

= Wyatt Earp =

Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp (March 19 , 1848 ? January 13 , 1929) was an American Old West gambler , a deputy sheriff in Pima County , and deputy town marshal in Tombstone , Arizona Territory , who took part in the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral , during which lawmen killed three outlaw Cowboys . He is often regarded as the central figure in the shootout in Tombstone , although his brother Virgil was Tombstone city marshal and Deputy U.S. Marshal that day , and had far more experience as a sheriff , constable , marshal , and soldier in combat .

Earp lived a restless life . He was at different times a constable , city policeman , county sheriff , Deputy U.S. Marshal , teamster , buffalo hunter , bouncer , saloon @-@ keeper , gambler , Brothel keeper , miner , and boxing referee . Earp spent his early life in Iowa . In 1870 , Earp married his first wife , Urilla Sutherland Earp , who contracted typhoid fever and died shortly before their first child was to be born . Within the next two years Earp was arrested , sued twice , escaped from jail , then was arrested three more times for " keeping and being found in a house of ill @-@ fame " . He landed in the cattle boomtown of Wichita , Kansas , where he became a deputy city marshal for one year and developed a solid reputation as a lawman . In 1876 , he followed his brother James to Dodge City , Kansas , where he became an assistant city marshal . In winter 1878 , he went to Texas to track down an outlaw and met John " Doc " Holliday , whom Earp later credited with saving his life .

Earp moved constantly throughout his life from one boomtown to another . He left Dodge City in 1879 and moved to Tombstone with his brothers James and Virgil , where a silver boom was underway . There , the Earps clashed with a loose federation of outlaws known as the Cowboys . Wyatt , Virgil , and their younger brother Morgan held various law enforcement positions that put them in conflict with Tom and Frank McLaury , and Ike and Billy Clanton , who threatened on several occasions to kill the Earps . The conflict escalated over the next year , culminating on October 26 , 1881 in the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral , in which the Earps and Holliday killed three of the Cowboys . In the next five months , Virgil was ambushed and maimed , and Morgan was assassinated . Pursuing a vendetta , Wyatt , his brother Warren , Holliday , and others formed a federal posse that killed three of the Cowboys whom they thought responsible . Wyatt was never wounded in any of the gunfights , unlike his brothers Virgil and James or Doc Holliday , which only added to his mystique after his death .

Earp was a lifelong gambler and was always looking for a quick way to make money . After leaving Tombstone , Earp went to San Francisco where he reunited with Josephine Earp . She became his common @-@ law wife . They joined a gold rush to Eagle City , Idaho , where they owned mining interests and a saloon . They left there to race horses and open a saloon during a real estate boom in San Diego , California . Back in San Francisco , Wyatt raced horses again , but his reputation suffered irreparably when he refereed the Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey boxing match and called a foul that led many to believe that he fixed the fight . They moved briefly to Yuma , Arizona before they joined the Alaskan Gold Rush to Nome , Alaska . They opened the biggest saloon in town and made a large sum of money . Returning to the lower 48 , they opened another saloon in Tonopah , Nevada , the site of a new gold find . In about 1911 , Earp began working several mining claims in Vidal , California , retiring in the hot summers with Josephine to Los Angeles .

When Earp died in 1929 , he was well known for his notorious handling of the Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey fight along with the O.K. Corral gun fight . An extremely flattering , largely fictionalized biography was published in 1931 after his death , becoming a bestseller and creating his reputation as a fearless lawman . Since then , Wyatt Earp has been the subject of and model for numerous films , TV shows , biographies , and works of fiction that have increased his mystique . Earp 's modern @-@ day reputation is that of the Old West 's " toughest and deadliest gunman of his day . " Until the book was published , Earp had a dubious reputation as a sometime Western lawman and gunfighter who had been arrested nine times and left more than one town with warrants for his arrest still outstanding . In modern times , Wyatt Earp has become synonymous with the stereotypical image of the Western lawman , and is a symbol of American frontier justice .

= = Early life = =

Wyatt was born on March 19 , 1848 , to Nicholas Porter Earp and his second wife , Virginia Ann Cooksey . He was named after his father 's commanding officer in the Mexican ? American War , Captain Wyatt Berry Stapp , of the 2nd Company Illinois Mounted Volunteers . Some evidence supports Wyatt Earp 's birthplace as 406 South 3rd Street in Monmouth , Illinois , though the street address is disputed by Monmouth College professor and historian William Urban . Monmouth is in Warren County in western Illinois . Wyatt had an elder half @-@ brother from his father 's first marriage , Newton , and a half @-@ sister Mariah Ann , who died at the age of ten months .

In March 1849 or in early 1850 , Nicholas Earp joined about one hundred other people in a plan to relocate to San Bernardino County , California , where he intended to buy farm land . Only 150 miles (240 km) west of Monmouth , their daughter Martha became ill . The family stopped and Nicholas bought a new 160 acres (0 @. @ 65 km²) farm 7 miles (11 km) northeast of Pella , Iowa . Martha died there on May 26 , 1856 .

Nicholas and Virginia Earp 's last child Adelia was born in June 1861 in Pella . Newton , James , and Virgil joined the Union Army on November 11 , 1861 . Their father was busy recruiting and drilling local companies , and Wyatt and his two younger brothers Morgan and Warren were left in charge of tending 80 @-@ acre (32 ha) of corn . Wyatt was only thirteen years old , too young to enlist , but he tried on several occasions to run away and join the army . Each time , his father found him and brought him home . James was severely wounded in Fredericktown , Missouri , and returned home in summer 1863 . Newton and Virgil fought several battles in the east and later followed the family to California .

= = = California = = =

On May 12 , 1864 , Nicholas Earp organized a wagon train and headed to San Bernardino , California , arriving on December 17 , 1864 . By late summer 1865 , Virgil found work as a driver for Phineas Banning 's Stage Coach Line in California 's Imperial Valley , and 16 @-@ year @-@ old Wyatt assisted . In spring 1866 , Wyatt became a teamster , transporting cargo for Chris Taylor . From 1866 ? 1868 , he drove cargo over the 720 miles (1 @, @ 160 km) wagon road from Wilmington , through San Bernardino then Las Vegas , Nevada , to Salt Lake City , Utah Territory .

In spring 1868 , Earp was hired to transport supplies needed to build the Union Pacific Railroad . He learned gambling and boxing while working on the rail head in the Wyoming Territory . Earp developed a reputation officiating boxing matches and refereed a fight in front of 3000 spectators between John Shanssey and Mike Donovan on July 4 , 1869 in Cheyenne , Wyoming .

= = = Lawman and marriage = = =

In spring 1868 , the Earps moved east again to Lamar , Missouri , where Wyatt 's father Nicholas became the local constable . Wyatt rejoined the family the next year . Nicholas resigned as constable on November 17 , 1869 to become the justice of the peace , and Wyatt was appointed constable in his place .

In late 1869 , Earp courted 20 @-@ year @-@ old Urilla Sutherland (c . 1849 ? 1870) , the daughter of William and Permelia Sutherland , who operated the Exchange Hotel in Lamar . They were married by his father Nicholas in Lamar on January 10 , 1870 , and in August 1870 Wyatt bought a lot on the outskirts of town for \$ 50 where he built a house . Urilla was pregnant and about to deliver their first child when she suddenly died from typhoid fever . In November , Earp sold the lot and a house on it for \$ 75 . Hoping to keep the office that he 'd been appointed to , he ran against his elder half @-@ brother Newton for the office of constable . The Earps may have hoped to keep the job in the family one way or another . Wyatt won by 137 votes to Newton 's 108 , but their father Nicholas lost the election for justice of the peace in a very close four @-@ way race .

= = = Lawsuits and charges = = =

After Urilla 's death , Wyatt went through a downward spiral and had a series of legal problems . On March 14 , 1871 , Barton County filed a lawsuit against Earp and his sureties . Earp was in charge of collecting license fees for Lamar , which funded local schools , and he was accused of failing to turn in the fees . On March 31 , James Cromwell filed a lawsuit against Earp , alleging that Earp had falsified court documents about the amount of money collected from Cromwell to satisfy a judgment . To make up the difference between what Earp turned in and Cromwell owed (which he claimed to have paid) , the court seized Cromwell 's mowing machine and sold it for \$ 38 . Cromwell 's suit claimed that Earp owed him \$ 75 , the estimated value of the machine .

On March 28 , 1871 Earp , Edward Kennedy , and John Shown were charged with stealing two horses , " each of the value of one hundred dollars " , from William Keys while in the Indian Country . On April 6 , Deputy United States Marshal J. G. Owens arrested Earp for the horse theft . Commissioner James Churchill arraigned Earp on April 14 , and set bail at \$ 500 . On May 15 , an indictment was issued against Earp , Kennedy , and Shown . Anna Shown , John Shown 's wife , claimed that Earp and Kennedy got her husband drunk and then threatened his life to persuade him to help . On June 5 Edward Kennedy was acquitted while the case against Earp and John Shown remained . Earp did not wait for the trial . He climbed out through the roof of his jail and headed for Peoria , Illinois .

= = = Arrests in Peoria = = =

Years afterward , Wyatt 's biographer Stuart N. Lake wrote that Wyatt was hunting buffalo during the winter of 1871 ? 72 . But Earp was arrested three times in the Peoria , Illinois area during that period . Earp is also listed in the Peoria city directory during 1872 as a resident in the house of Jane Haspel , who operated a brothel . In February 1872 , Peoria police raided the brothel , arresting four women and three men : Wyatt and Morgan Earp , and George Randall . They were charged with " Keeping and being found in a house of ill @-@ fame . " They were later fined twenty dollars plus costs for the criminal infraction . Wyatt Earp was arrested for the same crime on May 11 and again on September 10 , 1872 . The Peoria Daily National Democrat reported in September that Wyatt had been arrested aboard a floating brothel he owned named the Beardstown Gunboat with a woman named Sally Heckell , who called herself Wyatt Earp 's wife .

Some of the women are said to be good looking , but all appear to be terribly depraved . John Walton , the skipper of the boat and Wyatt Earp , the Peoria Bummer , were each fined \$ 43 @.@ 15 . Sarah Earp , alias Sally Heckell , calls herself the wife of Wyatt Earp .

By calling Earp the " Peoria bummer " , the newspaper was including him in a class of " contemptible loafers who impose on hard @-@ working citizens , " a " beggar , " and worse than tramps . They were men of poor character who were chronic lawbreakers .

= = = Wichita , Kansas = = =

Wyatt moved to the growing cow town of Wichita in early 1874 , and local arrest records show that a prostitute named Sally Earp operated a brothel with the wife of his brother James from early 1874 to the middle of 1876 . Wyatt may have been a pimp , but historian Robert Gary L. Roberts believes it more likely that he was an enforcer , or a bouncer for the brothel . It is possible that he hunted buffalo during 1873 ? 74 before he went to Wichita . When the Kansas state census was completed in June 1875 , Sally was no longer living with Wyatt , James , and Bessie .

Wichita was a railroad terminal and a destination for cattle drives from Texas . Like other frontier railroad terminals , when the cowboys accompanying the cattle drives arrived , the town was filled with drunken , armed cowboys celebrating the end of their long journey . Lawmen were kept busy . When the cattle drives ended and the cowboys left , Earp searched for something else to do . A newspaper story in October 1874 reported that he earned some money helping an off @-@ duty police officer find thieves who had stolen a man 's wagon . Earp officially joined the Wichita marshal 's office on April 21 , 1875 , after the election of Mike Meagher as city marshal (or police chief) ,

making \$ 100 per month . He also dealt faro at the Long Branch Saloon . In late 1875 , the Wichita Beacon newspaper published this story :

On last Wednesday (December 8) , policeman Earp found a stranger lying near the bridge in a drunken stupor . He took him to the ' cooler ' and on searching him found in the neighborhood of \$ 500 on his person . He was taken next morning , before his honor , the police judge , paid his fine for his fun like a little man and went on his way rejoicing . He may congratulate himself that his lines , while he was drunk , were cast in such a pleasant place as Wichita as there are but a few other places where that \$ 500 bank roll would have been heard from . The integrity of our police force has never been seriously questioned .

Earp was embarrassed on January 9 , 1876 when he was sitting with friends in the back room of the Custom House Saloon when his loaded single @-@ action revolver fell out of his holster . It discharged when the hammer hit the floor . " The ball passed through his coat , struck the north wall then glanced off and passed out through the ceiling . " Wyatt was so red @-@ faced by the incident that years later he persuaded biographer Stuart Lake to omit it from his book Wyatt Earp , Frontier Marshal .

