

PRESS RELEASE
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Straight Shooting About Doc Holliday

New Novel Offers a Fresh Literary Look at an American Legend

Picture a dusty mining town in a Western desert sometime past high noon. A quartet of lawmen marches down the street toward a standoff against four cattle rustling cowboys. There is the silence of strained nerves, then the sound of steel sliding past leather as the pistols come into play. And two minutes later the Gunfight at the OK Corral is over, with three men dead or dying of their wounds and five living men about to become legends.

That's the iconic Old West scene from Tombstone, Arizona that made Doc Holliday and the Earp brothers famous in our day -- and infamous in their own. "Doc Holliday may have been the original reporter-hounded celebrity," says author Victoria Wilcox. "Everywhere he went after the OK Corral shootout, the press was there hungry for an interview. The fact that he was nothing like the usual Western character likely added to his allure."

What set Holliday apart from his fellow gunslingers was his past as a Southern gentleman and his professional training in proper Philadelphia. "Before he was a Western legend," says Wilcox, "he was a Southern son with family links to the Civil War and the author of *Gone with the Wind*."

It's that same history that sets *Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday* apart from other tales that have been told about Holliday through the years. "Everything else, from books to movies to an upcoming TV miniseries focus on a year or two of his time in the West. They're like a snapshot of his life, without all the background that made him the fascinating character that he was."

Wilcox's new set of novels (his epic story overflowed from one volume into three) follows John Henry Holliday from his Georgia childhood as the son of a Confederate officer to his last days of dodging reporters in the Colorado mountains. Along the way, he goes from Southern gentleman to outlaw and from lawman to legend. The story begins in *Inheritance*, set during the turbulent times of Civil War and Reconstruction, and continues in *Gone West* and *The Last Decision*.

While the books are works of fiction, they are also closely based on real history. "I started out planning to simply dramatize his life," says Wilcox, "but soon discovered that much of the accepted truth about him was wrong. It took eighteen years of original research and working with some of the best Western historians in the country to create *Southern Son*. It's historical

fiction that is both good history and good fiction, with a compelling plot and literary elements. And there's romance, of course!" she adds with a smile. "Doc was passionate about life, which often landed him in trouble."

Wilcox's own passion for her subject comes from her work as Founding Director of Georgia's Holliday-Dorsey-Fife House Museum, the home of Doc Holliday's uncle, where she saw a different side to his story. "The family remembered Doc as being a much different man than the one of Western legend. There was even a rumored romance with a cousin who became the model for Melanie in *Gone with the Wind*. My novels include those elements, along with the best history available and the anecdotal stories that can't be proved but seem to fit with the truth we know. It's been a fascinating journey, recreating the life of a man whose own years spanned some of the most exciting events in American history. From the Old South to the Wild West and the edge of the modern era, Doc Holliday's story has it all – and it's never all been told until now."