
**FEBRUARY
2026**

THE HOWLER
At 5 Dogs
Latest News, Updates & More

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2025 - 2026 Town

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The Mayor's Anvil:
Forging Understanding
By Mayor Fordyce Beals

Sometimes the best intentions have a non-intuitive result - invention of the Gatling gun.

In a letter to a friend written in 1877, Richard Jordan Gatling explained his motivation for inventing the rapid-fire weapon that would bear his name: "It occurred to me that if I could invent a machine—a gun—which could by rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred, that it would, to a great extent, supersede the necessity of large armies, and consequently, exposure to battle and disease be greatly diminished." Only the speculation that one man could kill hundreds was true.





By 1866 the U.S. Army officially adopted Gatling's invention. Colt's Patented Firearms Manufacturing Company in Hartford, Connecticut produced all Gatling guns for the domestic U.S. market from 1866 to 1903 and continuously improved and experimented with the platform. The genius of the original Gatling concept is that all operations are carried out and synchronized through the movement of a single component: the multiple barrels, built into one rotating assembly (the 'rotor') and revolving on a common axis inside the gun casing. The firing mechanisms for each individual barrel are located on the outside of the rotor and engage fixed cam tracks on the inside of the casing. As the rotor spins, the curving cam tracks engage and move the bolt, the locking mechanism and the firing pin, and take the barrel through a complete, perfectly synchronized firing sequence for each revolution of the rotor. The Gatling gun served in Europe, Africa, Asia, and across the Americas. The United States deployed the weapon in China, Panama, Haiti, and most famously during the Spanish-American War, when three M1895 mounted on carriages provided support for Teddy Roosevelt, **the Rough Riders**, and the Buffalo Soldiers during the Battle of San Juan Hill. The Gatlings were used with remarkable success against the Spanish defenders. The Gatling Gun Detachment of General Shafter's 5th Corps in Cuba was commanded by Lt. John Henry Parker, he said, "The guns were pushed right up in the hottest place there was in the battlefield and put into action at the most critical point of the battle [the guns] so successfully subdued the Spanish fire that from that time to the capture of the practically impregnable position was only eight-and-one-half minutes. The expenditure of ammunition during this time, in which a continuous fire was kept up from three guns, was 6,000 rounds per gun." Despite their relatively long production period, only around 1,300 Gatling guns were manufactured by Colt across all models.

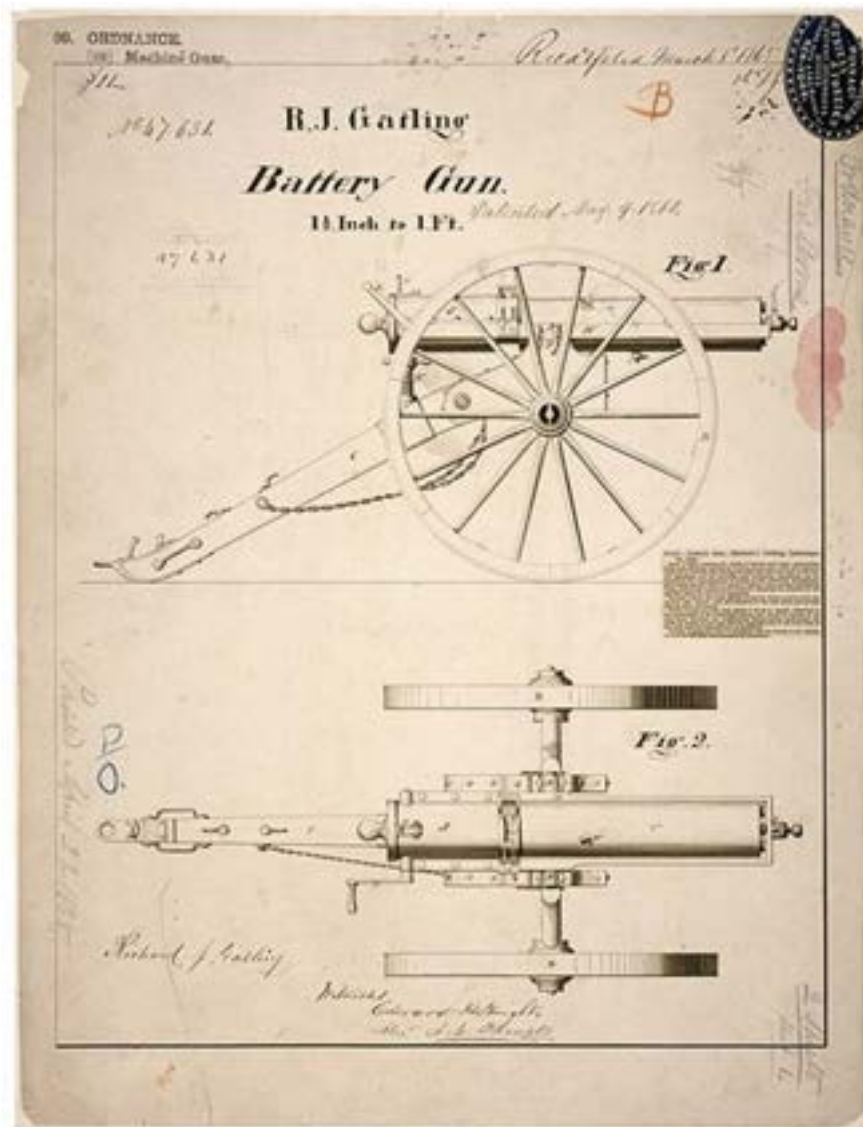
The concept saw a resurgence after WW2 with the M61 Vulcan, Dillon Aero M134D (yes, the blue reloader Dillon), and the A-10 Thunderbolt II (a.k.a. Warthog) ground attack aircraft Gau-8/A Gatling-type seven-barrel cannon. The GAU-8/A is the largest type of autocannon ever fitted to an aircraft. In 1973, your author was the stress analyst for the A-10 hydraulic system and is proud of the half century life of this weapon system.