Wyatt 's stint as Wichita deputy came to a sudden end on April 2 , 1876 , when Earp took too active an interest in the city marshal 's election . According to news accounts , former marshal Bill Smith accused Wyatt of using his office to help hire his brothers as lawmen . Wyatt got into a fistfight with Smith and beat him . Meagher was forced to fire Earp and arrest him for disturbing the peace , which ended a tour of duty that the papers called otherwise " unexceptionable " . Meagher won the election , but the city council was split evenly on re @-@ hiring Earp . His brother James opened a brothel in Dodge City , and Wyatt left Wichita to join him .

= = = Dodge City , Kansas = = =

After 1875 , Dodge City became a major terminal for cattle drives from Texas along the Chisholm Trail . Earp was appointed assistant marshal in Dodge City under Marshal Lawrence " Larry " Deger around May 1876 . There is evidence that Earp spent the winter of 1876 ? 77 in another boomtown , Deadwood , Dakota Territory . He was not on the police force in Dodge City in late 1877 , but rejoined the force in spring 1877 at the request of mayor James H. " Dog " Kelley . The Dodge City newspaper reported in July 1878 that Earp had been fined \$ 1 for slapping a muscular prostitute named Frankie Bell , who (according to the papers) " heaped epithets upon the unoffending head of Mr. Earp to such an extent as to provide a slap from the ex @-@ officer " . Bell spent the night in jail and was fined \$ 20 , while Earp 's fine was the legal minimum .

In October 1877 , outlaw Dave Rudabaugh robbed a Sante Fe Railroad construction camp and fled south . Earp was given a temporary commission as Deputy U.S. Marshal and he left Dodge City , following Rudabaugh over 400 miles (640 km) through Ft . Clark , Texas , where the newspaper reported his presence on January 22 , 1878 , and on to Fort Griffin , Texas .

He arrived at the frontier town on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River . Earp went to the Bee Hive Saloon , the largest in town and owned by John Shanssey , who Earp had known since he was 21 . Shanssey told Earp that Rudabaugh had passed through town earlier in the week , but he did not know where he was headed . Shanssey suggested that Earp ask gambler " Doc " Holliday , who had played cards with Rudabaugh . Holliday told Earp that Rudabaugh had headed back into Kansas .

By May 11 , 1878 , the Dodge newspapers reported that Wyatt had returned to Dodge City and on May 14 the Times noted that Wyatt had been appointed Assistant Marshal for the salary of \$ 75 per month , serving under Charlie Bassett . Doc Holliday with his common @-@ law wife Big Nose Kate also showed up in Dodge City during the summer of 1878 . During the summer , Ed Morrison and other Texas cowboys rode into Dodge and shot up the town , galloping down Front Street . They entered the Long Branch Saloon , vandalized the room , and harassed the customers . Hearing the commotion , Wyatt burst through the front door into a bunch of guns pointing at him . Holliday was playing cards in the back and put his pistol at Morrison 's head , forcing him and his men to disarm . Earp credited Holliday with saving his life that day , and he and Earp became friends .

While in Dodge City , he became acquainted with James and Bat Masterson , Luke Short , and

prostitute Celia Anne " Mattie " Blaylock . Blaylock became Earp 's common @-@ law wife until 1881 . Earp resigned from the Dodge City police force on September 9 , 1879 , and she accompanied him to Las Vegas in New Mexico Territory , and then to Tombstone in Arizona Territory .

= = = George Hoyt shooting = = =

At about 3 : 00 in the morning of July 26 , 1878 , George Hoyt (spelled in some accounts as " Hoy ") and other drunken cowboys shot their guns wildly , including three shots into Dodge City 's Comique Theater , causing comedian Eddie Foy to throw himself to the stage floor in the middle of his act . Fortunately , no one was injured . Assistant Marshal Earp and policeman Bat Masterson responded and " together with several citizens , turned their pistols loose in the direction of the fleeing horsemen " . As the riders crossed the Arkansas river bridge south of town , George Hoyt fell from his horse after he was wounded in the arm or leg . Earp told Stuart Lake that he saw Hoyt through his gun sights against the morning horizon and fired the fatal shot , killing him that day , but the Dodge City Times reported that Hoyt developed gangrene and died on August 21 after his leg was amputated .

= = Move to Tombstone , Arizona = =

In 1879 , Wyatt received a letter from his older brother Virgil , who was the town constable in Prescott , Arizona Territory . Virgil wrote Wyatt about the opportunities in the silver @-@ mining boomtown of Tombstone . In September 1879 , Wyatt resigned as assistant marshal in Dodge City . Accompanied by his common @-@ law wife Mattie Blaylock , his brother Jim and his wife Bessie , they left for Arizona Territory . They stopped in Las Vegas , New Mexico , where they reunited with Doc Holliday and his common @-@ law wife Big Nose Kate . The five of them arrived in Prescott in November . Wyatt , Virgil , and James Earp with their wives arrived in Tombstone on December 1 , 1879 , although Doc remained in Prescott , where the gambling afforded better opportunities . There , the Earps bought an interest in the Vizina mine , the First North Extension of the Mountain Maid mine , and some water rights . Later in life , Wyatt wrote that " In 1879 Dodge was beginning to lose much of the snap which had given it a charm to men of reckless blood , and I decided to move to Tombstone , which was just building up a reputation . "

On November 27 , 1879 , three days before moving to Tombstone , Virgil was appointed by Crawley Dake , U.S. Marshal for the Arizona Territory , as Deputy U.S. Marshal for the Tombstone mining district , some 280 miles (450 km) from Prescott . His territory included all of the southeast area of the Arizona Territory .

On March 5 , 1879 , when the city of Tombstone was founded , it had about 100 people living in tents and a few shacks . By the time the Earps arrived nine months later on December 1 , it had grown to about 1 @,@ 000 residents . Wyatt brought horses and a buckboard wagon , which he planned to convert into a stagecoach , but on arrival he found two established stage lines already running . In Tombstone , the Earps staked mining claims and water rights interests , attempting to capitalize on the mining boom . Jim worked as a barkeep . On December 6 , 1879 , the three Earps and Robert J. Winders filed a location notice for the First North Extension of the Mountain Maid Mine . When none of their business interests proved fruitful , Wyatt was hired in April or May 1880 by Wells , Fargo & Co. agent Frederick James Dodge as a shotgun messenger on stagecoaches when they transported Wells Fargo strongboxes . In summer 1880 , younger brothers Morgan arrived from Montana and Warren Earp moved to Tombstone as well . In September , Wyatt 's friend Doc Holliday arrived from Prescott with \$ 40 @,@ 000 in gambling winnings in his pocket .

= = = First confrontation with the Cowboys = = =

On July 25 , 1880 , U.S. Army Captain Joseph H. Hurst asked Deputy U.S. Marshal Virgil Earp to assist him in tracking Cowboys who had stolen six U.S. Army mules from Camp Rucker . Virgil

requested the assistance of his brothers Wyatt and Morgan , along with Wells Fargo agent Marshall Williams , and they found the mules at the McLaurys ' ranch . McLaury was a Cowboy , a term which in that time and region was generally used to refer to a loose association of outlaws , some of whom also were landowners and ranchers . Legitimate cowmen were referred to as cattle herders or ranchers . They found the branding iron used to change the " U.S. " brand to " D.8. " Stealing the mules was a federal offense because the animals were U.S. property .

Cowboy Frank Patterson " made some kind of a compromise " with Captain Hurst , who persuaded the posse to withdraw , with the understanding that the mules would be returned . The Cowboys showed up two days later without the mules and laughed at Hurst and the Earps . In response , Capt. Hurst printed a handbill describing the theft , and specifically charged Frank McLaury with assisting with hiding the mules . He also reproduced the flyer in The Tombstone Epitaph , on July 30 , 1880 . Frank McLaury angrily printed a response in the Cowboy @-@ friendly Nuggett , calling Hurst " unmanly " , " a coward , a vagabond , a rascal , and a malicious liar " , and accused Hurst of stealing the mules himself . Capt. Hurst later cautioned Wyatt , Virgil , and Morgan that the Cowboys had threatened their lives . Virgil reported that Frank accosted him and warned him " If you ever again follow us as close as you did , then you will have to fight anyway . " A month later Earp ran into Frank and Tom McLaury in Charleston , and they told him if he ever followed them as he had done before , they would kill him .

= = = Becomes deputy sheriff = = =

On July 28 , 1880 , Wyatt was appointed Deputy Sheriff for the eastern part of Pima County , which included Tombstone , by Democratic County Sheriff Charlie Shibell . Wyatt passed on his Wells Fargo job as shotgun messenger to his brother Morgan . Wyatt did his job well , and from August through November his name was mentioned nearly every week by the The Tombstone Epitaph or the Nugget newspapers .

The deputy sheriff 's position was worth more than US \$ 40 @,@ 000 a year (about \$ 980 @,@ 828 today) because he was also county assessor and tax collector , and the board of supervisors allowed him to keep ten percent of the amounts paid . While Wyatt was Deputy Sheriff , former Democrat state legislator Johnny Behan arrived in September 1880 .

= = = Town marshal shot = = =

On October 28 , 1880 , popular Tombstone town marshal Fred White attempted to break up a group of five late @-@ night , drunken revelers shooting at the moon on Allen Street in Tombstone . Deputy Sheriff Wyatt was in Owens Saloon a block away , though unarmed . When he heard the shooting , he ran to the scene , borrowed a pistol from Fred Dodge and went to assist White . He saw White attempt to disarm Curly Bill Brocius and the gun discharge , striking White in the groin . Wyatt pistol @-@ whipped Brocius , knocking him to the ground . Then he grabbed Brocius by the collar and told him to get up . Brocius protested , asking , " What have I done ? "

Fred Dodge arrived on the scene . In a letter to Stuart Lake many years later , he recalled what he saw .

Wyatt 's coolness and nerve never showed to better advantage than they did that night . When Morg and I reached him , Wyatt was squatted on his heels beside Curly Bill and Fred White . Curly Bill 's friends were pot @-@ shooting at him in the dark . The shooting was lively and slugs were hitting the chimney and cabin ... in all of that racket , Wyatt 's voice was even and quiet as usual .

Wyatt altered his story later on , telling John H. Flood that he did not see Brocius 's pistol on the ground in the dark until afterward . The pistol contained one expended cartridge and five live rounds . Brocius waived a preliminary hearing so he and his case could be transferred to Tucson District Court . Virgil and Wyatt escorted Brocius to Tucson to stand trial , possibly saving him from a lynching . White , age 31 , died of his wound two days after his shooting .

On December 27 , 1880 , Wyatt testified that White 's shooting was accidental . Brocius expressed regret , saying he had not intended to shoot White . Gunsmith Jacob Gruber testified that Curly Bill

's single @-@ action revolver was defective , allowing it to be discharged at half @-@ cock . A statement from White before he died was introduced stating that the shooting was accidental . The judge ruled that the shooting was accidental and released Brocius . Brocius , however , remained intensely angry about how Wyatt had pistol @-@ whipped him and became an enemy to the Earps . Virgil was also appointed acting town marshal of Tombstone .

= = = Loses reappointment = = =

Wyatt only served as deputy sheriff for eastern Pima County for about three months because , in November , Democrat Shibell ran for re @-@ election against Republican challenger Bob Paul . The region was strongly Republican and Paul was expected to win . Republican Wyatt expected he would continue in the job . Given how fast eastern Pima County was growing , everyone expected that it would be split off into its own county soon with Tombstone as its seat . Wyatt hoped to win the job as the new county sheriff and continue receiving the plum 10 % of all tax moneys collected . Southern Pacific was the major landholder , so that tax collection was a relatively easy process .

On election day , November 2 , Precinct 27 in the San Simon Valley in northern Cochise County , turned out 104 votes , 103 of them for Shibell . Shibell unexpectedly won the election by a margin of 58 votes under suspicious circumstances .

James C. Hancock reported that Cowboys Curly Bill Brocius and Johnny Ringo served as election officials in the San Simon precinct . However , on November 1 , the day before the election , Ringo biographer David Johnson places Ringo in New Mexico with Ike Clanton . Curly Bill had been arrested and jailed in Tucson on October 28 for shooting Sheriff Fred White , and he was still there on election day .

The home of John Magill was used as the polling place . The precinct only contained about 10 eligible voters (another source says 50) , but the Cowboys gathered non @-@ voters like the children and Chinese and had them cast ballots . Not satisfied , they named all the dogs , burros and poultry and cast ballots in their names for Shibell . The election board met on November 14 and declared Shibell as the winner .

