



Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters

Bill O'Neal

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Much information (some of it factual, a lot of it fictional) is available about the famous gunfighters of the Old West—the Jameses, Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, John Wesley Hardin, and that latter-day folk idol, Butch Cassidy. Dozens of less-well-known but sometimes even more murderous gunslingers—such men as Cullen Baker, Harvey Logan, Longhaired Jim Courtright, and Mysterious Dave Mather—have received only scant mention in scattered accounts.

This encyclopedia—a who's who of the gunfighting West—provides a compilation of facts, sifted myths, folklore, and outright lies, about the lives and deaths of 255 men, both the famous and the all but forgotten. Also included are detailed accounts of the almost six hundred gunfights the men took part in, mostly between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century.

Each entry follows a concise and useful format: an alphabetical listing of the gunman; nicknames or aliases; dates and places of birth and death, as known; the occupations the man pursued; a brief biography; and, in chronological order, accounts of the verified gunfights in which he participated.

In the Introduction, from the information he amassed in this volume, Bill O'Neal provides a fascinating summary of the data and offers new insights into the nature of the western gunmen and of the feuds and fights that bloodied the West. For example, he relates how a large number of the gunfighters used guns as tools of their trades, legitimate and otherwise—lawmen and detectives, buffalo hunters, army scouts, thieves, hired killers, and the like. Of the gunfighters included here 108 served as law officers at some time in their careers. The average lifespan, including those who died of natural causes, was forty-seven years, and more than 50 percent of the gunmen died from gunshot wounds.

Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters offers a unique compilation of information about these men—a comprehensive and reliable source.

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