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Shot All To Hell: Bad Ass Outlaws, Gunfighters, And Lawmen Of The Old West



Synopsis

True Stories of Western Badmen, Outlaws, Gunfighters, and Lawmen of the Old West For over 150 years the image of western bad men has thrilled readers and filled movie screens. Who hasn't heard of Jesse James, the Dalton Brothers, Black Bart, or Belle Starr? They are as much a part of American folklore as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. There's something about the West that has brought out the best, and the worst in mankind. The funny thing is, a cult following has developed around many of these bandits, making them out to be something they were not. Bad Ass Outlaws Who Made Their Mark The legend that grew up around Joaquin Murrieta was that he was just a normal guy who moved from Mexico to California and tried to strike it rich during the gold rush. What he discovered instead, was a big sign that read, "No Mexicans Allowed." His supporters say, that because of the Foreign Claim Tax he was forced off his land, and into a life of outlawry. Moreover, to support that claim, a whole legend has been built up, about how he stole from the rich and shared his wealth with poor Mexican families. The problem is the facts do not support that interpretation. The same stories developed around Jesse James. Legend has it, Jesse only stole from rich bankers and railroad men, and the reason he could disappear into thin air after pulling a bank job or train robbery was because he shared the booty with poor Missouri families. As with Murrieta, that probably never happened. Jesse James was a thief. He stole money wherever he could get his hands on it. He robbed stagecoaches, banks, trains, and you-name-it. And, last, but not least, there's Belle Starr, one of the most bad ass female robbers on record. Belle called her pistols her "babies," and ruled an outlaw kingdom based out of her home in Indian Territory. She lived by the gun, and she died by the gun. Outlaw Life Wasn't As Glamorous As You Think The outlaw life was almost always portrayed as a glamorous life, filled with loose women, blazing guns, and saddlebags overflowing with gold, silver, and greenbacks. What a life! Movies, books, and TV shows paint a distorted portrait of life in the old west. James Dodsworth lived the outlaw life for six weeks while riding as a spy with the Doolin-Dalton Gang. He said the gang was constantly on the move. They rarely spent more than one night in any one place. Dalton and Doolin, both worried they would end up like Jesse James "shot in the back. At night, the gang always posted at least one man on watch duty. The rest of the gang slept with Winchesters by their sides, and pistols under their heads. Every one of them was ready to spring into action at a moment's notice. And, as for those saddlebags overflowing with riches, more often than not, they were like a Charlie Brown Halloween special "filled with rocks rather than gold. Sometimes the gang would cut off the wrong car during a train robbery, and end up riding away empty handed. Sometimes a posse would chase them off a little too soon before they could grab their booty. Other times, it was slim

pickings, and there was nothing to take. The first train job the Dalton Gang pulled went awry. The Expressman got away before they could convince him to open the safe, and in their haste to rob the Atlantic Express the boys forgot to bring dynamite to blow the safe. Black Jack Ketchum, and his gang made off with \$100,000 in unsigned bank notes. Pearl Hart's fame rests upon a single stagecoach robbery that netted her under \$500, and several years in the caboose after she was captured. The sad truth is most outlaws led a short life that ended, either at the end of a rope or with a bullet in the brain. Only a lucky few survived into the new century—Frank James, Cole Younger, and Emmett Dalton, to name a few.

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Customer Reviews

I rather like this author's style when it comes to telling the tales of old time Western desperadoes and the men who wore the badge that were sworn to bring them to justice. Have to say the book did paint some pretty gruesome images as for example preserving the head of Joaquin Murrieta Carrillo in whiskey for display, blood spurting from the hole in Gratton Dalton's throat whenever the right arm of his corpse was lifted or Sanders cutting off his own brother's hand so he might escape the law.

Book did spark my interest as to wanting to explore more of the lives (and deaths) of similar notorious outlaws and already ordered up one on John Wesley Hardin as a result (ASIN: B01K934I0A) or you can grab yourself The Story of Cole Younger, by Himself (ASIN: B004TPC6Y0) for free if you like. Fine book overall complete with an active table of contents and an appendix at the close including mentions of the gunfight at the O. K. Corral, Four Bad Men Who Made a Specialty of Carrying Guns and more which made it a nifty book for me overall. Leave you with the dying words of Sam Bass to mark the occasion, "I am Sam Bass; I am shot all to hell, and it's no use to deny it."

For me this was a walk down memory lane. The men, who lived by the gun and died by the gun, have taken on a bigger than life persona. This book tries to separate the facts from the fictions. I know about all of the men mentioned in this book so there were no real big surprises in it for me. I was raised in Oklahoma so many of the places mentioned are known to me. Many people may not know of the Daltons, the Doolins, and the others but they are known in Oklahoma. Some of them were just men, who wanted the easy life that came from a gun. One thing that struck me about this book was the way it just presented the fact as they are known no sermonizing or oh these poor unfortunate men. These men picked the life they lead. You as the reader can come to your own conclusions as to were they right or wrong. I also enjoyed the appendices, which werewolves reprints of period newspaper articles on the men and several events from the book. My only complaint was there was not enough on Tom Horn. He is an interesting page from the American West. Would I read another book by Nick Vulich on the West? Yes, I would this is the way history should be written sometimes as a great story. Want to find out about the West this is a good place to start.

You can't beat this book for variety of coverage of numerous outlaws, gunfighters, and law men as promised in the title. It's best as an introductory work because it's not a 'deep dive' into any of them but focuses on the deeds and actions. That being said, there are many in this volume that I'm already well familiar with, some I want to learn more about, and a few I did not particularly know about. There are some very funny phases and pointed observations that I enjoyed and I bet any reader will too. As always with outlaws and other frontier characters, the truth is very difficult to get at. The writer acknowledges this in his explanation at the end. He also provides a good explanation that his particular interest is only in the action. That surely is more factual than trying to figure motivations and what in a lot of cases is simply rationalizations. Of special interest to me were some

the original newspaper articles included at the back covering events a few days after they occurred such as the Dalton Gang double bank robbery. This is a good book for those interested in this topic.

Even if you've read the stories of the men and women who are featured in this book, it's still just such a fun read. He gets to the point without any minutiae so it's also a great place to start for people who just want to know enough or use this as an entry to longer, more detailed biographies or histories

There is nothing in this book that is new or even not widely known. I should have saved my money on this one. Sorry guy, but stick to writing something new and not just paraphrasing widely known facts.

Short interesting excerpts of the Old West's well known cast of characters. The book doesn't go into depth at all about any of its subjects. This is like reading a collection of news articles. If you want a book that you can enjoy in 5 minutes doses then this is perfect.

I like the author's story telling. His accounts seem believable. I highly recommend. Do yourself a favor and read the book

impressive heroes of our wonderful past. I enjoyed the more descriptive acknowledgement of our folklore heroes and their realistic accomplishments. I recommend these short stories to anyone interested in the true wild west exploits of the old western eras.

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