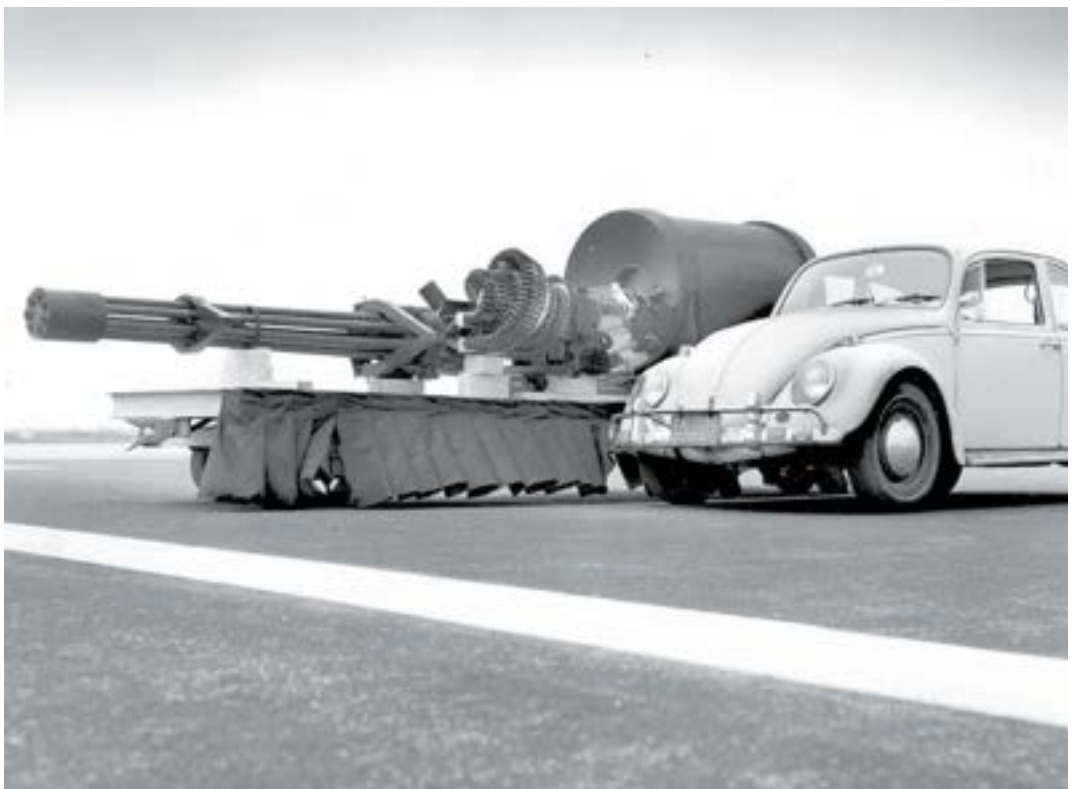


A U.S. Inspected Colt Model 1883 Gatling gun.



