

Calamity Jane: A Legendary Frontier Woman



Cabinet photograph captioned in the negative, Calamity Jane, Gen. Crook's Scout. An early view of Calamity Jane wearing buckskins, with an ivory-gripped Colt Single Action Army revolver tucked in her hand-tooled holster, holding a Sharps rifle.

Calamity Jane. (2024, May 30). In Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamity_Jane

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Calamity Jane

Early Life and Background

Calamity Jane, born Martha Jane Cannary in 1852 in Princeton, Missouri, was an iconic figure of the American Old West. She was the eldest of six children born to Robert and Charlotte Cannary. Her father, Robert, was a farmer who moved the family to Montana during the gold rush of 1865. Jane's mother, Charlotte, died the following year, and her father passed away shortly after, leaving Jane to care for her younger siblings. Known for her tough demeanor and exceptional skills with horses and firearms, she broke many of the gender norms of her time. Following the deaths of her parents, she moved to Wyoming and worked various jobs typically reserved for men, including as a mule skinner and railroad worker. Her adventurous spirit and rugged lifestyle earned her a reputation as a formidable frontierswoman.

Military and Expedition Involvement

Jane claimed to have served as a scout for the U.S. Army, participating in several military campaigns, although these claims are disputed. Her presence at Fort Laramie and involvement in the Newton-Jenney Party's exploration of the Black Hills in 1875 are well-documented. She was known for dressing in men's clothes and performing tasks alongside male soldiers, further cementing her legendary status.

Life in Deadwood and Relationship with Wild Bill Hickok

Calamity Jane is perhaps most famously associated with the town of Deadwood, South Dakota,

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where she became a local legend during the Black Hills Gold Rush. It was here that she formed a close, albeit possibly embellished, relationship with Wild Bill Hickok. After Hickok's murder in 1876, Jane claimed they had been married and had a child together, though historians largely dismiss these claims as fabrications.

Later Years and Legacy

In her later years, Jane capitalized on her fame by appearing in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and other exhibitions. She published an autobiographical pamphlet in 1896, though much of it is considered exaggerated. Jane's final years were marked by continued hardship and bouts of heavy drinking. She died in 1903 in Terry, South Dakota, and was buried in Deadwood's Mount Moriah Cemetery next to Wild Bill Hickok.

Films

The Plainsman is a 1936 film starring Gary Cooper as Bill Hickok and Jean Arthur as Jane. In Young Bill Hickok with Roy Rogers (1940), she was played by Sally Payne. She was played by Marin Sais in the 1940 serial Deadwood Dick, by Frances Farmer in the 1941 Western The Badlands of Dakota, and by Jane Russell in the 1948 Bob Hope comedy The Paleface. In 1949's Calamity Jane and Sam Bass, Jane was played by Yvonne De Carlo and Sam Bass by Howard Duff; both characters were heavily fictionalized.

Calamity Jane is a 1953 musical-Western film from Warner Bros. starring Doris Day and Howard Keel as Wild Bill Hickok. The plot of the film is almost entirely fictional and bears little resemblance to the actual lives of the protagonists. It won the Best Song Oscar for "Secret Love", by Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster.

UK Tour of "Calamity Jane" Starring Carrie Hope Fletcher

The legacy of Calamity Jane continues to captivate audiences, including through theatrical adaptations. The UK and Ireland tour of 'Calamity Jane,' starring Carrie Hope Fletcher, brings this legendary figure to life on stage. The production offers a musical interpretation of Jane's adventures and persona, celebrating her enduring spirit. For more details on the tour, visit the official announcement on [London Theatre 1](#).

UK & Ireland Tour of Calamity Jane Starring Carrie Hope Fletcher



Carrie Hope Fletcher as Calamity Jane.