

Discussion Questions

1. How much did you know about the Black Hills gold rush and about the life of Seth Bullock before reading this book? Has your viewpoint changed as a result of reading it?
2. Why do you think the author concentrates almost entirely upon Bullock's "public" career and says very little about his domestic life? Does this detract from the book's overall effect?
3. Did you get a clear picture of Seth Bullock, the man? What would you identify as the crucial characteristics of his character and personality?
4. Was Bullock a person fitted for the frontier? In what sense was he or was he not?
5. What do you think attracted Theodore Roosevelt to Bullock? How did they compare as personalities? Were you surprised to discover the close relationship that existed between the two?
6. Why do you think Bullock as a young man in his twenties and thirties was so committed to the idea of law and order? Did this commitment make sense to you? How does Bullock compare to people today who call for "law and order"?
7. "One can discern a tension existing between Bullock's desire for personal achievement and acquisition of wealth, on the one side, and his effort to promote community progress and betterment, on the other." Discuss.
8. Would you have wanted to live in Deadwood during the period that Bullock lived there? Why or why not?
9. What impression do you have of Martha Eccles Bullock? Do you think she had a good life?
10. Describe the relationship that existed between Bullock and his business partner, Sol Star. How do their achievements and contributions compare?
11. What do you think drew Bullock into politics? What role did it play in his life?
12. Were you surprised to discover how much Bullock was able to accomplish at a comparatively young age? Do you think he would have been able to achieve the same things in today's society? Why was he able to during the late 1800's?

13. Do you have a sense of class relations in Deadwood during the time Bullock lived there? How did he fit into the class system?
14. Much has been said or implied about the level of violence in Deadwood in the early years, based upon histories, novels, and the HBO program, “Deadwood.” How does the author’s description of the level of violence compare to what you had previously judged it to be?
15. Deadwood suffered a number of disastrous fires during its early years. How would the scope of the threats and challenges facing towns today compare?

Note: Information was attained from one of the South Dakota Book Bag Study Guides (a project supported with funding from the South Dakota Humanities Council).

<http://library.sd.gov/PROG/sdbookbag/index.aspx>