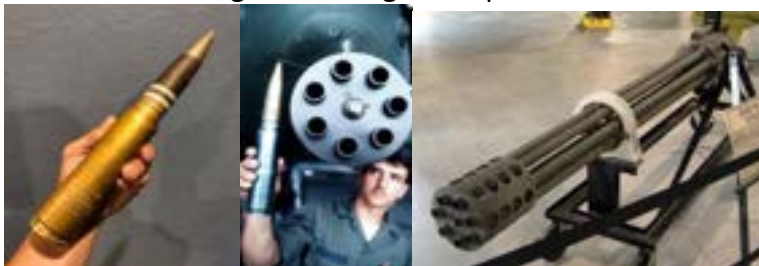
George C. Dotter/Library of Congress





Paraphrasing Mick Dundee : “Now this is a gun” The 19 feet 10-inch-long Gau-8/A Gatling-type seven-barrel cannon used in the A-10 Thunderbolt II

30 M.M 3323 feet per second rounds are a hand full. The cartridges measure 11.4 inches in length and weigh 1.53 pounds:





THE SHERIFF'S LOG

Howdy All,

Sadly, our January match was cancelled since Mother Nature decided to rain during the week and on that Saturday. There was so much rain and the ground so soggy and muddy it was not safe to shoot.

We made up for it by shooting on Saturday, January 10th and had great weather for it. We had 22 shooters and 5 clean shooters, so it was an especially good day for some!

Bull McFearson used five of his January scenarios and says he will write new ones for the February match. Looking forward to it because he writes good stages.

Speaking of the February match, don't forget the match will be on Saturday

January 31st and February 1st. Confusing, I know but keep in mind 5 Dogs Creek shoots the 1st Sunday of the month and the preceding Saturday. That's the best way to remember. **We are on "Winter Hours" for Saturday; the office opens at 9:30 and the shooters meeting is at 10:00.**

Dutch Longhorn says there will be what he calls a 'mini' Wild Bunch match after the main match. Three stages with lots of fun so bring that extra ammo and extra guns!

But the fun does not stop there, 5 Dogs Creek will be shooting on Saturday, February 7th (don't want to shoot on Valentine's Day!). We will shoot 5 stages and again "Winter Hours".

There is lots going on, and if the weather is an issue we will let everyone know we are cancelling the match by sending out an email and posting it on Facebook as soon as we decide.

Also, Snakebite advises the Kings River Regulators will be putting on their annual match in April. Check out their website for applications for the 'Fort Miller' match.

Don't forget your 5 Dogs Creek membership is due. You can renew it online at 5dogscreek.com.

See you on the range,

Lap Dog

FEBRUARY

Shooting Schedule:

1/31, SATURDAY

Office opens 9:30
Shooter's Mtg. 10:00
Match Starts: 10:15

2/1, SUNDAY

Office opens 8:00
Shooter's mtg. 8:30
Match Starts: 9:00



2026 MATCH **CALENDAR**

FEB: JAN 31-

FEB 1

MAR: FEB 28-

MAR 1

APRIL: 4-5

MAY: 2 -3

JUNE: 6-7

COME JOIN US FOR SOME CAMPING FUN!



Friday Evening (5:00-ish)

Appetizers (Hot or cold)

Saturday Evening, (6:00-ish)

Bring your favorite potluck grub to share.

Plates & utensils provided

JAN. 3/4 RAINED OUT

SATURDAY, JAN. 10TH CLEAN SHOOTERS



PANHANDLE RED, JAILER, PINEBOX FILLER, SNAKEBITE, STAMPEDE STEVE

Territorial Governor's News:

(Watch for the Professor's wise words of wisdom here again soon.)



Professor Cubby Bear
(cubbybear29521@aol.com)



Range Wranglers' Notes:

(Brandin Iron's News here soon.)





