



# Legends of the West: The Life and Legacy of Bat Masterson

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures of important people and places.

\*Discusses Masterson's most famous shootouts and his friendship with famous Westerners like Wyatt Earp and Buffalo Bill.

\*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"I have come over a thousand miles to settle this. I know you are heeled [armed]. Now fight!" – Bat Masterson

Space may be the final frontier, but no frontier has ever captured the American imagination like the “Wild West”, which still evokes images of dusty cowboys, outlaws, gunfights, gamblers, and barroom brawls over 100 years after the West was settled. A constant fixture in American pop culture, the 19th century American West continues to be vividly and colorful portrayed not just as a place but as a state of mind. In Charles River Editors’ Legends of the West series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America’s most famous frontier figures in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Though he is no longer as well remembered as he once was, one of the most famous and notorious lawmen of the Wild West was Bat Masterson, who drifted around Dodge City and other parts of the West and was associated with legends like Wyatt Earp. Carrying a six-shooter that he called “the gun that tamed the West”, Masterson was involved in several duels and shootouts, much of which was embellished during the early 20th century when he became a newspaper columnist and was given a chance to frame anecdotes about the frontier days and talk about colorful characters like Doc Holliday.

Like Wyatt Earp, who once served as a lawman under him, Masterson was primarily known as being on the right side of the law, but he wasn’t afraid to firmly straddle both sides of it. While tall tales about shootouts were commonplace and believed wholesale throughout the West in the 19th century, few men had as strong a reputation as Bat Masterson, who was known for public shootouts, one of which took place in Dodge City in 1878 that ended with the death of his brother and town marshal, Ed Masterson. Bat also took part in the famous Earp Vendetta Ride near Tombstone, which occurred in the wake of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral. Given the number of times he fought, and the fact that he was shot and injured himself, perhaps Bat Masterson’s most remarkable feat was that he managed to survive into the 20th century, something few Western legends of his era (with the exception of Wyatt Earp) accomplished. Thanks to his survival, Masterson was able to parlay his notoriety into opportunities back East, including even being appointed marshal in New York by President Theodore Roosevelt. Through his reputation and his position as a writer, when Masterson died in 1921 at an office desk writing a newspaper column, he was something of a folk hero, and he would go on to be the title character of a critically acclaimed television series in the late 1950s. Legends of the West: The Life and Legacy of Bat Masterson chronicles the Western icon’s life and examines the myths and legends in an attempt to separate fact from fiction. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Bat Masterson like you never have before, in no time at all.

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