

David Wolff, author of *Seth Bullock: Black Hills Lawman*, took a moment to answer a few questions.

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.

Q. Bullock seems central to the development of the Black Hills and yet he is not as famous a figure as some of the Wild West characters. What do you think the reasons for this might be?

A. For a variety of reasons, but those that come to mind include: one, he never killed anyway in gun battles and that shortcoming diminishes his appeal in Western lore; two, he mingled in the upper class of Deadwood, and that makes him hard to relate to as a Wild West character; third, dime novels or other fictionalized accounts of the West never made him a character, and finally, he spent most of his life running businesses or working for the federal government and such activities don't often make for much melodrama.

Q. How has the HBO show "Deadwood" affected the image of the Black Hills, Deadwood, and people such as Bullock?

A. I am not sure that the HBO affected the image of the area at all. If people have read accounts of the town, they will discover where HBO got their basic material. The Gem Theater and such institutions existed. The show did use a lot of foul language, and I don't believe that the people talked that way. The show more than anything created a greater awareness of Deadwood. While much of the story line was historical fiction, I think the town was portrayed fairly.

As far as Bullock, because of his prominence in the show, I believe a new appreciation for him as a Deadwood pioneer developed.

Q. Did the HBO show portray Bullock with any authenticity/accuracy?

A. While the show fictionalized Bullock a fair amount, for instance, he never married his brother's wife and he didn't shoot anyone on Main Street, I believe the demeanor, the confidence, and even the look that Timothy Oliphant brought to the part was a good portrayal.