



# *The* WILD WEST

*People and Events That Shaped the American West*

## *Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch Gang*

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**Butch Cassidy** was born Robert LeRoy Parker on April 13, 1866. He was a train and bank robber, and he led a gang of outlaws called the Wild Bunch Gang.

The Wild West was truly a wild place. With vast ranch lands and the expansion of the railroads, there were many unpoliced miles of road and prairie. Robbers, thieves, and all kinds of outlaws took full advantage of the vast expanse.

Butch left home as a young teenager and found work on a dairy farm. There, he met Mike Cassidy, a horse thief and cattle rustler who became his mentor. During this time, he acquired the nickname "Butch," to which he added the last name "Cassidy" in honor of his mentor.

According to lore, in 1896, Butch helped organize the Wild Bunch Gang, made up of smaller groups of outlaws. These gangs robbed banks and trains and stole livestock and horses. In 1899, Butch paired with outlaw Harry Longbaugh, better known as the Sundance Kid. Along with Harry's girlfriend, Etta Place, the two escaped to New York City, then to South America.

### *Fun Fact:*

*Though it was widely believed that Butch and Harry died in a shootout in 1908, Butch's sister Lula Parker Betenson, claims to have visited with him as late as 1925. The date of his death remains a mystery.*

**Why do you think Butch turned to a life of crime? What choice would you have made?**