



# Fort Meade and the Black Hills

*Robert Lee*

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Fort Meade was the home of the famous Seventh Cavalry after its ignominious defeat in the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Troops from Fort Meade played a pivotal role in the events that led to the tragedy at Wounded Knee in 1890. It was the scene of imprisonment of Ute Indians who made the mistake of interpreting their new citizenship status as freedom from government control. The fort survived the mechanization of the horse cavalry, aided the record-breaking Stratosphere Balloon flight of 1935, and became a training site for the nation's first airborne troops.

Fort Meade existed for sixty-six years, from 1878 to 1944. Robert Lee examines the strategic importance of its location on the northern edge of the Black Hills and the role it played in the settlement of the region, as well as the role played by the citizens of Sturgis in keeping it alive. One of the chief delights of Fort Meade and the Black Hills is a gallery of characters including the unfortunate Major Marcus Reno, the beautiful and fatal Ella Sturgis, and the cigar-smoking Poker Alice Tubbs. They, and events scaled to their larger-than-life size, are part of this long overdue story of Fort Meade.

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