

west of the Deadwood city limits, to Mount Theodore Roosevelt. In addition, he wanted the Black Hills Pioneers to develop a suitable memorial on the mountain in honor of Roosevelt. In April of 1919, plans for the construction of a tower using native Black Hills stone were approved by the Society of Black Hills Pioneers. The public dedication was scheduled for July 4, 1919.

Despite an overcast day with intermittent rain, automobiles and countless people converged on Mount Theodore Roosevelt in the afternoon for the dedication ceremony. Though the Roosevelt family did not attend the dedication, Kermit Roosevelt sent a heartfelt letter dated July 4, 1919 thanking Bullock for contributing to the memory of his late father. Two months after the dedication, Captain Seth Bullock died in his home in Deadwood, South Dakota on September 23, 1919.

Throughout the 20th century, Mount Theodore Roosevelt and the Roosevelt Tower grew in popularity as a local and regional tourist attraction. By the mid-1960s, the Society of Black Hills Pioneers decided to transfer ownership of the tower and grounds to the United States Forest Service (USFS). Society members, including Seth Bullock's grandson Kenneth Kellar, helped facilitate the transfer and began planning the rededication ceremony on July 4, 1968.

In 2005, the USFS and several local Black Hills agencies began restoring the Roosevelt Tower. The Deadwood Historic Preservation Office awarded a grant to the USFS and aided in the successful nomination of the tower to the National Register for Historic Places. Five years later in 2010, the US Forest Service received \$120,000 as part of the American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the rehabilitation of the tower. In 2019, as part of the 100th anniversary of the Roosevelt Tower, the USFS, Deadwood HPC, City of Deadwood, and Deadwood Masonic Lodge #07 rededicated the tower.

Today, Roosevelt Tower is a silent reminder of the friendship between two prominent men who helped shape this nation and western South Dakota.



## Mt. Theodore Roosevelt

Open Year Round  
Sunrise to Sunset

Open to foot traffic but limited maintenance



City of Deadwood  
Historic Preservation Office  
108 Sherman Street  
Deadwood, SD 57732  
Tel.: (605) 578-2082  
[www.cityofdeadwood.com](http://www.cityofdeadwood.com)



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# DEADWOOD Mt. Roosevelt Tower



## A BRIEF HISTORY

Dedicated July 4, 1919



# HistoryLink

A TRAIL TO DEADWOOD'S PAST



Theodore Roosevelt and Bullock in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1910

## Seth Bullock (1847 - 1919)

## Theodore Roosevelt (1858 - 1919)

The year 2019 commemorates the 100th anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt's and Seth Bullock's deaths and the dedication of Mount Theodore Roosevelt – the first monument dedicated in memory of Roosevelt.

In 1892 U.S. Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt came to western South Dakota to observe conditions on Indian Reservations. Somewhere along the Belle Fourche River Valley, near today's Belle Fourche, South Dakota, Roosevelt crossed paths with Seth Bullock before heading to Deadwood, South Dakota and the reservations. Roosevelt's recollections of this meeting appear in his 1910 autobiography.



*“We had a rather rough trip, ... Seth [Bullock] received us with rather distant courtesy at first, but unbent when he found out who we were, remarking, ‘You see by your looks, I thought you were some kind of a tin-horn gambling outfit, and that I might have to keep an eye on you!’”*

Bullock served as Captain of Troop A of the Third Volunteer Cavalry. He oversaw the training and care of soldiers at Fort Thomas in Chickamauga, Georgia. Following the war, Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York in 1898 and Republican Vice-President two years later in 1900. Bullock returned to Deadwood as a noted military veteran with a new found respect amongst his fellow citizens.

In July of 1900, Roosevelt accepted the vice-presidential nomination during the Republican National Convention in Pennsylvania. As part of the Republican ticket, Roosevelt campaigned in twenty-four states including North and South Dakota and Montana. Bullock, a prominent Republican, Spanish-American War veteran, and former lawman was invited to accompany Roosevelt. At the conclusion of this trip, both men forged a strong friendship.

federal appointment for four and half years. During this time, Bullock became one of Theodore Roosevelt's staunchest and valued friends. In the summers of 1903, 1905, 1907 and 1909, Roosevelt's children, Theodore Jr., Kermit and Archibald visited Bullock and spent time with him in the ranch country of western South Dakota. In 1905, as a gesture of friendship, Bullock conceived the idea of a brigade of western cowboys from South Dakota to ride horses at Roosevelt's Inaugural parade. Local and national newspapers published accounts of Bullock's Cowboy Brigade's trip to Washington D.C. and their meeting with the president.

In 1909, Roosevelt embarked on a one year safari to Africa. In several letters, Roosevelt invited Bullock and his family to London, England following the safari. The Bullock family accepted the invitation and arrived in England in June of 1910. Over the next nine years, until their deaths in 1919, Seth Bullock, Theodore Roosevelt and members of the Roosevelt family continued to correspond through personal letters. Many of the letters provide a glimpse into how national politics, political views and the war in Europe affected the lives of Bullock and the Roosevelt families.

On January 6, 1919, Theodore Roosevelt died at his home in Sagamore Hill, New York. As word of Roosevelt's passing disseminated across the nation, Roosevelt's death came as a severe blow to Bullock. As the nation bereaved the loss of a great leader, a grief stricken Bullock began a campaign to venerate the memory of his longtime friend. During the annual meeting of the Society of Black Hills Pioneers, Bullock proposed to rename Sheep Mountain, located three miles

*“Seth Bullock was a hero-worshipper and [Roosevelt] was his great hero.”*

*The Happy Hunting Grounds, Kermit Roosevelt*

In 1898, both men enlisted to fight during the Spanish-American War. Roosevelt was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the First Volunteer Cavalry and gained national notoriety for the assault on and capture of San Juan Hill, Cuba.

In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became the 26th President of the United States following the assassination of William McKinley. In a congratulatory letter dated September 24, 1901, Bullock was appointed forest supervisor for the Black Hills Forest Reserve. Bullock held this