



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Dodge City, Kansas

With all of the legends the state of Kansas has produced and all of the magnificent things that have happened in Kansas cities, Dodge City stands out for its incredible history and the many memorable events that have taken place there. Once known as the Gateway to the West, Dodge City remains a fabled city that is referenced in everything from western films to tales of the Wild West.



The history of Dodge City dates back to the days of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's exploration in 1541, at which time Coronado first crossed the Arkansas River. In the 1800s, Dodge City began its most notable historical role, serving as the opening of the Santa Fe Trail created by William Becknell. This route served as the main commercial route to New Mexico for more than half a century.

In 1859, Fort Dodge was established as a supply base for troops engaged in the Indian Wars. Buffalo flourished in the area, and Kiowa, Cheyenne and other Plains tribes inhabited the land. In 1871, a rancher established the first structure at the foot of a hill on the 100th meridian, the site that would become Dodge City the following year.

Dodge City was officially founded in 1872, five miles west of Fort Dodge. By the fall of that year, the Santa Fe Railroad reached Dodge City, sparking tremendous growth in the area. Slowly but steadily, businesses and homes began popping up, along with the legendary Front Street, and Dodge City became synonymous with gun slinging and lawlessness. Kansas legends like Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson served as law enforcement officers of the town, and it is from these individuals that Marshal Matt Dillion's character was created for "Gunsmoke."



Dodge City saw an influx of cowboys each summer and became a main stay of the Texas trade business. Saloons, dance halls and business houses offered food, entertainment and more to Dodge City residents and visitors alike. The city also served as the buffalo capital, with more than 1.5 million hides shipped out of the city in a six-year period during the 1870s.

Although the end of a great deal of the city's fame came with the end of the 19th century, its history is retold and embellished in novels, films, radio and television. Today, roadways such as Wyatt Earp Boulevard give tourists reminders of the Western Frontier and all the history that goes with it. Dodge City offers the Gunfighter's Wax Museum, Boot Hill Museum, the Carnegie Art Center and Dodge City Zoo as major attractions.



In 2005, the city commemorated the 50th anniversary of "Gunsmoke" by adding medallions dedicated to the actors of the show along the Trail of Fame. Many of the city's businesses, including restaurants, saloons and sports bars, are named for pieces of Dodge City history.

In addition to the city's historical fame, the U.S. Climatic Data Center named Dodge City the windiest city in the country, with an average annual wind speed of 14 miles per hour.

