



American Legends: The Life of John Wayne

Charles River Editors

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*Includes Wayne's entire filmography

*Includes pictures of Wayne and important people and places in his life.

*Analyzes Wayne's legacy on the screen and off of it.

*Includes some of Wayne's most colorful and controversial quotes.

"Every country in the world loved the folklore of the West -- the music, the dress, the excitement, everything that was associated with the opening of a new territory. It took everybody out of their own little world. The cowboy lasted a hundred years, created more songs and prose and poetry than any other folk figure. The closest thing was the Japanese samurai. Now, I wonder who'll continue it." - John Wayne

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Hollywood has produced no shortage of famous movie stars, but none have been as culturally significant as John Wayne. Marion Morrison was born in a quintessentially quaint Midwestern town, but he eventually grew up to become John Wayne, the legend of the silver screen who embodied the Western frontier. Wayne starred in so many movies (nearly 150 in all) that when asked to name his worst, he joked that 50 of them were tied, but the excessive number allowed Wayne to portray heroes of all stripes, from cowboys to soldiers, and he was invariably charming, courageous, and full of rugged, masculine swagger.

Even as Westerns have certainly waned in popularity, Wayne himself has remained immensely popular, in part because he set the prototype for the heroic character, regardless of genre. Wayne will always be associated with Westerns, John Wayne transcended the Western genre. Through the portrayal of rugged, masculine characters, Wayne came to epitomize the American spirit and the way Americans view themselves. In that sense, he is truly America's actor, and he continues to live on in both the reels of Hollywood's archives and the living rooms of middle America.

At the same time, the central role of John Wayne in defining a big piece of American culture is not without controversy. His later interview with Playboy magazine is a case in point. Many Americans today realize that John Wayne's America, though beloved by many, is not the America that everyone calls their own. Western movies that pay homage to Confederate soldiers and Indian-killing frontiersman and cowboys are not everyone's cup of tea.

American Legends: The Life of John Wayne looks at the iconic actor's life on and off the silver screen, from his outsized influence to Hollywood to his outspoken views on politics. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about The Duke like you never have before, in no time at all.

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