Mayor Fordyce's Range Notes:

Sass Pocket Range Officers Card

Print and cut out for range use

<https://sassnet.com/uploads/downloads/Shooters%20Handbooks%20-%20GAS/CAS%202025%20SHB%20-%2020Vers%2027.9%20-%20May%202025%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

SASS® Range Operations Basic Safety Course	Pocket RO Card — Current as of January 2024 "MSV" Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty "SOQ" = Stage Disqualification; "MDQ" = Match Disqualification		M S V	S D Q	M D Q
Empty or live round in magazine, action, or on the carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded, or an empty in the chamber of a long gun- after the next firearm is fired, or if last firearm, put down on the unloading table.			X		
Empty long guns that slip and fall but don't break 170 or sweep anyone			X		
Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45 degrees downrange			X		
Leaving the stage anytime between when the first and last shots have been fired on the stage				X	
Leaving the firing line after stage has begun before all firearms have been verified as clear				X	
Loading at other than designated location				X	
Holstering or staging revolver with hammer cocked (not fully down) or down (on a live round)				X	
Any dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line				X	
Discharge impacting 5-10 feet from shooter, while on the firing line				X	
Cocked revolver leaving shooter's hand				X	
Changing location or leaving the designated loading area with a live round chambered in a long gun with the action closed				X	
Unsafe gun handling (fanning, etc.)				X	
Use of illegal or illegally-modified firearm				X	
Dry firing at the loading or unloading table(s)				X	
Violation of 170 rule (without sweeping anyone)				X	
Sweeping anyone with unloaded firearm				X	
Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleaned firearms after completing a stage within the same day (assessed on the previously completed stage)				X	
De-cocking to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location				X	
Not adhering to loading or unloading procedures				X	

SASS® Range Operations Basic Safety Course	Pocket RO Card — Current as of January 2024 "MSV" Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty "SOQ" = Stage Disqualification; "MDQ" = Match Disqualification		M S V	S D Q	M D Q
Shooting on the move (shooting multiple shots during continuous movement)				X	
Leaving the designated loading area with a RIFLE having a live round under a cocked hammer/hammer down on a live round				X	
Staging or discarding a long gun containing a live round in the chamber (once it leaves the shooter's hands)				X	
Use or presence of outlawed/illegal items				X	
Dropped gun (loaded)					X
Discharge impacting within 5 feet from shooter, while on the firing line or any discharge away from the firing line. Any discharge in the loading or unloading areas.					X
Sweeping anyone with loaded firearm					X
Willful failure to comply with a "cease fire" or "Stop" command given by, and while under the positive control of, the CRO/TO					X
Any two (2) stage DQ penalties or 2 F.T.E./S.O.G.s during the course of a match					X
Belligerent attitude/unsportsmanlike conduct					X
Shooting under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications					X
Leaving the firing line with a malfunctioning firearm unless under direct supervision of a match official					X
Shooting out of category, e.g., Not wearing the correct items in Classic Cowboy or not making enough smoke in B/P Categories 1st violation is a procedure, 2nd violation is SOQ, 3rd violation is MDQ			P	2	3
Procedural: Unintentional errors caused by confusion or mistakes. 10 seconds; no more than one procedural penalty may be assessed per stage.					
Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game: Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage, not meeting the Ammunition Power Factor or willfully disregarding a non-shooting procedure. 30 seconds.					
Reshoots are granted for failure of props/match equipment; Range Officer impeding shooter progress; or timer failure.					
Reshoots for failure of shooter equipment or firearms may be granted at the discretion of the Match Director (except at annual or state/regional champion—ships and above). Only safety penalties carry over. Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a "clean" start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O. are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.					

Mayor Fordyce's Range Notes (cont.)