Earp resigned from the Sheriff 's office on November 9 , 1880 , and Shibell immediately appointed Behan as the new Deputy Sheriff for eastern Pima County . Democrat Johnny Behan had considerably more political experience than Republican Wyatt Earp . Behan had previously served as Yavapai County Sheriff from 1871 to 1873 . He had been elected to the Arizona Territorial Legislature twice , representing Yavapai Country in the 7th Territorial Legislature in 1873 and Mohave County in the 10th in 1879 . Behan moved for a time to the northwest Arizona Territory , where he served as the Mohave County Recorder in 1877 and then deputy sheriff of Mohave County at Gillet , in 1879 .

Paul filed a lawsuit on November 19 contesting the election results , alleging that Shibell 's Cowboy supporters like Clanton , Curly Bill Brocius , and Frank McLaury had cooperated in ballot stuffing . Chief Justice of Arizona C.G.W. French ruled in Paul 's favor in late January 1881 , but Shibell appealed . His lawsuit was finally resolved by April 1881 . The election commission found that a mysterious " Henry Johnson " was responsible for certifying the ballots . This turned out to be James Johnson , the same James K. Johnson who had been shooting up Allen Street the night Marshal White was killed . Moreover , he was the same Johnson that testified at Curly Bill 's preliminary hearing after he shot Fred White . James Johnson later testified for Bud Paul in the election hearing and said that the ballots had been left in the care of Phin Clanton . None of the witnesses during the election hearing reported on ballots being cast for dogs . The recount found Paul had 402 votes and Shibell had 354 . Sixty @-@ two were kept from a closer examination . Paul was declared the winner of the Pima County sheriff election but by that time the election was a moot point . Paul could not replace Behan with Earp because on January 1 , 1881 , Cochise County was created out of the eastern portion of Pima County .

= = = Behan wins election = = =

Earp and Behan both applied to fill the new position of Cochise County sheriff , which like the Pima County Sheriff job paid the office holder 10 % of the fees and taxes collected . Earp thought he had a good chance to win the position because he was the former undersheriff in the region and a Republican , like Arizona Territorial Governor John C. Fremont . However , Behan had greater political experience and influence in Prescott .

Earp improbably testified during the preliminary hearing after the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral that he and Behan had made a deal . If Earp withdrew his application to the legislature , Behan agreed to appoint Earp as undersheriff . Behan received the appointment in February 1881 , but did not keep his end of the bargain and instead chose Harry Woods , a prominent Democrat , as undersheriff . Behan testified at first that he had not made any deal with Earp , although he later admitted he had lied . Behan said he broke his promise to appoint Earp because of an incident that occurred shortly before his appointment .

This incident arose after Earp learned that one of his prize horses , stolen more than a year before , was in the possession of Ike Clanton and his brother Billy . Earp and Holliday rode to the Clanton ranch near Charleston to recover the horse . On the way , they overtook Behan , who was riding in a wagon . Behan was also heading to the ranch to serve an election @-@ hearing subpoena on Ike Clanton . Accounts differ as to what happened next . Earp later testified that when he arrived at the Clanton ranch , Billy Clanton gave up the horse even before being presented with ownership papers . According to Behan 's testimony , however , Earp had told the Clantons that Behan was on his way to arrest them for horse theft . After the incident , which embarrassed both the Clantons and Behan , Behan testified that he did not want to work with Earp and chose Woods instead .

= = = Relationship to Sadie Marcus = = =

Thirty @-@ two @-@ year @-@ old Wyatt Earp and 35 @-@ year @-@ old Johnny Behan apparently shared an interest in the same 18 @-@ year @-@ old woman , Josephine Sarah Marcus . She said she first visited Tombstone as part of the Pauline Markham Theatre Troupe on December 1 , 1879 for a one @-@ week engagement but modern researchers have not found any record that she was ever part of the theater company . Behan owned a saloon in Tip Top , Arizona , where he maintained a prostitute named Sadie Mansfield . In September 1880 , Behan moved to Tombstone . Sadie may have returned to San Francisco and then joined Behan in Tombstone , where she and Behan continued their relationship . Sadie was a well @-@ known nickname for Sarah , and it was common for prostitutes to change their first name . Wyatt had a mischievous sense of humor . When they became a couple in 1882 , he knew his wife preferred the name " Josephine " and detested " Sadie " , but early in their relationship he began calling her ' Sadie ' .

Sadie Mansfield and Sadie Marcus had very similar names and initials and were both known by their friends as " Sadie . " Both made a stagecoach journey from San Francisco to Prescott , Arizona Territory ; both traveled with a black woman named Julia ; both were sexual partners with Behan ; both were 19 years old , born in New York City , and had parents from Prussia . The only difference noted in the 1880 census is their occupation : Sadie in San Francisco is listed as " At home " , while Sadie in Tip Top is recorded as a " Courtesan " . But Josephine said that her parents hid her activities , and they may have been covering for her when the census taker , a neighbor who knew the family , appeared on their doorstep .

In spring 1881 , Marcus found Behan in bed with the wife of a friend and kicked him out , although she still used the Behan surname through the end of that summer . Earp had a common @-@ law relationship with Mattie Blaylock , who was listed as his wife in the June 1880 census . She suffered from severe headaches and became addicted to laudanum , a commonly used opiate and painkiller . There are no contemporary records in Tombstone of a relationship between Josephine and Earp . Tombstone diarist George W. Parsons never mentioned seeing Wyatt and Josephine together and neither did John Clum in his memoirs . But Earp and Marcus certainly knew each other , as Behan and Earp both had offices above the Crystal Palace Saloon .

A letter written by former New Mexico Territory Governor Miguel Otero in 1940 appears to indicate that Earp had strong feelings for Josephine in April 1882 . After leaving Tombstone following the

Earp Vendetta Ride , the Earp posse went to Albuquerque , New Mexico for two weeks . While there , Wyatt stayed with prominent businessman Henry N. Jaffa , who was also president of New Albuquerque ' s Board of Trade . Like Josephine , Jaffa was Jewish .

Wyatt and Holliday had been fast friends since Holliday saved Earp 's life in Dodge City during 1878 . During their stay in Albuquerque , the two men ate at The Retreat Restaurant owned by " Fat Charlie " . Ortero wrote in his letter , " Holiday said something about Earp becoming ' a damn Jew @-@ boy . ' Earp became angry and left ? . [Henry] Jaffa told me later that Earp ' s woman was a Jewess . Earp did mezuzah when entering the house . " The Earp party split up in Albuquerque , and Holliday and Dan Tipton rode on to Pueblo , Colorado while the rest of the group headed for Gunnison . Earp 's anger at Holliday 's racial slur may indicate that his feelings for Josephine were more serious at the time than is commonly known . The information in the letter is compelling because at that time in the 1940s , the relationship between Wyatt Earp and Josephine Marcus in Tombstone was not public knowledge . Ortero could know these things only if he had a relationship with someone who had personal knowledge of the individuals involved .

Marcus went to great lengths to sanitize her own and Wyatt 's history . For example , she worked hard to keep both her name and the name of Wyatt 's second wife Mattie out of Stuart Lake 's 1931 book , Wyatt Earp : Frontier Marshal , and Marcus threatened litigation to keep it that way . Marcus also told Earp 's biographers and others that Earp never drank , did not own gambling saloons , and that he never provided prostitutes to customers , although strong evidence to the contrary exists .

= = = Interest in mining and gambling = = =

Losing the undersheriff position left Wyatt Earp without a job in Tombstone ; however , Wyatt and his brothers were beginning to make some money on their mining claims in the Tombstone area . In January 1881 , Oriental Saloon owner Mike Joyce gave Wyatt Earp a one @-@ quarter interest in the faro concession at the Oriental Saloon in exchange for his services as a manager and enforcer . Gambling was regarded as a legitimate profession , comparable to a doctor or member of clergy , at the time . Wyatt invited his friend , lawman and gambler Bat Masterson , to Tombstone to help him run the faro tables in the Oriental Saloon . In June 1881 , Wyatt also telegraphed another friend and gambler from Dodge , Luke Short , who was living in Leadville , Colorado , and offered him a job as a faro dealer .

Bat remained until April 1881 , when he returned to Dodge City to assist his brother Jim . On October 8 , 1881 , Doc Holliday got into a dispute with John Tyler in the Oriental Saloon . A rival gambling concession operator hired and disrupt Wyatt 's business . When Tyler started a fight after losing a bet , Wyatt threw him out of the saloon . Holliday later wounded Oriental owners Milt Joyce and his partner William Parker and was convicted of assault .

= = = Stands down lynch mob = = =

Stuart Lake described in his book how Earp single @-@ handedly stood down a large crowd that wanted to lynch gambler Michael O 'Rourke (Johnny Behind the Deuce) . O 'Rourke had killed Henry Schneider , chief engineer of the Tombstone Mining and Milling Company ? he said in self @-@ defense . Henry was well @-@ liked and a mob of miners quickly gathered , threatening to lynch O 'Rourke on the spot . In fact , the Epitaph gave primary credit to Ben Sippy for standing down the crowd , assisted by Virgil Earp , Wyatt Earp , and Johnny Behan . This incident as described by Lake added to Earp 's modern legend as a lawman .

= = = Stagecoach robbers kill two = = =

Tensions between the Earps and both the Clantons and McLaurys increased through 1881 . On March 15 , 1881 , at 10 p.m. , three cowboys attempted to rob a Kinnear & Company stagecoach reportedly carrying US \$ 26 @, @ 000 in silver bullion (or about \$ 637 @, @ 538 in today 's dollars) . The amount of bullion actually carried has been questioned by modern researchers , who note that

at the then current value of US \$ 1 @. @ 00 per ounce , the bullion would have weighed about 1 @, @ 600 pounds (730 kg) , a significant weight for a team of horses . The hold up took place near Benson , during which the robbers killed popular driver Eli " Budd " Philpot and passenger Peter Roerig .

The Earps and a posse tracked the men down and arrested Luther King , who confessed he had been holding the reins while Bill Leonard , Harry " The Kid " Head , and Jim Crain robbed the stage . They arrested King and Sheriff Johnny Behan escorted him to jail , but somehow King walked in the front door and almost immediately out the back door .

During the hearing into the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral , Wyatt testified that he offered the US \$ 3 @, @ 600 in Wells Fargo reward money (\$ 1 @, @ 200 per robber) to Ike Clanton and Frank McLaury in return for information about the identities of the three robbers . Wyatt testified that he had other motives for his plan as well : he hoped that arresting the murderers would boost his chances for election as Cochise County sheriff . Wyatt told the court that he had taken the extra step of obtaining a second copy of a telegram for Ike from Wells Fargo assuring that the reward for capturing the killers applied either dead or alive .

According to testimony given by Wyatt and Virgil , both Frank McLaury and Ike Clanton agreed to provide information to assist in capturing Leonard , Head , and Crain , but they never had a chance to fulfill the agreement . All three suspects were killed when attempting other robberies .

In his testimony at the court hearing , Clanton said Wyatt did not want to capture the men , but to kill them . Clanton told the court that Earp wanted to conceal the Earp family 's involvement in the Benson stage robbery . He said Wyatt swore him to secrecy and the next day Morgan Earp asked him whether he would make the agreement with Wyatt . He said that four or five days afterward Morgan had confided in him that he and Wyatt had " piped off \$ 1 @, @ 400 to Doc Holliday and Bill Leonard " who were supposed to be on the stage the night Bud Philpot was killed . During his testimony , Clanton told the court , " I was not going to have anything to do with helping to capture ? " and then he corrected himself " ? kill Bill Leonard , Crane and Harry Head " . Clanton denied having any knowledge of the Wells Fargo telegram confirming the reward money .

= = = September stagecoach robbery = = =

Meanwhile , tensions between the Earps and the McLaurys increased when Cowboys robbed the passenger stage on the Sandy Bob Line in the Tombstone area on September 8 , bound for nearby Bisbee . The masked robbers shook down the passengers and robbed the strongbox . They were recognized by their voices and language . They were identified as Deputy Sheriff Pete Spence (an alias for Elliot Larkin Ferguson) and Deputy Sheriff Frank Stilwell , a business partner of Spence . Stilwell was fired a short while later as a Deputy Sheriff for Sheriff Behan (for county tax " accounting irregularities ") .

Wyatt and Virgil Earp rode with the sheriff 's posse attempting to track the stage robbers . Wyatt discovered an unusual boot heel print in the mud . The posse checked with a shoemaker in Bisbee and found a matching heel that he had just removed from Stilwell 's boot . A further check of a Bisbee corral turned up both Spence and Stilwell who were arrested by sheriff 's deputies Billy Breakenridge and Nagel .

