



# Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend

*James D. McLaird*

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## **Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend** James D. McLaird

Forget Doris Day singing on the stagecoach. Forget Robin Weigert's gritty portrayal on HBO's *Deadwood*. The real Calamity Jane was someone the likes of whom you've never encountered. That is, until now.

This book is a definitive biography of Martha Canary, the woman popularly known as Calamity Jane. Written by one of today's foremost authorities on this notorious character, it is a meticulously researched account of how an alcoholic prostitute was transformed into a Wild West heroine.

Always on the move across the northern plains, Martha was more camp follower than the scout of legend. A mother of two, she often found employment as waitress, laundress, or dance hall girl and was more likely to be wearing a dress than buckskin. But she was hard to ignore when she'd had a few drinks, and she exploited the aura of fame that dime novels created around her, even selling her autobiography and photos to tourists.

Gun toting, swearing, hard drinking—Calamity Jane was all of these, to be sure. But whatever her flaws or foibles, James D. McLaird paints a compelling portrait of an unconventional woman who more than once turned the tables on those who sought to condemn or patronize her. He also includes dozens of photos—many never before seen—depicting Jane in her many guises. His book is a long-awaited biography of Martha Canary and the last word on Calamity Jane.

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