Link to Shooters Handbook

<https://sassnet.com/uploads/downloads/Shooters%20Handbooks%20-%20CAS/CAS%202025%20SHB%20-%20%20Vers%2027.9%20-%20May%202025%20%20-%20FINAL.pdf>



WANDERIN' AROUND with Utah Blaine

The Story of Myra Maybelle Shirley Reed Starr, Known as: Belle Starr - An American Outlaw

Belle Starr was born Myra Maybelle Shirley on her father's farm near Carthage, Missouri, on February 5, 1848, though she was called May by her family. Her father, John Shirley, was considered the “black sheep” of his well to do Virginia family which had moved to Indiana. However her father prospered raising wheat, corn, hogs and horses. though he was considered to be the "black sheep" of a well-to-do Virginia family which had moved west to Indiana, where he married and divorced twice (Wikipedia Page 3:no date). Elizabeth "Eliza" Hatfield Shirley, who was John's third wife and a distant relative to the Hatfields (Wikipedia, page 3:no date) In the 1860s, Belle's father sold the farm and moved the family to Carthage. He bought a livery stable and blacksmith shop on the town square in Carthage (Wikipedia page 3:no date)..

It is particularly interesting that Belle actually received a classical education and learned piano, and graduated from Missouri's Carthage Female Academy, a private institution that her father had helped to found. But while Belle was in school, she was apparently irregular in attendance and her teacher regarded her as rather wild in nature (Wikipedia page 3:no date).

Belle's elder brother was killed in the Civil War, and who early in the War is reported to have become a bushwhacker. He may have been a member of the guerrilla raiders led by William C. Quantrill. Also following the burning of Carthage in 1863, the family, including of course Belle, moved to a farm located in Scyene, which is near Dallas, Texas (Britannica, page 3:no date). And at the conclusion of the Civil War those left Quantrill's gang turned to outlawry. Quantrill's gang was as notorious as gangs led by the Younger brothers and also by Jesse and Frank James. They occasionally sought refuge at the Shirley farm in Texas. Belle's first child, Pearl, was probably fathered by Thomas C. ("Cole") Younger. (Britannica page 3:no date).

In 1880, Belle married Cole Younger's cousin, Bruce Younger, a petty outlaw who supposedly rode with some famous gangs. Their marriage lasted three weeks. Bruce Younger disappeared into history, but a newspaper account years later identified a mummified body found in a cave inn New Mexico as his (Wikipedia page 5:no date).

In 1866, while living in Texas, 20 year old Belle, according to Collin County marriage records, James C. Reed and Myra M. Shirley (Belle Starr) were married there on November 1, 1866. (Wikipedia page 3:no date). Two years later, she gave birth to their first child, Rosie Lee, who was nicknamed Pearl. Jim Reed was a Missouri outlaw. They were for a time in California, which is where their son, named Edward, was born. In California the Reed's tried farming, unsuccessfully, so they returned to Texas. Belle (Starr) Reed dressed as a "bandit queen" (Wikipedia page 3: no date).

Belle, obviously, always had a strong sense of style. A crack shot, she used to ride sidesaddles, while dressed in a black velvet and an ostrich feather-plumed hat, carrying two pistols, with cartridge belts across her hips. Reed turned to crime and was wanted for murder in Arkansas, which caused the family to move to California, where their second child, James Edwin (Eddie), was born in 1871 (Wikipedia page 3: no date).



Jim Reed was killed a short time after a sensational holdup of the Austin–San Antonio stage in 1874. Belle (Starr)Shirley was named an accessory but not a participant for that crime. Subsequently she operated a livery stable in Dallas for a period of time, and she continued to have a variety of unsavory associations, both on the personal and on the professional level (Britannica Page 1: No Date).

Later she moved to the Oklahoma Territory. In 1880 she married Sam Starr, a Cherokee Indian, who was also a longtime friend of the Youngers and James's. Belle and Sam settled on a ranch on the Canadian River, which is near present-day Eufaula. Not surprisingly it became a hideout for outlaws of every kind (Wikipedia.) In fact, Jesse James holed up there for several months (Wikipedia page 5:no date).

Eventually Belle Starr developed the reputation, a reputation not necessarily deserved, of criminal mastermind. Allegedly her gang preyed on travelers, ranchers, and cowboys across the region (Wikipedia page 5:no date). In 1883 she and her husband were indicted for horse stealing, and in March they were convicted by Judge Isaac C. Parker, the "hanging judge" of Fort Smith, Arkansas ((Britannica page 1:no date).

They served nine months in the federal penitentiary in Detroit, Michigan. Belle was indicted three more times in the next few years—once on a charge that, disguised as a man, she took part in a post office robbery—but she was never again convicted. Sam was killed in a gunfight in 1887.