Spence and Stilwell were arraigned on the robbery charges before Justice Wells Spicer who set their bail at \$ 7 @, @ 000 each . They were released after paying their bail , but Spence and Stilwell were re @- @ arrested by Virgil for the Bisbee robbery a month later , on October 13 , on the new federal charge of interfering with a mail carrier . The newspapers , however , reported that they had been arrested for a different stage robbery that occurred (October 8) near Contention City . Occurring less than two weeks before the O.K. Corral shootout , this final incident may have been misunderstood by the McLaurys . While Wyatt and Virgil were still out of town for the Spence and Stilwell hearing , Frank McLaury confronted Morgan Earp , telling him that the McLaurys would kill the Earps if they tried to arrest Spence , Stilwell , or the McLaurys again .

= = Gunfight on Fremont Street = =

On Wednesday , October 26 , 1881 , the tension between the Earps and the Cowboys came to a head . Ike Clanton , Billy Claiborne , and other Cowboys had been threatening to kill the Earps for several weeks . Tombstone city Marshal Virgil Earp learned that the Cowboys were armed and had gathered near the O.K. Corral . He asked Wyatt and Morgan Earp and Doc Holliday to assist him , as he intended to disarm them . Wyatt was acting as a temporary assistant marshal , Morgan was a Deputy City Marshal , and Virgil deputized Holliday for the occasion . At approximately 3 p.m. the Earps headed towards Fremont Street , where the Cowboys had been reported gathering .

They confronted five Cowboys in a vacant lot adjacent to the O.K. Corral 's rear entrance on Fremont Street . The lot between the Harwood House and Fly 's Boarding House and Photography Studio was narrow ? the two parties were initially only about 6 to 10 feet (1 @ .@ 8 to 3 @ .@ 0 m) apart . Ike Clanton and Billy Claiborne fled the gunfight . Tom and Frank McLaury along with Billy Clanton stood their ground and were killed . Morgan was clipped by a shot across his back that nicked both shoulder blades and a vertebra . Virgil was shot through the calf and Holliday was grazed by a bullet .

= = Charged with murder = =

On October 30 , as permitted by Territorial law , Ike Clanton filed murder charges against the Earps and Holliday . Justice Wells Spicer convened a preliminary hearing on October 31 to determine if there was enough evidence to go to trial . In an unusual proceeding , he took written and oral testimony from a number of witnesses over more than a month .

Sheriff Behan , testifying for the prosecution , said the Cowboys had not resisted but either thrown up their hands and turned out their coats to show they were not armed . He said that Tom McLaury threw open his coat to show that he was not armed and that the first two shots were fired by the Earp party . Sheriff Behan insisted Doc Holliday had fired first using a nickel @-@ plated revolver , although other witnesses reported seeing him carrying a messenger shotgun immediately beforehand .

The Earps hired an experienced trial lawyer , Thomas Fitch , as defense counsel . Wyatt testified that he drew his gun only after Billy Clanton and Frank McLaury went for their pistols . He detailed the Earps ' previous troubles with the Clantons and McLaurys and explained that they intended to disarm the cowboys . He said they fired in self @-@ defense . Fitch managed to produce testimony from prosecution witnesses during cross @-@ examination that was contradictory , or appeared to dodge his questions , or in which they said they could not remember .

After extensive testimony , Justice Spicer ruled on November 30 that there was not enough evidence to indict the men . He said the evidence indicated that the Earps and Holliday acted within the law and that Holliday and Wyatt had been deputized temporarily by Virgil . Even though the Earps and Holliday were free , their reputations had been tarnished . The Cowboys in Tombstone looked upon the Earps as robbers and murderers and plotted revenge .

= = = Cowboys ' revenge = = =

On December 28 , while walking between saloons on Allen Street in Tombstone , Virgil was ambushed and maimed by a shotgun round that struck his left arm and shoulder . Ike Clanton 's hat was found in the back of the building across Allen Street from where the shots were fired . Wyatt wired U.S. Marshal Crawley P. Dake asking to be appointed deputy U.S. marshal with authority to select his own deputies . Dake granted the request in late January and provided the Earps with some funds he borrowed from Wells Fargo | Wells , Fargo & Co. on behalf of the Earps , variously reported as \$ 500 to \$ 3 @ ,@ 000 .

In mid @-@ January , when Earp ally Rickabaugh sold the Oriental Saloon to Earp adversary Milt Joyce , Wyatt sold his gambling concessions at the hotel . The Earps also raised some funds from sympathetic business owners in town . On February 2 , 1882 , Wyatt and Virgil , tired of the criticism leveled against them , submitted their resignations to Dake , who refused to accept them because

their accounts had not been settled . On the same day , Wyatt sent a message to Ike Clanton that he wanted to reconcile their differences , which Clanton refused . Clanton was also acquitted that day of the charges against him in the shooting of Virgil Earp , when the defense brought in seven witnesses who testified that Clanton was in Charleston at the time of the shooting .

The Earps needed more funds to pay for the extra deputies and associated expenses . Contributions received from supportive business owners were not enough . On February 13 , Wyatt mortgaged his home to lawyer James G. Howard for \$ 365 @. @ 00 (about \$ 8 @, @ 950 today) and received \$ 365 @. @ 00 in U.S. gold coin . (He was never able to repay the loan and in 1884 Howard foreclosed on the house .)

After attending a theatre show on March 18 , Morgan Earp was assassinated by gunmen firing from a dark alley through a door window into a room where he was playing billiards . Morgan was struck in the right side . The bullet shattered his spine , passed through his left side , and lodged in the thigh of George A. B. Berry . Another round narrowly missed Wyatt . A doctor was summoned and Morgan was moved from the floor to a nearby couch . The assassins escaped in the dark and Morgan died forty minutes later .

Wyatt Earp felt he could not rely on civil justice and decided to take matters into his own hands . He concluded that the only way to deal with Morgan 's assassins was to kill them all .

= = Earp vendetta ride = =

The day after Morgan 's assassination , Deputy U.S. Marshal Wyatt Earp formed a posse made up of his brothers James and Warren , Doc Holliday , Sherman McMaster , Jack " Turkey Creek " Johnson , Charles " Hairlip Charlie " Smith , Daniel " Tip " Tipton , and John Wilson " Texas Jack " Vermillion to protect the family and pursue the suspects , paying them \$ 5 @. @ 00 a day . They took Morgan 's body to the railhead in Benson . James was to accompany Morgan 's body to the family home in Colton , California , where Morgan 's parents and wife waited to bury him . The posse guarded Virgil and Addie through to Tucson , where they had heard Frank Stilwell and other Cowboys were waiting to kill Virgil . The next morning Frank Stilwell 's body was found alongside the tracks riddled with buckshot and gunshot wounds . Wyatt and five other federal lawmen were indicted for murdering him and Tucson Justice of the Peace Charles Meyer issued warrants for their arrest .

The Earp posse briefly returned to Tombstone , where Sheriff Behan tried to stop them . The heavily armed posse brushed him aside . Hairlip Charlie and Warren remained in Tombstone , and the rest set out for Pete Spence 's wood camp in the Dragoon Mountains . They found and killed Florentino " Indian Charlie " Cruz . Two days later , near Iron Springs (later Mescal Springs) , in the Whetstone Mountains , they were seeking to rendezvous with a messenger for them . They unexpectedly stumbled onto the wood camp of Curly Bill Brocius , Pony Diehl , and other Outlaw Cowboys . According to reports from both sides , the two sides immediately exchanged gun fire . Except for Wyatt and Texas Jack Vermillion , whose horse was shot , the Earp party withdrew to find protection from the heavy gunfire . Curly Bill fired at Wyatt with a shotgun but missed . Eighteen months prior Wyatt had protected Curly Bill against a mob ready to lynch him and then provided testimony that helped spare Curly Bill from a murder trial for killing Sheriff Fred White . Now , Wyatt returned Curly Bill 's gunfire with his own shotgun and shot Curly Bill in the chest from about 50 feet (15m) away . Curly Bill fell into the water by the edge of the spring and died .

Wyatt received bullet holes in both sides of his long coat and another struck his boot heel . After emptying his shotgun , Wyatt fired his pistol , mortally wounding Johnny Barnes in the chest and wounded Milt Hicks in the arm . Vermillion tried to retrieve his rifle wedged in the scabbard under his fallen horse , exposing himself to the Cowboys ' gunfire . Doc Holliday helped him get to cover . Wyatt had trouble remounting his horse because his cartridge belt had slipped down his legs . He was finally able to get on his horse and with the rest of the posse retreated .

The Earp Party rode north to the Percy Ranch , but were not welcomed by Hugh and Jim Percy , who feared the Cowboys ; after a meal and some rest , they left at about 3 : 00 in the morning of March 27 . The Earp party slipped into the area near Tombstone and met with supporters , including

" Hairlip Charlie " Smith and Warren Earp . On March 27 , the posse arrived at the Sierra Bonita Ranch owned by Henry Hooker , a wealthy and prominent rancher . That night Dan Tipton caught the first stage out of Tombstone and headed for Benson , carrying \$ 1 @, @ 000 from mining owner and Earp supporter E. B. Gage for the posse . Hooker congratulated Earp on the killing of Curly Bill . Hooker fed them and Wyatt told him he wanted to buy new mounts . Hooker was known for his purebred stallions and ran over 500 brood mares that produced horses that became known for their speed , beauty and temperament . He provided Wyatt and his posse with new mounts but refused to take Wyatt 's money . When Behan 's posse was observed in the distance , Hooker suggested Wyatt make his stand there , but Wyatt moved into the hills about three miles (5 km) distant near Reilly Hill .

The federal posse led by Wyatt Earp was not found by the local posse , led by Cochise County Sheriff John Behan , although Behan 's party trailed the Earps for many miles . In the middle of April 1882 the Earp party left the Arizona Territory and headed east into New Mexico Territory and then into Colorado .

The coroner reports credited the Earp party with killing four men ? Frank Stilwell , Curly Bill , Indian Charlie , and Johnny Barnes ? in their two @-@ week @-@ long ride . In 1888 Wyatt Earp gave an interview to California historian H. H. Bancroft during which he claimed to have killed " over a dozen stage robbers , murderers , and cattle thieves " in his time as a lawman .

= = Life after Tombstone = =

The gunfight in Tombstone lasted only 30 seconds , but it would end up defining Earp for the rest of his life . After Wyatt killed Frank Stilwell in Tucson , his movements received national press coverage and he became a known commodity in Western folklore .

= = Deals Faro in Colorado = =

After killing the four Cowboys , Wyatt and Warren Earp , Holliday , Sherman McMaster , " Turkey Creek " Jack Johnson , and Texas Jack Vermillion left Arizona . Wyatt never returned to Tombstone . The group stopped in Albuquerque , New Mexico , where they met Deputy U.S. Marshal Bat Masterson , Wyatt 's friend . Masterson went with them to Trinidad , Colorado , where Masterson opened a Faro game in a saloon and later became Marshal .

Wyatt dealt faro at Masterson 's saloon for several weeks before he , McMaster , Vermillion , and Warren Earp left in May 1882 for Gunnison , Colorado .

The Earps and Texas Jack set up camp on the outskirts of Gunnison , where they remained quietly at first , rarely going into town for supplies . In Gunnison , they were reported to have pulled a " gold brick scam " on a German visitor named Ritchie by trying to sell him gold @-@ painted rocks for \$ 2 @, @ 000 .

Wyatt and Holliday , who had been fast friends since Holliday saved Earp 's life in Dodge City during 1878 , had a serious disagreement and parted ways in Albuquerque . According to a letter written by former New Mexico Territory Governor Miguel Otero , Wyatt and Holliday were eating at " Fat Charlie 's " The Retreat Restaurant in Albuquerque " when Holiday said something about Earp becoming ' a damn Jew @-@ boy . ' Earp became angry and left ? . [Henry] Jaffa told me later that Earp ? s woman was a Jewess . Earp did mezuzah when entering the house . " Wyatt was staying with prominent businessman Henry N. Jaffa , who was also president of New Albuquerque ? s Board of Trade . Jaffa was also Jewish , and based on the letter , Earp had , while staying in Jaffa ? s home , honored Jewish tradition by performing the mezuzah upon entering his home . Earp 's anger at Holliday 's racial slur may indicate that the relationship between Josephine Marcus and Wyatt Earp was much more serious at the time than is commonly known . The information in the letter is compelling because at the time it was written in the 1940s , no one knew of any relationship between Wyatt Earp and Josephine Marcus while living in Tombstone . The only way Ortero could write about these things was if he knew someone with personal knowledge of the individuals involved . Holliday and Dan Tipton headed to Pueblo in late April 1882 and then Denver . Holliday

and Wyatt met again in June 1882 in Gunnison after Wyatt helped to keep his friend from being convicted on murder charges against Frank Stillwell ; and then again lastly Wyatt was able to see his old friend Holliday in the late winter of 1886 , where they met in the lobby of the Windsor Hotel . Sadie Marcus described the skeletal Holliday as having a continuous cough and standing on " unsteady legs . ?

