

Transcript

Mount Roosevelt Virtual Tour – Northern Hills

September 10, 2012

Event: Travel back in time to the era of Theodore Roosevelt and Seth Bullock while viewing a virtual tour of the Mount Roosevelt Friendship Tower.

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00:00:01,000 --> 00:00:11,150

Hi, my name is Rhonda O'Byrne and I'm the district ranger on the Northern Hills Ranger District and I'd like to welcome you to the friendship tower on Mount Roosevelt on the Black Hills National Forest.

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00:00:14,120 --> 00:00:22,240

TEXT: Mount Roosevelt Friendship Tower A "Chance" Meeting

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00:00:26,080 --> 00:00:37,110

A stone watch tower stands on top of Mount Roosevelt just northwest of Deadwood, South Dakota, a place where you can look out and see the northern great plains as people have done beyond memory.

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00:00:38,030 --> 00:00:43,060

The Deadwood sheriff built it toward the end of his life to celebrate his friend, Teddy Roosevelt.

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00:00:44,020 --> 00:00:55,180

Known as the Mount Roosevelt Friendship Tower, it is a monument and testament to the friendship and loyalty that has outlasted the lives of the man who built it and the man who inspired it.

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00:00:58,240 --> 00:01:07,110

The famous Deadwood Sheriff, Seth Bullock, built the Tower in 1919 after President Roosevelt died but while Bullock still lived.

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00:01:08,040 --> 00:01:13,210

Bullock built the Tower as a dedication to President Roosevelt, his dear close friend of many years.

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00:01:14,180 --> 00:01:17,250

Seth Bullock was originally from Ontario, Canada.

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00:01:18,120 --> 00:01:24,140

When he was 18 he decided to move to Montana where he was later elected to the territorial senate.

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00:01:25,170 --> 00:01:38,080

Like other visionaries in his generation, Bullock was fiercely dedicated to public service and conserving open space which was then quickly disappearing as settlement forever changed the Wild West.

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00:01:39,080 --> 00:01:49,080

Bullock was instrumental in establishing what became Yellowstone National Park and quickly became involved in law and politics to help bring peace to a troubled land.

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00:01:52,150 --> 00:01:59,060

Bullock's ambition led him to South Dakota where gold fever gripped the imaginations of tens of thousands of new Americans.

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00:01:59,150 --> 00:02:13,290

High in the northern Black Hills the small mining camp of Deadwood was exploding in a mining frenzy and, with it, the usual assortment of scandalous and infamous characters, all hoping to strike it rich from Black Hills gold.

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00:02:16,180 --> 00:02:24,040

Bullock saw a chance to get rich selling supplies to the miners and opened a hardware store with his business partner, Sol Star.

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00:02:26,130 --> 00:02:29,190

Deadwood needed a sheriff and Bullock was the man for the job.

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00:02:30,200 --> 00:02:36,170

In later years he would serve as a U. S. Deputy Marshall and Black Hills National Forest Supervisor.

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00:02:38,050 --> 00:02:43,250

Seth Bullock came to love the South Dakota landscape and bought land for a ranch near Belle Fourche [Bell Foosh].

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00:02:46,110 --> 00:02:55,060

He recalled that one day he saw three men on horses riding across the plains and stopped them, thinking they looked like some kind of "gambling outfit."

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00:02:56,270 --> 00:03:01,060

Turns out they were bringing in a horse thief that was wanted in the Dakota Territory.

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00:03:02,090 --> 00:03:08,230

One of them, ironically, was a fellow deputy sheriff from Medora, North Dakota, named Theodore Roosevelt.

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00:03:09,140 --> 00:03:14,230

This chance meeting started a life-long friendship memorialized in the Friendship Tower.

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00:03:18,140 --> 00:03:24,200

Over the years Bullock and Roosevelt enjoyed visits together that included hunting expeditions and camping trips.

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00:03:26,020 --> 00:03:42,120

After Roosevelt became President he sent his sons, Ted, Kermit, and Archie to spend summers on Bullock's S & B Cattle Company ranch where Roosevelt knew they would experience the full flavor of the west; something they could never experience in their home back east.

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00:03:43,250 --> 00:03:52,080

Bullock would help establish Wind Cave National Park, Devils Tower National Monument, and the DC Booth National Fish Hatchery.

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00:03:53,070 --> 00:03:59,090

Just after the turn of the twentieth century Bullock was appointed as the Forest Supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest.

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00:04:04,250 --> 00:04:12,130

In 1919, the Society of Black Hills Pioneers provided financial support to build the Mt. Roosevelt Friendship Tower.

