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Clay Allison

FAMOUS IN ELIZABETH TOWN



Robert Andrew "Clay" Allison was once asked what he did for a living and he replied "I am a shootist." It is simply not possible to verify the multiple accounts of his numerous outrageous activities with "news" being what it was at the time and a century intervening. Though many of the tales were highly exaggerated, if even half of them were true, people were right to be afraid of him.

Born with a clubfoot, Robert Clay Allison, known as "Clay", was born September 2, 1840, the fourth of nine children of John and Nancy (Lemmond) Allison. His father, a Presbyterian minister, also worked in the cattle and sheep business, and died when Clay was only five. Clay was said to have been restless from birth and as he grew into manhood, he became feared for his wild mood swings and easy anger.

Clay worked on the family farm near Waynesboro, Tennessee until the age of 21 when the Civil War broke out and he immediately signed up to fight for the Confederacy, enlisting in the Tennessee Light Artillery division on October 15, 1861.



Learn more about Clay Allison, Charles Kennedy and many others by visiting our Museums in Eagle Nest and coming soon to E-Town Tours in Elizabethtown.