= = = Meets Josephine in San Francisco = = =

Sadie , traveling as either Mrs. J. C. Earp or Mrs. Wyatt Earp , left Tombstone for her family in San Francisco via Los Angeles on March 25 , 1882 . This was one week after Morgan Earp was assassinated and five days after Wyatt set out in pursuit of those he believed responsible .

In July , four months later , Wyatt traveled from Colorado to San Francisco where Sadie was living with her half @-@ sister Rebecca and husband Aaron Wiener , and where his brother Virgil was seeking treatment for his arm . Wyatt remained in San Francisco for about nine months until early 1883 , when he and Sadie left San Francisco together for Silverton , Colorado , where silver and gold mining were flourishing . It was the first of many mining camps and boom towns they lived in . Sadie was Wyatt 's common @-@ law wife until his death 46 years later .

= = = Mattie asks for divorce = = =

Wyatt still owned a house in Tombstone with his common @-@ law wife Mattie Blaylock , but she waited for him in Colton , where his parents and Virgil were living . But during the summer of 1882 , she sent Wyatt a letter saying she wanted a divorce . She had met a gambler from Arizona and he had asked her to marry him . Wyatt , who did not believe in divorce , refused . She ran away with the gambler anyway , and he later abandoned her in Arizona .

She moved to Pinal City , Arizona , where she resumed life as a prostitute . Mattie struggled with addictions and committed " suicide by opium poisoning " on July 3 , 1888 .

= = = Dodge City War = = =

During what became known as the Dodge City War , the Mayor tried to run Earp 's friend Luke Short , part owner of the Long Branch saloon , first out of business and then out of town . Short appealed to Masterson who contacted Earp . On May 31 , 1883 , Earp and Sadie went with Bat Masterson , Johnny Millsap , Shotgun John Collins , Texas Jack Vermillion , and Johnny Green to Dodge City to help Short .

Short was in Kansas City to appeal to Governor George Washington Glick for help but to no avail . When he returned , Short 's allies marched up Front Street into Short 's saloon , where they were sworn in as deputies by constable " Prairie Dog " Dave Marrow . The town council offered a compromise to allow Short to return for ten days to get his affairs in order , but Earp refused to compromise . When Short returned , there was no force ready to turn him away . Short 's Saloon reopened , and the Dodge City War ended without a shot being fired .

= = = Idaho mining venture = = =

In 1884 , Wyatt and his wife Josie , his brothers Warren and James , and James ' wife Bessie arrived in Eagle City , Idaho , another new boomtown that was created as a result of the discovery of gold , silver , and lead in the Coeur d 'Alene area . (It 's now a ghost town in Shoshone County) . Wyatt joined the crowd looking for gold in the Murray @-@ Eagle mining district . They paid \$ 2 @, @ 250 for a 50 feet (15 m) diameter white circus , in which they opened a dance hall and saloon called The White Elephant . An advertisement in a local newspaper suggests gentlemen " come and see the elephant " .

Earp was named Deputy Sheriff in the area including newly incorporated Kootenai County , Idaho , which was disputing jurisdiction of Eagle City with Shoshone County . There were a considerable

number of disagreements over mining claims and property rights , which Earp had a part in . On March 28 , several feet of snow were still on the ground . Bill Buzzard , a miner of dubious reputation , began constructing a building when one of Wyatt 's partners , Jack Enright , tried to stop the construction . Enright claimed the building was on part of his property . Words were exchanged and Buzzard reached for his Winchester . He fired several shots at Enright and a skirmish developed . Allies of both sides quickly took defensive positions between snowbanks and began shooting at one another . Deputy Sheriff Wyatt Earp and his brother James stepped into the middle of the fray and helped peacefully resolve the dispute before anyone was seriously hurt . Shoshone County Deputy W. E. Hunt then arrived and ordered the parties to turn over their weapons .

In about April 1885 , it was reported that Wyatt Earp used his badge to join a band of claim jumpers in Embury Camp , later renamed Chewelah , Washington . Within six months their substantial stake had run dry , and the Earps left the Murray @-@ Eagle district . About 10 years later , after the Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey fight , a reporter hunted up Buzzard and extracted a story from him that accused Wyatt of being the brains behind lot @-@ jumping and a real @-@ estate fraud , further tarnishing his reputation .

= = = San Diego real estate boom = = =

After the Coeur d 'Alene mining venture died out , Earp and Josie briefly went to El Paso , Texas before moving in 1887 to San Diego , where the railroad was about to arrive and a real estate boom was underway . They stayed for about four years , living most of the time in the Brooklyn Hotel . Earp speculated in San Diego 's booming real estate market . Between 1887 and around 1896 he bought four saloons and gambling halls , one on Fourth Street and the other two near Sixth and E , all in the " respectable " part of town . They offered 21 games including faro , blackjack , poker , keno , and other Victorian @-@ American games of chance like pedro and monte . At the height of the boom , he made up to \$ 1 @,@ 000 a night in profit . Wyatt also owned the Oyster Bar located in the first granite @-@ faced building in San Diego , the four @-@ story Louis Bank Building at 837 5th Avenue , one of the more popular saloons in the Stingaree district . One of the reasons it drew a good crowd was the Golden Poppy brothel upstairs . Owned by Madam Cora , each room was painted a different color , like emerald green , summer yellow , or ruby red , and each prostitute was required to dress in matching garments .

Wyatt had a long @-@ standing interest in boxing and horse racing . He refereed boxing matches in San Diego , Tijuana , and San Bernardino . In the 1887 San Diego City Directory he was listed as a capitalist or gambler . He won his first race horse " Otto Rex " in a card game and began investing in racehorses . He also judged prize fights on both sides of the border and raced horses . Earp was one of the judges at the County Fair horse races held in Escondido in 1889 . As rapidly as the boom started , it came to an end , and the population of San Diego fell from a high of 40 @,@ 000 in 1885 when Earp arrived to only 16 @,@ 000 in 1890 .

On July 3 , 1888 , Mattie Blaylock , who had always considered herself Wyatt 's wife , committed suicide in Pinal , Arizona Territory , by taking an overdose of laudanum .

= = = San Francisco horse racing = = =

The Earps moved back to San Francisco in 1891 in part so Josie could be closer to her family . Earp developed a reputation as a sportsman as well as a gambler . He held onto his San Diego properties but their value fell , but he could not pay the taxes and was forced to sell the lots . He continued to race horses , but by 1896 he could no longer afford to own them but raced them on behalf of the owner of a horse stable in Santa Rosa that he managed for her . From 1891 to 1897 , they lived in at least four different locations in the city : 145 Ellis St. , 720 McAllister St. , 514A Seventh Ave. and 1004 Golden Gate Ave . In Santa Rosa , Earp personally competed in and won a harness race .

= = = Relationship to Marcus = = =

Josephine wrote in I Married Wyatt Earp : The Recollections of Josephine Sarah Marcus , that she and Wyatt were married in 1892 by the captain of multimillionaire Lucky Baldwin 's yacht off the California coast . Raymond Nez wrote that his grandparents witnessed their marriage , but no public record of the marriage has been found . Baldwin , a horse breeder and racer , also owned the Santa Anita racetrack in Los Angeles , which Wyatt ? a long @-@ time horse aficionado ? frequented when he was in town .

Earp 's relationship with Josephine Marcus was at times tempestuous . He had a mischievous sense of humor . He knew his wife preferred Josephine and detested " Sadie " , but early in their relationship he began calling her by that name . Josephine gambled to excess and Wyatt had affairs . Josephine later developed a reputation as a shrew who made life difficult for Earp .

Josephine frequently griped about Wyatt ? s lack of work and financial success and even his character and personality . Wyatt would often go on long walks to get away from her . He was furious about her gambling habit , during which she lost considerable sums of money . Each may have engaged in extramarital affairs . Josephine could be controlling . Grace Spolidora was a teenager during the Earp 's many visits to her family 's home near Needles , California and sometimes went to San Diego with them . She attributed the highly exaggerated stories about Earp to Josephine . Sadie " would always interfere whenever Wyatt would talk with Stuart Lake . She always interfered ! She wanted him to look like a church @-@ going saint and blow things up . Wyatt didn 't want that at all ! "

= = = Fixes Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey fight = = =

On December 2 , 1896 , Earp was a last @-@ minute choice as referee for a boxing match that the promoters billed as the heavyweight championship of the world . Bob Fitzsimmons was set to fight Tom Sharkey that night at the Mechanics ' Pavilion in San Francisco . Earp had refereed 30 or so matches in earlier days , though not under the Marquis of Queensbury rules , but under the older and more liberal London Prize Ring Rules . The fight may have been the most anticipated fight on American soil that year . Fitzsimmons was favored to win , and the public and even civic officials placed bets on the outcome .

Fitzsimmons dominated Sharkey throughout the fight , and in the eighth round , he hit Sharkey with his famed " solar plexus punch " , an uppercut under the heart that could render a man temporarily helpless . Fitzsimmons ' next punch apparently caught Sharkey below the belt and Sharkey dropped , clutched his groin , and rolled on the canvas , screaming foul . Wyatt stopped the bout , ruling that Fitzsimmons had hit Sharkey below the belt , but virtually no one witnessed the punch . Earp awarded the fight to Sharkey , who attendants carried out as " limp as a rag " . The 15 @,@ 000 fans in attendance greeted his decision with loud boos and catcalls . It was widely believed that there had been no foul and Earp had bet on Sharkey . While several doctors verified afterward that Sharkey had been hit hard below the belt , the public had bet heavily on Fitzsimmons and they were livid at the outcome .

Fitzsimmons went to court to overturn Earp 's decision . Newspaper accounts and testimony over the next two weeks revealed a conspiracy among the boxing promoters to fix the fight 's outcome .

Stories about the fight and Earp 's contested decision were distributed nationwide to a public that until that time knew little of Wyatt Earp . Earp was parodied in editorial cartoon caricatures and vilified in newspaper stories across the United States .

On December 17 , Judge Sanderson finally ruled that prize fighting was illegal in San Francisco and the courts would not determine who the winner was . Sharkey retained the purse , but the decision provided no vindication for Earp . Until the fight , Earp had been a minor figure known regionally in California and Arizona . Afterward , his name was known from coast to coast in the worst possible way . Earp sold his interest in his horses on December 20 and left San Francisco shortly afterward . He only returned when he caught a boat to Alaska . Earp 's decision left a smear on his public character that followed him until he died and afterward .

Eight years later , Dr. B. Brookes Lee was arrested in Portland , Oregon . He had been accused of

treating Sharkey to make it appear that he had been fouled by Fitzsimmons . Lee admitted it was true . " I fixed Sharkey up to look as if he had been fouled . How ? Well , that is something I do not care to reveal , but I will assert that it was done ? that is enough . There is no doubt that Fitzsimmons was entitled to the decision and did not foul Sharkey . I got \$ 1 @, @ 000 for my part in the affair . "

= = = Klondike Gold Rush = = =

On August 5 , 1897 , Earp and Josie once again joined in a mining boom and left Yuma , Arizona , for San Francisco , where they boarded the steamship Rosalie for Dawson in the Yukon to join in the Alaska Gold Rush . Earp had secured the backing of a syndicate of sporting men to open a gambling house there . He arrived in Dawson on September 12 , 1897 where he planned to open a Faro game . Earp and Josephine returned briefly to San Francisco on October 11 aboard the steamship City of Seattle with plans to return north as soon as possible . Upon returning north , Wyatt was offered a job as the marshal in Wrangell , Alaska , but he served for only 10 days .

