



Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend

By Gary L. Roberts

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"You can't beat this story for drama. . . . An omnibus of everything ever known, spoken, or written about Doc Holliday."
-Publishers Weekly

"An engagingly written, persuasively argued, solidly documented work of scholarship that will surely take its place in the literature of the Old West."
-Booklist

In *Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend*, the historian Gary Roberts takes aim at the most complex, perplexing, and paradoxical gunfighter of the Old West, drawing on more than twenty years of research-including new primary sources-in his quest to separate the life from the legend. Doc Holliday was a study in contrasts: the legendary gunslinger who made his living as a dentist; the emaciated consumptive whose very name struck fear in the hearts of his enemies; the degenerate gambler and alcoholic whose fierce loyalty to his friends compelled him, more than once, to risk his own life; and the sidekick whose near-mythic status rivals that of the West's greatest heroes. With lively details of Holliday's spirited exploits, his relationships with such Western icons as Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson, and the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, this book sheds new light on one of the most mysterious figures of frontier history.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Roberts, an authority on western history, takes on John Henry Holliday, legendary gunman, drinker, gambler and dentist (hence "Doc"), best known for some adroit shooting at the OK Corral on October 26, 1881. This is part biography, part debunking of myths and part archive of accounts of the lives of Holliday and the Earp Brothers written from the time they were alive up to the present. Roberts is effective in evoking the influences that formed his subject's character. Born in Georgia in 1851, Holliday absorbed the manliness and rebelliousness instilled in young men of his prosperous class in antebellum Southern culture. Holliday also acquired expertise in drinking, whoring and gambling, as well as a taste for violence. Roberts is measured in evaluating the myths associated with Holliday's exit from Georgia and his nomadic life in Texas, Colorado and Arizona. This brings the author to Tombstone, and the fray featuring Holliday and the Earps against the Clantons and McLaurys. You can't beat this story for drama, and Roberts provides a step-by-step account of the gunfight. Some chapters are unduly packed with Roberts's massive research. But without it, the book would not have been what the author plainly intends—an omnibus of everything ever known, spoken or written about Doc Holliday. Photos not seen by *PW*. (Apr.)

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From Booklist

Doc Holliday, one of the most famous western gunfighters, died of tuberculosis at the ripe old age of 36. But he left behind him a legend so immense that, even with the addition of this effusively sourced biography, the truth about the man may never be known. There are a few facts: Holliday was a dentist, he became a gambler and a gunslinger, and he was involved in the infamous gunfight at the OK Corral. But around Holliday has been constructed (by scholars, by outlaw-turned-author Bat Masterson, and by various Hollywood moviemakers) a life story that is made up substantially of myth and misunderstanding. The real John Henry Holliday, according to Roberts, was "a man seen almost entirely through the eyes of others." Roberts' role here is a bit like that of a judge, examining the testimonies and deciding which witnesses to believe and which to discard. The result is an engagingly written, persuasively argued, solidly documented work of scholarship that will surely take its place in the literature of the Old West. *David Pitt*

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Review

Who was Doc Holliday, the famed participant in the 1881 gunfight at OK Corral? Was he a killer and professional cutthroat, a reckless murderer, or a mild-mannered young man who would give aid to his friends, whatever the fight? Roberts (history, emeritus, Abraham Baldwin Coll.) considers these contrasting opinions as he relates John Henry "Doc" Holliday's life, a difficult task because Doc left no reminiscences, and the letters he wrote to family members were destroyed. The portrait that emerges is based on available newspaper stories and public records, which allow Roberts to show how Doc, who grew up in Georgia during the Civil War and received a DDS degree from the College of dental Surgery in Philadelphia, was a product of his circumstances. For example, he had tuberculosis and headed west in an effort to extend his life in the drier climate. Where the facts and reasons are not known, Roberts carefully considers the alternatives based upon the evidence. As he carefully points out, his work cannot be definitive but is an attempt—and a very sound one—to understand a man whose biography and legend will be forever entwined. Highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.

-- Stephen H. Peters, Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., Marquette. ("Library Journal," March 15, 2006)

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Krumm:

The book Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You should use to make your capable much more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem using your subject. If you can make reading through a book Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend for being your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your capable, increase your knowledge about several or all subjects. You could know everything if you like start and read a reserve Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science publication or encyclopedia or other folks. So , how do you think about this guide?

Gwen Dawes:

Typically the book Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend has a lot info on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Tom makes some research previous to write this book. This book very easy to read you can find the point easily after scanning this book.

Ross Fletcher:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend, you are able to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

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