



# American Legends: The Life of Orson Welles

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures.

\*Includes Welles' quotes about his life and career.

\*Includes a bibliography for further reading.

“I have always been more interested in experiment, than in accomplishment.” – Orson Welles

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

When it comes to Hollywood and the entertainment industry, perhaps nobody catapulted to fame as quickly or as strangely as Orson Welles, but it would also be safe to say that few produced such critically acclaimed work either. Though he had worked on stage productions from an early age and seamlessly transitioned into radio, few were familiar with his work until a legendary 1938 radio broadcast of H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, during which some people who heard Welles narrating the work truly believed that an alien invasion was underway. As Welles famously apologized at the end of the broadcast, “This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen, out of character, to assure you that *The War of the Worlds* has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be; The Mercury Theatre's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying ‘Boo!’”

Although the alleged widespread hysteria caused by that broadcast is mostly overstated, the notorious broadcast made Welles a household name, and he only followed it up with one of the greatest movies ever made: *Citizen Kane*. As the co-writer, producer, director, and main star of the film, a biting social critique of newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst, Welles' first movie would end up being his most famous and critically acclaimed. Of course, it also ensured that he would continue to work across every entertainment medium for the next 4 decades, juggling radio, the stage, movies, and television throughout the rest of his illustrious career.

*American Legends: The Life of Orson Welles* examines the life and career of one of America's greatest and most versatile entertainers. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Welles like never before, in no time at all.

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