The Earps may have spent the winter in Wrangell before setting out for Dawson in the spring on board the Governor Pingree but by the time they reached Rampart on the Yukon River , freeze @-@ up has set in . The Earps rented a cabin from Rex Beach for \$ 100 a month and spent the winter of 1898 ? 1899 there . He managed a small store during the spring of 1899 in St. Michael on the Norton Sound , a major gateway to the Alaskan interior via the Yukon River . By this time he decided the rush to stake a claim in the Klondike was over . Earp headed for Nome , Alaska , instead . In September , Earp and partner Charles E. Hoxie built the Dexter Saloon in Nome , the city 's first two story wooden building and its largest and most luxurious saloon . The second floor had twelve " clubrooms " upstairs decorated with fine mirrors , thick carpets , draperies , and sideboards . The building was used for a variety of purposes because it was so large : 70 by 30 feet (21 @. @ 3 m x 9 @. @ 1 m) with 12 feet (3 @. @ 7 m) ceilings . Earp used the club rooms upstairs as a brothel , another fact that Josephine worked hard to see was omitted from stories about him .

On July 6 , 1900 , Wyatt 's brother Warren was shot and killed in a saloon in Willcox , Arizona . Wyatt learned about his death soon after , and although there are some modern rumors that he went to Arizona to avenge his brother 's death , no evidence has been found to support that theory .

While in Alaska , Wyatt rubbed elbows with future novelist Rex Beach , writer Jack London , playwright Wilson Mizner , and boxing promoter Tex Rickard , with whom Earp developed a long @-@ lasting relationship . Rickard was a partner in the Northern Saloon and gambling house in Nome . Both the Dexter and the Northern Saloon competed for business with more than 60 other saloons in town serving an estimated 20 @, @ 000 residents . Wyatt was arrested twice in Nome for minor offenses , including being drunk and disorderly , although he was not tried . Most members of law enforcement were corrupt or otherwise engaged .

= = = Saloon in Seattle = = =

In November 1899 , Earp apparently left Alaska and went to Seattle , Washington , with a plan to open a saloon and gambling room . On November 25 , 1899 the Seattle Star described him as " a man of great reputation among the toughs and criminals , inasmuch as he formerly walked the streets of a rough frontier mining town with big pistols stuck in his belt , spurs on his boots and a devil @-@ may @-@ care expression upon his official face " . The Seattle Daily Times was less full of praise , announcing in a very small article that he had a reputation in Arizona as a " bad man " .

He faced considerable opposition to his plan from John Considine , who controlled all three gaming operations in town . Although gambling was illegal , Considine had worked out an agreement with Police Chief C.S. Reed . But Earp partnered with an established local gambler name Thomas Uguhart and they opened the Union Club saloon and gambling operation in Seattle 's Pioneer Square . The Seattle Star noted two weeks later that Earp 's saloon was earning a large following . Considine unsuccessfully tried to intimidate Earp , but his saloon continued to prosper . On March

23 , 1900 , the state of Washington filed charges against several gamblers , including Earp and his partner . The club 's furnishings were confiscated and burned . The Earps returned briefly to San Francisco in April 1900 , but within a couple of months , Wyatt and Josephine returned to Oregon and caught the SS Alliance for Alaska .

= = = Silver boom in Tonopah = = =

Wyatt and Josie left Alaska and arrived in Los Angeles at the Hollenbeck Hotel on December 13 , 1901 . They had an estimated \$ 80 @, @ 000 , a relative fortune (equivalent to about \$ 2 @, @ 280 @, @ 000 today) . Three months later , in February 1902 , they arrived in Tonopah , Nevada , known as the " Queen of the Silver Camps " , where silver and gold had been discovered in 1900 and a boom was under way . Wyatt and Josie opened the Northern Saloon in Tonopah and he served as a Deputy U.S. Marshal under Marshal J.F. Emmitt . His saloon , oil , and copper mining interests produced some income for a period .

After Tonopah 's gold strike waned , they moved in 1905 to Goldfield , Nevada , where his brother Virgil and his wife were living . Tex Rickard was also already there and had opened a second Northern Saloon . He hired Wyatt as a pit boss . Wyatt also staked mining claims just outside Death Valley and elsewhere in the Mojave Desert . In 1906 he discovered several deposits of gold and copper near the Sonoran Desert town of Vidal , California on the Colorado River and filed more than 100 mining claims near the Whipple Mountains . While in Los Angeles they lived in at least nine small Los Angeles rentals as early as 1885 and as late as 1929 , mostly in the summer .

= = = Life in Los Angeles = = =

In 1910 , when he was 62 , the Los Angeles Police Department hired Wyatt and former Los Angeles detective Arthur Moore King at \$ 10 @. @ 00 per day to carry out various tasks " outside the law " such as retrieving criminals from Mexico , which he did very capably . This led to Wyatt 's final armed confrontation . In October 1910 he was asked by former Los Angeles Police Commissioner H. L. Lewis to head up a posse to protect surveyors of the American Trona Company who were attempting to wrest control of mining claims for vast deposits of potash on the edge of Searles Lake held in receivership by the foreclosed California Trona Company . Wyatt and the group he guarded were regarded as claim jumpers and were confronted by armed representatives of the other company . King wrote , " it was the nerviest thing he had ever seen " . With guns pulled , Wyatt came out of his tent with a Winchester rifle , firing a round at the feet of Federal Receiver Stafford W. Austin . " Back off or I 'll blow you apart , or my name is not Wyatt Earp " . The owners summoned the U.S. Marshal who arrested Earp and 27 others , served them with a summons for contempt of court , and sent them home . Earp 's actions did not resolve the dispute , which eventually escalated into the " Pot Ash Wars " of the Mojave Desert .

On July 23 , 1911 , Earp was arrested in Los Angeles and charged with attempting to fleece J. Y. Peterson , a realty broker , in a fake faro game . Since money had not changed hands the charge against Earp was reduced to vagrancy and he was released on \$ 500 bail .

= = = Happy Days mine = = =

The Earps bought a small cottage in Vidal , the only home they ever owned . Beginning in 1911 and until Wyatt 's health began in to fail in 1928 , Wyatt and Josie Earp summered in Los Angeles and spent the rest of the year in the desert working their claims . The " Happy Days " mine was located in the Whipple Mountains a few miles north of Vidal . The cottage was the only permanent residence they owned the entire time they were married . Wyatt had some modest success with the Happy Days gold mine and they lived on the slim proceeds of income from that and oil wells in Oakland and Kern County .

In about 1923 , Charles Welsh , a retired railroad engineer and friend that Earp had known since Dodge City , frequently invited the Earps to visit his family in San Bernardino . The Welsh family did

not appreciate Josephine 's gambling habits . They noted that she received an allowance from her family (likely her only living relative , half @-@ sister Rebecca and husband Aaron Wiener) and gambled it away , often leaving Wyatt hungry .

When the Welsh family moved to Los Angeles , the Earps accepted an invitation to stay with them for a while in their top floor apartment until the Earps found a place to rent . After Earp and Josie moved into a bungalow nearby , Charlie Welsh 's daughter , Grace Spolidora , recalled that Josie , who had never had many domestic skills , did very little housekeeping or cooking for Wyatt . She and her sister Alma were concerned about the care Josie gave Wyatt . Even though he was very ill , she still did not cook for him . Spolidora , her sisters , and her mother brought in meals .

= = = Flood manuscript = = =

Earp began to collaborate with John Flood , a mining engineer and good friend , on a biography beginning in 1925 . The two men sat together every Sunday in the kitchen of Earp 's modest , rented bungalow . While Wyatt sipped a drink and smoked a cigar , they tried to tell Earp 's story . But Josephine was always present . She often interrupted and insisted " You can 't write that ! It needs to be clean . " She also demanded that they add more " pep " to the manuscript , which in her mind meant including the word " CRACK ! " in all caps . In the chapter about the shootout , the manuscript includes 109 uses of " CRACK " . She thought Earp needed to be shown as a hero , and the manuscript includes a chapter titled " Conflagration " in which Earp saves two women , one a cripple , from a Tombstone fire .

In 1990 , Spolidora was interviewed by a member of the San Bernardino historical society . She had been a teenager during the Earps ' many visits to the family home near Needles , California and sometimes went to San Diego with them . She attributed the highly exaggerated stories about Wyatt Earp to Josephine . Sadie " would always interfere whenever Wyatt would talk with Stuart Lake . She always interfered ! She wanted him to look like a church @-@ going saint and blow things up . Wyatt didn 't want that at all ! "

= = = Movie connections = = =

While living in Los Angeles , Earp became an unpaid film consultant for several silent cowboy movies . In 1916 , he went with his friend Jack London , who he knew from Nome , Alaska , to visit the set of former cowboy , sailor and movie actor @-@ turned @-@ film director Raoul Walsh who was shooting at the studio of Mutual Film conglomerate in Edendale , California . Walsh took the two men to dinner at Al Levy 's Cafe on Main and Third Street . During the meal , the highest paid entertainer in the world , Charlie Chaplin , dropped by to greet Wyatt Earp . Chaplin was impressed by both men , but particularly the former Tombstone marshal .

In 1915 , Earp visited the set of director Allan Dwan 's movie , The Half @-@ Breed , starring Douglas Fairbanks . In his autobiography , Dwan recalled , " As was the custom in those days , he [Earp] was invited to join the party and mingle with our background action . " Earp became friends with William Hart and later Tom Mix , the two most famous movie cowboys of their era . Hart was a stickler for realism in his depictions of Western life , and may have relied on Earp for advice . Earp later frequently visited the sets of movie director John Ford , whose movies starred Harry Carey .

In the early 1920s , Earp was given the honorary title of Deputy Sheriff in San Bernardino County , California . On January 25 , 1926 , Wyatt 's only surviving brother James died of cerebral apoplexy in San Bernardino , California .

= = = No regrets = = =

Two years before his death , Earp defended his decisions before the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral and his actions afterward in an interview with Stuart Lake , author of the 1931 largely fictionalized biography , Wyatt Earp : Frontier Marshal . He wrote Lake :

For my handling of the situation at Tombstone , I have no regrets . Were it to be done over again , I

would do exactly as I did at that time . If the outlaws and their friends and allies imagined that they could intimidate or exterminate the Earps by a process of murder , and then hide behind alibis and the technicalities of the law , they simply missed their guess . I want to call your particular attention again to one fact , which writers of Tombstone incidents and history apparently have overlooked : with the deaths of the McLowerys , the Clantons , Stillwell , Florentino Cruz , Curly Bill , and the rest , organized , politically protected crime and depredations in Cochise County ceased .

He also said , " The good Lord owes me an explanation for the things that have happened in my life

= = Death = =

Wyatt Earp was the last surviving Earp brother and the last surviving participant of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral when he died at home in the Earps ' small rented bungalow at 4004 W 17th Street , in Los Angeles , of chronic cystitis on January 13 , 1929 at the age of 80 . Charlie Welsh 's daughter Grace Spolidora and his daughter @-@ in @-@ law , Alma , were the only witnesses to Wyatt 's cremation . Josephine was apparently too full of grief to assist . Wyatt was survived by Josephine and sister Adelia . He had no children .

= = = Hollywood pallbearers = = =

The funeral was held at the Congregational Church on Wilshire Boulevard . Earp 's pallbearers were William J. Hunsaker , (Earp 's attorney in Tombstone and noted LA attorney) ; Jim Mitchell (Los Angeles Examiner reporter and Hollywood screenwriter) ; George W. Parsons (founding member of Tombstone 's " Committee of Vigilance ") ; Wilson Mizner (a friend of Wyatt 's during the Klondike Gold Rush) ; John Clum (a good friend from his days in Tombstone , former Tombstone mayor , and editor of The Tombstone Epitaph) ; William S. Hart (good friend and western actor and silent film star) ; and Tom Mix (friend and western film star) . Mitchell wrote Wyatt 's local obituary . The newspapers reported that Tom Mix cried during his friend 's service . When Josephine did not attend Wyatt 's funeral , Grace Spolidora was furious . " She didn 't go to his funeral , even . She wasn 't that upset . She was peculiar . I don 't think she was that devastated when he died . "

= = = Privately buried = = =

Josie , who was of Jewish heritage , had Earp 's body cremated and secretly buried his remains in the Marcus family plot at the Hills of Eternity , a Jewish cemetery in Colma , California . When she died in 1944 , her remains were interred alongside his . In 1957 , the Tombstone Restoration Commission looked for Wyatt 's ashes with the goal of having them moved to Tombstone . They contacted family members seeking permission and the location of his ashes , but no one could tell them where Wyatt was buried , not even his closest living relative , George Earp . Arthur King , a deputy to Earp from 1910 to 1912 , finally revealed that Josephine had buried Wyatt 's cremated remains in Colma , California , and the Tombstone Commission cancelled its plans to relocate his ashes .