In 1884, Belle had a short romance with Blue Duck. Two years later Blue Duck was convicted of murder and sentenced to hang, but his sentence was commuted to life in prison. However, after a year he was released due to poor health and went home to die.



Blue Duck and Belle Starr, May 24, 1886.

Belle's fourth and her last husband was Jim July. Three years later Jim July died in a Fort Smith hospital after being shot by U.S. deputy marshals (National Park Service page 1:no date).

As an addendum two other Belle's ex-lovers met violent ends. Jack Spaniard was hanged in Fort Smith in August 1889 for killing a deputy marshal and Jim French was killed while robbing a store in 1895. That's a total of at least eight men who met a violent death after interludes with Belle Starr (National Park Service page 1:no date).

Belle Starr died, was actually murdered, on February 3, 1889. She was 40 years old, two days shy of 41. There are at least three versions of how she met her death but to this day her murder remains unsolved (Wikipedia page 6:no date). Her gravestone, erected by her daughter at Younger's Bend, has a carved bell and star (Britannica page 2:no date).

(Not surprisingly, Belle Starr has not been forgotten by the contemporary media! The following information comes from Wikipedia, pages 8-10: no date.)

Film and television series

- She was portrayed by Betty Compson in a 1928 silent film *Court Martial*.
- In a 1938 Hopalong Cassidy movie *Heart of Arizona* she was portrayed by Natalie Moorhead.

- Sally Payne appeared as Belle Starr in the Roy Rogers western *Robin Hood of the Pecos* (1941).
- Gene Tierney played the title role in the big-budget film *Belle Starr* (1941). It made no pretense to accuracy but it was a success, and it increased Hollywood's interest in the character. In three equally fictionalized treatments, Isabel Jewell played Starr in *Badman's Territory* (1946) and *Belle Starr's Daughter* (1948), and **Jane Russell** played the role in *Montana Belle* (1952).
- In 1954, former Miss Utah Marie Windsor played Starr in the premiere episode of Jim Davis's television series *Stories of the Century*.
- In 1957, Jeanne Cooper, later a soap opera star, played Belle Starr in an episode of Dale Robertson's *Tales of Wells Fargo*. In this episode, Starr calls herself Mrs. Reed. There is mention of "Hanging Judge" Isaac C. Parker, and the episode makes mention of his sentencing Starr to a comparatively short prison term in a correctional facility at Detroit. In 1960, Cooper again played Belle Starr in an episode of the TV series *Bronco* titled "Shadow of Jesse James".
- In 1959, Jean Willes portrayed Starr in the *Maverick* episode "Full House" opposite James Garner.
- In 1960, Lynn Bari played Belle in the premiere episode, titled "Perilous Passage", of the short-lived NBC western *Overland Trail*.
- In 1961, Carole Mathews appeared as Belle in "A Bullet for the D.A.", an episode of *Death Valley Days*, hosted by Stanley Andrews.
- In 1965, Sally Starr, a television host from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, played the character for laughs in The Three Stooges' feature film *The Outlaws Is Coming*.
- In 1968, Elsa Martinelli starred as Belle Starr in *The Belle Starr Story*, a western directed by Lina Wertmüller.
- In 1975, Brooke Tucker appeared as Belle Starr alongside **Marty Ingels** as Billy the Kid in "They Went Thataway", the ninth episode of *The Ghost Busters*.
- In 1977, Florence Henderson appeared as Belle Starr in *Storybook Squares*, a version of *Hollywood Squares* for children.
- Elizabeth Montgomery portrayed Belle in the 1980 television movie *Belle Starr*, made by Hanna-Barbera.

- Pamela Reed portrayed Belle Starr in the 1980 Hollywood film *The Long Riders*.
- In 1995, Belle Starr was portrayed by Melissa Clayton in season 3 of *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, in an episode titled "Baby Outlaws", as a 14-year-old outlaw who falls under the care of the good doctor and her family. This episode takes place in 1870, when Belle actually would have been 22.
- In 2007, independent filmmaker Ron Maxwell optioned the film rights to novelist Speer Morgan's 1979 book *Belle Starr*. In the December 2008 issue of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, Maxwell is mentioned as being the director of a forthcoming film titled *Belle Starr*.
- The 2010 film *Bass Reeves* is a fictionalized version of lawman Bass Reeves's life, and it features a depiction of Belle Starr.
- In the 2013 series *Quick Draw!*, a fictionalized account of Belle Starr portrays her as the deceased spouse of the protagonist Sheriff John Henry Hoyle. She is referred as wife of Cole Younger and Sam Starr. Arden Myrin appears in two episodes as Belle Starr, and Alexia Dox appears as Pearl Starr as a series regular.
- An early 2015 episode of *The Pinkertons* features Sheila Campbell as Belle Carson at the beginning of Belle's exploits as an outlaw (highly fictionalized, with the name Belle Starr as her fantasy persona and an affair with Jesse James in Kansas City).
- Amber Sweet plays Belle Starr in the 2019 film *Hell on the Border*, written and directed by Wes Miller.