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00:04:13,250 --> 00:04:22,000

Architects C.E. Dawson and H.S. Vincent of Deadwood developed the plans for a tower reminiscent of medieval watch towers from central Europe.

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00:04:22,230 --> 00:04:34,140

The Memorial was officially dedicated on July 4, 1919 with a grand dedication ceremony and several influential guest speakers including South Dakota Governor Peter Norbeck.

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00:04:35,150 --> 00:04:44,120

Before he died Seth Bullock asked to be buried in the Mount Moriah cemetery above Deadwood (near Wild Bill Hickok) where he would have a clear view of Mount Roosevelt for eternity.

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00:04:48,140 --> 00:04:55,100

In 1966, the Society of Black Hills Pioneers donated the Tower to the United States Forest Service.

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00:04:55,280 --> 00:05:03,080

In 2005, the Tower was added to the National Register of Historic Places for its unique architecture and workmanship.

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00:05:06,110 --> 00:05:19,260

The Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission, the Black Hills Parks and Forest Association, and the Black Hills National Forest have now completely restored the Tower and will preserve this memorial to conservation and friendship for future generations.

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00:05:25,090 --> 00:05:34,220

One of the things that I think is really special about the Friendship Tower at Mount Roosevelt is that this is a lasting legacy of a friendship between two people.

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00:05:34,270 --> 00:05:49,250

Obviously Seth Bullock and Teddy Roosevelt had a great friendship throughout their life and it was special enough that Bullock felt he wanted to do something to memorialize that friendship.

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00:05:50,150 --> 00:05:55,060

So he built this structure in 1919 and it has withstood time.

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00:05:55,12 --> 00:06:10,210

I think that's something that's really important not just because of the physical structure that's still standing here after 90 years, but also it's those connections, the friendships that people have with each other, that's something we can all relate to as human beings.

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00:06:11,080 --> 00:06:16,120

And something that I think is really important about the Friendship Tower itself.

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00:06:19,190 --> 00:06:35,180

It's another reason for the Forest Service to keep this structure open and available to the public so that everybody has a chance to come up and see the tower and realize that special bond, that Teddy Roosevelt and Seth Bullock had.

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00:06:39,050 --> 00:06:47,220

The Black Hills National Forest acquired the Mount Roosevelt, the Friendship Tower at Mount Roosevelt in 1966 from the Society of Black Hills Pioneers.

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00:06:48,260 --> 00:06:53,120

The Tower was actually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

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00:06:54,160 --> 00:07:03,060

Since then, the Forest has done lots of projects around the Tower to try to restore it back to what it originally looked like.

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00:07:05,240 --> 00:07:13,000

Back in 2005, we started a project to do restoration up here on Mount Roosevelt.

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00:07:13,210 --> 00:07:26,050

We had a couple things that we did initially to try to stabilize the Tower and try to open up the view, so that the public could see the views back like they were earlier in the early 1900's.

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00:07:26,070 --> 00:07:30,220

One of the first things that we did is, we actually opened up the view behind me.

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00:07:31,090 --> 00:07:37,280

We brought in the YNRP crew, which is one of the youth organizations that help work with the Forest Service.

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00:07:38,090 --> 00:07:46,290

We brought them in and we had them help with the chipping and we had our own crews up here cutting the trees and they were helping us feed them into the chipper.

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00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:54,210

We cut out a lot of the pine trees, opened up the view again so that the public can see what the view was earlier in the year.

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00:07:55,050 --> 00:08:00,250

The other thing that we did is we did some work on the base of the Tower.

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00:08:00,270 --> 00:08:18,000

The Tower was crumbling and so we came in here and we put a concrete layer over the top of the tower to try to stabilize it until we could get in a more professional mason type of workers and have them do more restoration on the tower.

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00:08:18,030 --> 00:08:28,120

That concrete pad over the top actually helped keep it from crumbling for several years before we were able to gain more funds and start the restoration.

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00:08:33,150 --> 00:08:38,000

In 2010, was when most of the work on the Tower was completed.

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00:08:38,200 --> 00:08:54,230

They received about \$120,000 in ARRA, which is American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds from the government, to put into the Tower and the majority of the work went to the Tower itself.

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00:08:55,250 --> 00:09:02,000

That was working on the base of to reinforce it from the elements.

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00:09:02,050 --> 00:09:10,290

Obviously, the Tower has been standing for over 90 years and so it needed some work to make sure that base was sufficient to hold it for hopefully another 90 years.