On July 8 , 1957 , thieves excavated the Earp 's grave in an apparent attempt to steal his cremated remains , but unable to find them , stole the simple , 600 pounds (270 kg) grave marker . The stone was eventually returned but a new , more elaborate marker was erected later on . Their gravesite is the most visited resting place in the Jewish cemetery .

= = = Still controversial = = =

At the time of his death , he was still well known for his decision ending the Fitzimmons @-@ Sharkey fight along with the gunfight in Tombstone . His Associated Press obituary described him as a " gun @-@ fighter , whose blazing six @-@ shooters , were for most of his life allied with the side

of law and order " . It also gave prominent attention to his officiating of the Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey fight .

= = Physical description = =

Like his brothers , Wyatt Earp was a physically imposing figure for his day : 6 feet (1 @.@ 8 m) tall , when most men were about 5 feet 6 inches (1 @.@ 68 m) . He was described in 1887 by the Los Angeles Herald as " quiet , unassuming , broad @-@ shouldered , with a large blonde mustache . He is dignified , self @-@ contained , game and fearless , and no man commands greater respect ... " He weighed about 165 to 170 pounds (75 to 77 kg) , was long @-@ armed , and muscular , and was very capable of using his fists instead of his weapon to control those resisting his authority .

At about the same time , The Mirror , a newspaper in Monroe , Iowa printed a wire story originating in Denver . The anonymous reporter described Wyatt in detail :

Wyatt Earp , a man whose trigger finger had considerable to do in making the border history of the West , was in Denver for several days last week . He is tall and athletic . His eyes are blue and fringed with light lashes and set beneath blonde eyebrows . His hair , which was once as yellow as gold , is beginning to be stranded with white . A heavy , tawny mustache shades his firm mouth and sweeps below his strong , square chin . He wore ... a neat gray tailor @-@ made suit , immaculate linen and fashionable neckwear . With a Derby hat and a pair of tan shoes , he was a figure to catch a lady 's eye ...

In 1926 , writer Adela Rogers St. Johns met the elderly Earp for the first time .

He was straight as a pine tree , tall and magnificently built . I knew he was nearly 80 , but in spite of his snow white hair and mustache , he did not seem or look old . His greetings were warm and friendly . I stood in awe . Somehow , like a mountain , or desert , he reduced you to size .

= = Contemporary reputation = =

Among his peers , Wyatt was respected . His deputy Jimmy Cairns described Wyatt 's work as a police officer in Wichita , Kansas . " Wyatt Earp was a wonderful officer . He was game to the last ditch and apparently afraid of nothing . The cowmen all respected him and seemed to recognize his superiority and authority at such times as he had to use it . " He described Wyatt as " the most dependable man I ever knew ; a quiet , unassuming chap who never drank and in all respects a clean young fellow " .

When citizens of Dodge City learned the Earps had been charged with murder after the gunfight , they sent letters endorsing and supporting the Earps to Judge Wells Spicer .

John Clum , owner of The Tombstone Epitaph and mayor of Tombstone while Wyatt was a gambler and lawman there , described him in his book It All Happened in Tombstone .

Wyatt 's manner , though friendly , suggested a quiet reserve ... Frequently it has happened that men who have served as peace officers on the frontier have craved notoriety in connection with their dealings with the outlaw element of their time . Wyatt Earp deprecated such notoriety , and during his last illness he told me that for many years he had hoped the public would weary of the narratives ? distorted with fantastic and fictitious embellishments ? that were published from time to time concerning him , and that his last years might be passed in undisturbed obscurity .

Bill Dixon knew Wyatt early in his adult life . He wrote :

Wyatt was a shy young man with few intimates . With casual acquaintances he seldom spoke unless spoken to . When he did say anything it was to the point , without fear or favor , which wasn 't relished by some ; but that never bothered Wyatt . To those who knew him well he was a genial companion . He had the most even disposition I ever saw ; I never knew him to lose his temper . He was more intelligent , better educated , and far better mannered than the majority of his associates , which probably did not help them to understand him . His reserve limited his friendships , but more than one stranger , down on his luck , has had firsthand evidence of Wyatt 's generosity . I think his outstanding quality was the nicety with which he gauged the time and effort for every move . That , plus his absolute confidence in himself , gave him the edge over the run of men .

Public perception of his life has varied over the years as media accounts of his life have changed . The story of the Earps ' actions in Tombstone were published at the time by newspapers nationwide . Shortly after the shooting of Curly Bill , the Tucson Star wrote on March 21 , 1882 , in an editorial about the O.K. Corral gunfight , that the Cowboys had been ordered to put their hands up and after they complied , were shot by the Earps , stating , " The whole series of killings cannot be classed other than cold blooded murder . "

Famous lawman Bat Masterson described Wyatt in 1907 .

Wyatt Earp was one of the few men I personally knew in the West in the early days whom I regarded as absolutely destitute of physical fear . I have often remarked , and I am not alone in my conclusions , that what goes for courage in a man is generally fear of what others will think of him ? in other words , personal bravery is largely made up of self @-@ respect , egotism , and apprehension of the opinions of others . Wyatt Earp 's daring and apparent recklessness in time of danger is wholly characteristic ; personal fear doesn 't enter into the equation , and when everything is said and done , I believe he values his own opinion of himself more than that of others , and it is his own good report he seeks to preserve ... He never at any time in his career resorted to the pistol excepting cases where such a course was absolutely necessary . Wyatt could scrap with his fists , and had often taken all the fight out of bad men , as they were called , with no other weapons than those provided by nature .

= = = Experience in gun fights = = =

Wyatt was reputed to be an expert with a pistol . He showed no fear of any man . The Tombstone Epitaph said of Wyatt , " bravery and determination were requisites , and in every instance proved himself the right man in the right place " .

Wyatt was lucky during the few gun fights he took part in from his earliest job as an assistant police officer in Wichita to Tombstone , where he was briefly Deputy U.S. Marshal . Unlike his lawmen brothers Virgil and James , Wyatt was never wounded , although once his clothing and his saddle was shot through with bullet holes . According to John H. Flood 's biography (as dictated to him by Wyatt Earp) , Wyatt vividly recalled a presence that in several instances warned him away or urged him to take action . This happened when he was on the street , alone in his room at the Cosmopolitan Hotel , at Bob Hatch 's Pool Hall , where he went moments before Morgan was assassinated , and again when he approached Iron Springs and surprised Curly Bill Brocius , killing him .

= = Later reputation = =

After the shootout in Tombstone , his pursuit and murder of those who attacked his brothers , and after leaving Arizona , Wyatt was often the target of negative newspaper stories that disparaged his and his brothers ' reputation . His role in history has stimulated considerable ongoing scholarly and editorial debate . A large body of literature has been written about Wyatt Earp and his legacy , some of it highly fictionalized . Considerable portions of it are either full of admiration and flattery or hostile debunking .

Wyatt was repeatedly criticized in the media over the remainder of his life . His wife Josephine wrote , " The falsehoods that were printed in some of the newspapers about him and the unjust accusations against him hurt Wyatt more deeply than anything that ever happened to him during my life with him , with the exception of his mother 's death and that of his father and brother , Warren . "

= = = Negative publicity = = =

On April 16 , 1894 , the Fort Worth Gazette wrote that Virgil Earp and John Behan had a " deadly feud " . It described Behan as " an honest man , a good official , and possessed many of the attributes of a gentleman " . Earp , on the other hand , " was head of band of desperadoes , a partner in stage robbers , and a friend of gamblers and professional killers ... Wyatt was the boss

killer of the region . "

Former nemesis Johnny Behan continued to spread rumors about the Earps for the next 20 years . On December 7 , 1897 , he was quoted in a story in the Washington Post , reprinted by the San Francisco Call , describing the Earp 's lawbreaking behavior in Tombstone . After referring to the Fitzsimmons @-@ Sharkey fight , the article quoted Behan . " The Clanton brothers and the McLowrys were a tough lot of rustlers who were the main perpetrators of the rascally rife in that region . Between them and Earps rose a bitter feud over the division of the proceeds of the looting . The Earp boys believed they had failed to get a fair divide of the booty and swore vengeance . They caught their former allies in Tombstone unarmed and shot three of them dead while their hands were uplifted . " Behan went on to say , " They were hauled up before a Justice of the Peace ... Warrants were issued for their arrest , and , summoning a posse , I went out to bring the Earps in . They were chased entirely out of the country and Tombstone knew them no more . " Up until he died in 1912 , Johnny Behan lambasted the Earps as the bad men who had attacked the cowboys .

After Earp left Alaska in 1901 , the New York Sun printed a story in 1903 that described a confrontation Earp had reportedly had with a short 5 feet (1 @.@ 5 m) Cockney Canadian Mountie , who embarrassed Earp by demanding that he leave his weapon in his room . The story was reprinted as far away as New Zealand by the Otago Witness . The Dawson Record commented on the story , mocking the newspaper as a " venerable dispenser of truth . "

On April 13 , 1921 , the Arizona Republican ran a lengthy interview with Thomas Raines , a former resident of Tombstone . Raines remembered the Earps as having shot the Cowboys and killing Ike Clanton before they had a chance to surrender . He recalled that the Cowboys " were leading their horses out of the gate when they were confronted , almost from ambush , by four of the Earps , Virgil . Wyatt , Morgan and Jim and by Doc Holliday . Virgil Earp , armed with a sawed off express shotgun , and accompanying his demand with profanity , yelled " Hands up ! " But he didn 't wait for the action demanded and shot almost as soon as he spoke . Tom McLowery [sic] showed his empty bands , and cried . ' Gentlemen , I am unarmed . ' Holliday answered with the discharge of his shotgun . Ike Clanton fell at the first fire , mortally wounded , but he rolled over and fired two shots from his pistol between his bent knees . "

During 1922 , Frederick R. Bechdolt published the book When the West Was Young , which included a story about Wyatt 's time in Tombstone , but he mangled many basic facts . He described the Earp @-@ Clanton differences as the falling @-@ out of partners in crime .

On March 12 , 1922 , the Sunday Los Angeles Times ran a short , scandalous article titled " Lurid Trails Are Left by Olden @-@ Day Bandits " by J.M. Scanland . It described Wyatt and his brothers as a gang , comparable to the Dalton Gang , who waylaid the cowboys in the shoot out at the O.K. Corral . It said that the Earps were allies of Frank Stilwell , who had informed on them , so they killed him , and that Earp had died in Colton , California . In an article titled , " Lurid Trails Are Left By Olden Day Bandits , " the author described the Earp 's relationship with Sheriff Behan and the Cowboys :

Trouble arose between them and Sheriff John Behan , who tried to ' clean up ' the town . Trouble began when four cowboys refused to recognize the right of the Earp gang to rule the town . The cowboys were Bill and Ike Clanton and Tom and Frank McLowry . The Earps ordered the cowboys out of town and they were preparing to leave when they were waylaid and a gun battle followed during which Virgil Earp was shot in the leg , Morgan Earp in the shoulder and Ike Clanton was killed . The town was aroused and Frank Stilwell , who led the stage robberies , brought the trouble to a climax when he informed against his partners , because the Earps would not divide fairly . In a gun battle that followed , Stilwell killed Morgan Earp . A few months later another stage was robbed , and the driver , ' Bud ' Philpot , was killed .

Josephine and Earps ' friend and actor William Hart both wrote letters to the publisher . Josephine demanded that the error " must be corrected and printed in the same sensational manner " given to the correction as to the original article , which the paper published .

In 1924 , a story in a San Francisco paper said interviewing him was " like pulling teeth " . Earp did not trust the press and he preferred to keep his mouth shut . But the story by Scanland galvanized Earp . He was tired of all the lies perpetuated about him and became determined to get his story

accurately told . He began to collaborate on a biography with his friend John Flood in 1925 . It took Earp until 1927 to track down J.M. Scanland , the author of the LA Times article , and extract a written retraction from him . These and other reports bothered Earp a great deal , and he finally decided to do something about them .

= = = Walter Noble Burns = = =

Author Walter Noble Burns visited Earp in September 1926 and asked him questions with the intent to write a book about Earp . Earp declined because he was already collaborating with John Flood . Burns visited Tombstone and based on what he learned decided instead to focus his book on Doc Holliday . He pestered Earp for facts , and on March 27 the next year , Earp finally responded to Burn 's repeated requests in an 11 @-@ page letter outlining the basic facts from Earp 's point of view .