Literature and music

- Woody Guthrie wrote a song titled "Belle Starr."¹
- Margot Douaihy wrote a “docupoetry” book called "Bandit/Queen: The Runaway Story of Belle Starr" (2022), imagining the inner life of the outlaw, casting Belle Starr as trailblazing feminist and intersectional figure, a "runaway".^[28]
- Emmylou Harris and Mark Knopfler's 2006 collaboration *All the Roadrunning* features a track titled "Belle Starr," written by Harris.^[29]
- Sissy Spacek wrote the song "Some Small Crime" about Starr and sang it with Levon Helm on *The Midnight Special* in 1980.^[30]

- The 'ghost of Belle Starr' is mentioned in "[Tombstone Blues](#)" on [Bob Dylan](#)'s album *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965). Belle Starr is mentioned by Dylan in the lyrics of "Seeing The Real You at Last" on the album *Empire Burlesque* (1985).
- *Belle Starr* (1979) was the first novel of American author and editor [Speer Morgan](#).
- *The Legend of Belle Starr* (1979) was a historical novel by Stoney Hardcastle.
- The unsolved murder of Belle Starr is the basis for the [Douglas C. Jones](#) novel *The Search for Temperance Moon* (1991). A character based on [Pearl Starr](#), Belle's daughter, is featured as a bordello owner in Fort Smith, Arkansas.
- Pulp western author [J.T. Edson](#) featured Belle Starr in several of his *Floating Outfit* series of novels as the love interest of Mark Counter, one of the three lead protagonists in the series. Edson's novel *Guns in the Night* features Belle Starr's murder when pregnant with Mark Counter's child after which the Floating Outfit team to catch her murderer.
- One of the more distinctive adaptations of the legend of Belle Starr was made by the Japanese manga artist [Akihiro Ito](#), who in 1993 created a manga known as *Belle Starr Bandits*, loosely based on historical figures, facts and events. She had an appearance in the manga [Gun Blaze West](#) from [Nobuhiro Watsuki](#), as one of J.J.'s ([Jesse James](#)) gang members. [ISBN 3-89885-759-X](#)
- Belle Starr appeared as a caricature in the 1995 *Belle Starr* album of the [Lucky Luke](#) comics series, illustrated by [Morris](#) and written by Xavier Fauche.
- The 2009 historical novel *The Branch and the Scaffold* by Loren D. Estleman deals in part with Belle Starr's life in the Indian Nations as her path crossed that of Judge [Isaac C. Parker](#).
- Peter Mattheissen's historical fiction (*The Killing of Mr. Watson Trilogy* and now *Shadow Country*) includes the story of E.J. Watson's murdering Belle Starr.
- American country singer Michael Martin Murphey sings about Belle Starr's life in a song titled "Belle Star" on his album *Cowboy Songs III: Rhymes of the Renegades*.
- The band Rival Sons recorded the song "Belle Starr" as the eighth song on their 2014 album, *Great Western Valkyrie*.
- A comic-book adaption of her fictionalized legend by Dick Wood appears as "Belle Starr" in *Crime Does Not Pay* #25.

Video games

- The brawler Belle in the game **Brawl Stars** was based on her. The in-game mastery title for that brawler is her surname (Starr).
- The character Black Belle in the game **Red Dead Redemption 2** was based on Belle Starr.

References

1. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. "Belle Starr." No date.
2. Britanica Editors. Britanica. "Belle Starr: American Outlaw." No date.
3. National Park Service. Fort Smith - National Historic Site AR, OK. "Belle Starr: A Black Widow." No date.

