

History 101

Calamity Jane



Martha Jane Cannary (May 1, 1852 – August 1, 1903), better known as Calamity Jane, was an American frontierswoman known for being an acquaintance of Wild Bill Hickok's. Late in her life, she appeared in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show and at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition. She is said to have exhibited compassion to others, especially to the sick and needy. This facet of her character contrasted with her daredevil ways and helped to make her a noted frontier figure. She was also known for her habit of wearing men's attire.

Calamity Jane was the eldest of six children, and had two brothers and three sisters. Jane took whatever jobs she could find to provide for her large family. She worked as a dishwasher, cook, waitress, dance hall girl, nurse, and ox team driver. Finally, in 1874, she claimed she found work as a scout at Fort Russell. During that time, she also began her on-and-off employment as a prostitute at the Fort Laramie Three-Mile Hog Ranch. She moved on to a rougher, mostly outdoor and adventurous life on the Great Plains.

A popular belief is that she instead acquired her nickname as a result of her warnings to men that to offend her was to "court calamity". She was known by that nickname by 1876, because the arrival of the Hickok wagon train was reported in Deadwood's newspaper, the *Black Hills Pioneer*, on July 15, 1876, with the headline: "Calamity Jane has arrived!"

In 1876, Calamity Jane settled in the area of Deadwood, South Dakota, in the Black Hills. There she became friends with Dora DuFran, the Black Hills' leading madam, and was occasionally employed by her. Jane also became friendly with Wild Bill Hickok and Charlie Utter, having traveled with them to Deadwood in Utter's wagon train. Jane claimed that, following Hickok's death, she went after his murderer Jack McCall with a meat cleaver,. Following McCall's execution for the crime, Jane continued living in the Deadwood area for some time, and at one point she helped save numerous passengers in an overland stagecoach by diverting several Plains Indians who were in pursuit of the vehicle. The stagecoach driver was killed, and Jane took over the reins and drove the stage on to its destination at Deadwood. In late 1876 or 1878, Jane nursed the victims of a smallpox epidemic in the Deadwood area.

She died at the age of 51 from inflammation of the bowels and pneumonia.



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CANADA MATCH TORONTO

had a gentler side.
tobacco and liquor, but also
Calamity liked men's coats, chewing
tobacco and liquor, but also
had a gentler side.

Born around 1852 in Missouri,
she spent her life drifting through the Wild
West. Her actual name was Martha Jane Cannary.
CALAMITY JANE

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CALAMITY JANE'S
1867

EATING EMPORIUM
STEAK AND SEAFOOD

CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING - FERMEZ AVANT D'ALLUMER