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00:09:11,200 --> 00:09:14,280

They also re-mortared the sides of the Tower.

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00:09:15,200 --> 00:09:20,270

Put up the railings and a good chunk of money was also to re-do the stairs.

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00:09:21,090 --> 00:09:32,280

Over time, since the Forest acquired it, the structure itself was just deemed unsafe and so the stairs had been removed to discourage the public from getting in.

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00:09:34,190 --> 00:09:42,120

They put the stairs back on, but also put them to specifications that are more modern for safety issues.

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00:09:43,100 --> 00:09:49,070

And then inside the Tower, they reinforced the original rock staircase that goes up to the top.

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00:09:49,260 --> 00:09:56,270

They put a new cap on the top to try to seal in, to keep moisture out.

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00:09:57,010 --> 00:10:02,230

And also the roof, which is probably the most visible thing that everybody notices when they come up to the Tower.

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00:10:02,240 --> 00:10:09,240

They put this roof on, which will help keep the snow and moisture out during the winter months.

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00:10:10,030 --> 00:10:20,030

We also will have a tarp that we can put on in the winter time to try to also keep more of that moisture out from seeping down into the Tower and causing more cracking.

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00:10:21,020 --> 00:10:30,150

We had the help of the Job Corps, the Boxelder Job Corps and of course our North Zone engineers were involved extensively to try to get this project accomplished.

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00:10:31,190 --> 00:10:36,060

This year the Forest Service has taken on several projects at Mount Roosevelt.

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00:10:36,120 --> 00:10:45,140

The fire crews are here removing pine beetle killed trees and trying to remove some of the hazards that are along the trail and remove hazards that could impact the Tower as well.

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00:10:46,060 --> 00:10:50,070

We also installed signs , some interpretive signs for the public.

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00:10:51,100 --> 00:10:56,110

And eventually we would like to restore the view shed from the Tower looking toward Mount Moriah.

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00:10:57,100 --> 00:11:11,130

Seth Bullock's last wish was to be buried a-top Mount Moriah where he could see Mount Roosevelt and so we are trying to restore that view since many trees have grown up over the years in that path.

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00:11:19,130 --> 00:11:24,280

As I walk up the mortared steps into this grand tower it reminds me of a medieval castle.

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00:11:26,080 --> 00:11:34,030

When I reach the first platform I am inspired by this gesture that Seth Bullock made to the memory of his dear friend, President Roosevelt.

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00:11:35,290 --> 00:11:46,030

It is as if I can almost spot that place on the plains, near Belle Fourche, where Mr. Bullock and President Roosevelt met for the first time on horseback.

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00:11:50,090 --> 00:11:59,210

The Tower represents the greatness that Mr. Bullock saw in his friend, but also stands as a marker of a time now lost, the passing of the Western Frontier.

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00:12:00,150 --> 00:12:07,120

Recently restored, the Tower now looks more like it did on that July 4th day in 1919 when it was dedicated.

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00:12:09,180 --> 00:12:17,190

The small door at the base of the tower leads me inside where the cold iron hand-rail guides me up the original rock spiral staircase.

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00:12:29,030 --> 00:12:41,010

The view from the top is astonishing. I can see all around; Wyoming's Bearlodge Mountains to the west, a glimpse of Montana to the northwest, and on this day North Dakota to the north.

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00:12:41,190 --> 00:12:48,150

There is a commanding view of Bear Butte to the northeast and Custer Peak pokes up above the rest of the Black Hills to the south.

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00:12:49,060 --> 00:13:03,180

It is clear that Mr. Bullock built this tower to remind us of the day he looked out on a vanishing "wild west"; to remind the generations after him of the importance that President Roosevelt played in preserving open spaces for all Americans.

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00:13:05,260 --> 00:13:21,060

I feel as though I could stay here forever; the wind blowing, swirling around Mount Theodore Roosevelt; looking at what Mr. Bullock saw, feeling what the pioneers felt, and the Native Americans who also once stood here looking at their vanishing homeland.

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00:13:22,040 --> 00:13:28,170

In this place, a Friendship Tower has been constructed, set in stone, a monument to the memory of friendship.

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00:13:29,060 --> 00:13:37,050

From here it is as though you can almost see into the past, for as far as you look you can see the rugged solitude of the rolling plains.

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00:13:43,090 --> 00:13:48,130

It is clear to me, now, why Mr. Bullock was inspired to choose this unique place.

00:13:50,210 --> 00:14:49,100

END CREDITS