James Butler Hickok was born in Troy Grove, Illinois, in 1837. In 1855, he left his father's farm to become a stage coach drive on the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail.

Afterward, he found employment in law enforcement in Kansas. When the Civil War began, he became a Scout for the Union Army. After the war, he continued to work for the Army as a Scout. While Scouting, he is perhaps most famous for a single rifle shot: he shot and killed Whistler the Peacemaker, preventing the Sioux from attacking a group of settlers. The shot, made on a windy day and at over 750 yards, earned him an instant reputation as a crack-shot.

This reputation served him well when he went back to law enforcement. Many criminals were too afraid to face him and left town. His prowess with a weapon earned him the nickname "Wild Bill."

Hickok is also famous for the "high-noon", quick-draw shoot out which was synonymous with the West. He however was the only historical figure on record to have fought this kind of duel, earning him a permanent place in history books.

It is rumored, but not known for sure, that he appeared in Buffalo Bill's play, "Scouts of the Plains." He then began working as a Scout again for a new stage coach line, where he met another figure of the Old West, Calamity Jane.

Hickok became a hero of legend, appearing in many of the "dime novels", which were becoming popular at the time. Like many heroes of the Old West, much of his legend is fiction only, but he really was a Scout and really did leave his mark on the West at a time when our country was expanding toward California, settlers bringing the dream of America with them.