When their efforts to get the Flood manuscript published failed , the Earps decided to appeal to Burns , whose own book was near publication . But he was not interested . His book was about to be published , free of the constraints imposed by a collaboration with Earp . Burns wrote them , " I should not now care to undertake another book which , in part at least , would be upon much the same lines ... I should have been delighted six months ago to accept your offer but it is too late now . My book has championed Mr. Earp 's cause throughout and I believe will vindicate his reputation in Tombstone in a way that he will like . " When Burns turned them down , Josephine actively worked to stop the publication of his book , fearful that their efforts to publish Wyatt 's biography would be thwarted as a result .

In late 1927 , Burns published Tombstone , An Iliad of the Southwest , a mesmerizing tale " of blood and thunder " , that christened Earp as the " Lion of Tombstone " . " Strong , bold , forceful , picturesque was the fighter of the old frontier . Something epic in him , fashioned in Homeric mold . In his way , a hero . " It included a good deal about Wyatt as well , much to the Wyatt and Josie 's displeasure . Readers and reviewers found they had a difficult time discerning between " fact and fiction " . The book was the first to popularize its subject for a mass reading audience . Burns treated Earp as a mythical figure , a " larger @-@ than @-@ life hero whose many portrayals in film , television , and books often render fidelity to truth the first casualty . "

= = = Billy Breakenridge = = =

While living in Vidal , Wyatt and Josie were visited by Billy Breakenridge , the former Tombstone deputy under John Behan . He pressed Wyatt for details about his time in Tombstone to add to his book Helldorado : Bringing Law to the Mesquite . Breakenridge was assisted by Western novelist William MacLeod Raine , who since 1904 had published more than 25 novels about Western history . The book was published in 1928 before Wyatt died . It depicted Wyatt as a thief , pimp , crooked gambler , and murderer . Breakenridge wrote that the Earps and Doc Holliday aggressively mistreated the guiltless cowboys until they were forced into a fatal confrontation . His description of the 1881 O.K. Corral gun fight stated that the Clanton and McLaury brothers were merely cowboys who had been unarmed and surrendered but the Earp brothers had shot them in cold blood . Wyatt and Josie protested that the book 's contents was biased and more fiction than fact . Earp complained about the book until his death in 1929 , and his wife continued in the same vein afterward .

= = = Edwin Burkholder = = =

Edwin V. Burkholder , who specialized in stories about the Old West , published an article about Wyatt in 1955 in Argosy Magazine . He called Wyatt Earp a coward and murderer , and manufactured evidence to support his allegations . He also wrote , using the pseudonyms " George Carleton Mays " and " J. S. Qualey " , for the Western magazine Real West . His stores were filled with sensational claims about Wyatt Earp 's villainy , and he made up fake letters to the editor from

supposed " old @-@ timers " to corroborate this story .

= = = Frank Waters = = =

Frank Waters interviewed Virgil Earp 's widow , Allie Sullivan Earp , to write The Earp Brothers of Tombstone . The book was so contentious and disputed that he waited until 13 years after her death to publish the book . In it he condemned the Earp brothers ' character and called them names . The book " further embroidered upon Frank Waters 's imaginings about Wyatt 's adulterous affair " with Josephine . It was described by one reviewer as " a smear campaign levied against the Earp brothers " .

Waters used Allie Earp 's anecdotes as a frame for adding a narrative and " building a case , essentially piling quote upon quote to prove that Wyatt Earp was a con man , thief , robber , and eventually murderer " . Waters vociferously berated Wyatt :

Wyatt was an itinerant saloonkeeper , cardsharp , gunman , bigamist , church deacon , policeman , bunco artist , and a supreme confidence man . A lifelong exhibitionist ridiculed alike by members of his own family , neighbors , contemporaries , and the public press , he lived his last years in poverty , still vainly trying to find someone to publicize his life , and died two years before his fictitious biography recast him in the role of America 's most famous frontier marshal .

Allie Earp was so upset by the way Waters distorted and manipulated her words that she threatened to shoot him .

S.J. Reidhead , author of Travesty : Frank Waters Earp Agenda Exposed , spent nearly a decade searching for Water 's original manuscript , researching him , his background , and his bias against the Earps . In doing so , the author discovered that the story Waters presented against the Earps was primarily fictitious . " Nothing is documented , " she wrote . " There are no notes nor sourcing . There is only the original Tombstone Travesty manuscript and the final Earp Brothers of Tombstone . Because of his later reputation , few writers , even today , dare question Waters ' motives . They also do not bother fact checking the Earp Brothers of Tombstone , which is so inaccurate it should be considered fiction , rather than fact . "

Anti @-@ Earp writers and researchers use Frank Waters ' Earp Brothers of Tombstone , as their primary source for material that presents Wyatt Earp as something of a villainous monster , aided and abetted by his brothers who were almost brutes . Waters detested the Earps so badly that he presented a book that was terribly flawed , poorly edited , and brimming with prevarications . In his other work , Waters is poetic . In the Earp Brothers of Tombstone , he is little more than a tabloid hack , trying to slander someone he dislikes . To date , no reason has been uncovered for the bias Frank Waters exhibited against Wyatt Earp and his brothers .

= = = Ed Bartholomew = = =

In 1963 , Ed Bartholomew published Wyatt Earp , The Untold Story followed by Wyatt Earp : Man and Myth in 1964 . His books were strongly anti @-@ Earp and attacked Wyatt Earp 's image as a hero . Bartholomew went about this by reciting snippets of accumulated anti @-@ Earp facts , rumors , gossip , and innuendo . Bartholomew 's books started a trend of debunking Earp , and the academic community followed his lead , pursuing the image of Earp as a " fighting pimp " .

= = = Allen Barra = = =

In reviewing Allen Barra 's Inventing Wyatt Earp . His Life and Many Legends , William Urban , a Professor of History at Monmouth College in Warren County , Illinois , pointed out a number of factual inaccuracies in the book . One inconsistency by Barra pointed out by another reviewer includes a description of the poker game the night before the shootout . Ike Clanton 's account of the game (the only one that exists) gives the participants as John Behan , Virgil Earp , Ike Clanton , Tom McLaury , and a fifth man Ike did not recognize , while Barra wrote the Holliday had attended the game .

= = Fame = =

Earp was dismayed about the controversy that continually followed him . He wrote a letter to John Hays Hammond on May 21 , 1925 , telling him " notoriety had been the bane of my life . I detest it , and I never have put forth any effort to check the tales that have been published in which my brothers and I are supposed to have been the principal participants . Not one of them is correct . "

Finally attempting to counter negative accounts in newspapers and books , Earp tried to persuade his good friend , well @-@ known cowboy movie star William S. Hart , to make a movie about his life . " If the story were exploited on the screen by you , " he wrote Hart , " It would do much toward setting me right before a public which has always been fed lies about me . " Hart encouraged Earp to first find an author to pen his story .

= = = Flood manuscript = = =

After Earp failed to get his story told in a way that he approved , he began working in 1925 with former mining engineer John H. Flood , Jr. to get his life story committed to paper . Flood volunteered his time and attempted to write an authorized biography of Earp 's life , based on Earp 's recollections . But Flood 's writing was " stilted , corny and one @-@ dimensional , " and the manuscript , completed some time in early 1926 , never found a publisher . In February 1927 , editor Anne Johnston of Bobbs Merrill wrote back and was highly critical of the " stilted , florid and diffuse " writing . She wrote , " Now one forgets what it 's all about in the clutter of unimportant details that impedes its pace , and the pompous manner of its telling . "

Hart tried to help . In February 1926 he wrote The Saturday Evening Post and encouraged them to publish Flood 's biography so " that ... the rising generation may know the real from the unreal " , but Flood was a horrendous writer , and publisher after publisher rejected the manuscript .

A number of copies were made and sold in 1981 , and the original carbon copy of the typed manuscript , found among Josephine Earp 's papers , was given by Glenn Boyer to the Ford County Historical Society .

= = = Lake 's biography = = =

Unlike most legendary lawmen of the American West , Earp was relatively unknown until Stuart Lake published the first biography of Wyatt Earp , Wyatt Earp : Frontier Marshal in 1931 , two years after Earp died . Lake portrayed Earp as a " Western superhero " who single @-@ handedly cleaned up a town full of cowboy criminals . In fact Earp had been a stagecoach guard for Wells Fargo , a full @-@ time gambler , a regular associate of prostitutes , and , occasionally , a lawman .

Lake wrote the book with Earp 's input , but was only able to interview him eight times before Earp died , during which Earp sketched out the " barest facts " of his life . Despite having received very little information from Earp , Lake wrote the biography in the first person .

Lake initially sought Earp out hoping to write a magazine article about him . Earp was also seeking a biographer at about the same time . Earp , who was 80 , was concerned that his vantage point on the Tombstone story may be lost , and may have been financially motivated as he had little income in his last years of life .

During the interviews and in later correspondence , Josephine and Wyatt went to great lengths to keep her name out of Lake 's book . Lake wrote Earp that he planned to send portions of the book to his New York agent , but Earp objected because he wanted to read it first . After Earp 's death on January 13 , 1929 , Josephine continued to try to persuade Lake to leave her and Earp 's former wife , Mattie Blaylock , out of the book , even threatening legal action . Lake finally published Wyatt Earp : Frontier Marshal in 1931 , two years after Earp 's death .

Lake 's creative biography portrays Earp as a " Western superhero " , " gallant white knight " and entirely avoided mentioning Josephine Earp . A number of Hollywood movies have been directly and indirectly influence by Earp 's role as a western lawman . The book drew considerable positive

attention and established Lake as a western screenwriter for years to come . It also established the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral in the public consciousness and Earp as a fearless lawman in the American Old West .

The book " is now regarded more as fiction than fact " , " an imaginative hoax , a fabrication mixed with just enough fact to give it credibility " .

= = = Reputation as a teetotaler = = =

Earp 's image is that of a teetotaler , but as a saloon owner and gambler , he drank occasionally as well . When Flood and Lake wrote their biographies , Prohibition was in force . Among the other facts Josephine wanted scrubbed from Earp 's history , she persuaded biographers Flood , Lake and Burns to write that Earp was a non @-@ drinker . A good friend of Earp 's , Charlie Welsh , was known to disappear for days at a time " to see property " , the family euphemism for a drinking binge , and Earp was his regular partner . Director John Ford said that whenever Josephine left town for religious conventions , Earp would come into town , play poker , and get drunk with the cowboy actors .

= = = " Buntline Special " = = =

In his book , Lake wrote about the Colt Buntline Special , a variant of long @-@ barreled Colt Single Action Army revolver . According to Lake 's biography , dime novelist Ned Buntline had five Buntline Specials commissioned . Lake described them as extra @-@ long , 12 inches (300 mm) -long barrel Colt Single Action Army revolvers . Buntline was supposed to have presented them to lawmen in thanks for their help with contributing " local color " to his western yarns . According to Lake , the pistol was equipped with a detachable metal shoulder stock . Lake wrote that Earp and four other well @-@ known western lawmen ? Bat Masterson , Bill Tilghman , Charlie Bassett and Neal Brown ? each received a Buntline Special . However , neither Tilghman nor Brown were lawmen then .

Researchers have never found any record of an order received by the Colt company , and Ned Buntline 's alleged connections to Earp 's have been largely discredited .

After the publication of Lake 's book , various Colt revolvers with long (10 " or 16 ") barrels were referred to as " Colt Buntlines " . Colt re @-@ introduced the revolvers in its second generation revolvers produced after 1956 . The Buntline Special was further popularized by The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp television series .

= = = Dubious claims by Earp = = =

Earp 's reputation has been confused by inaccurate , conflicting , and false stories told about him by others , and by his own claims that cannot be corroborated . For example , in an interview with a reporter in Denver in 1896 , he denied that he had killed Johnny Ringo . He then flipped his story , claiming he had killed Ringo . In 1888 , he was interviewed by an agent of California historian Hubert H. Bancroft , and Earp claimed that he had killed " over a dozen stage robbers , murderers , and cattle thieves " . In about 1918 he told Forrestine Hooker , who wrote an unpublished manuscript , and then Frank Lockwood , who wrote Pioneer Days in Arizona in 1932 , that he was the one who killed Johnny Ringo as he left Arizona in 1882 . However , Earp included details that do not match what is known about Ringo 's death . Earp repeated that claim to at least three other people .

At the hearing following the Tombstone shootout , Earp said he had been marshal in Dodge City , a claim he repeated in an August 16 , 1896 , interview that appeared in the San Francisco Examiner . But Earp had only been an assistant city marshal there .

During an interview with his future biographer Stuart Lake during the late 1920s , Earp said that he arrested notorious gunslinger Ben Thompson in Ellsworth , Kansas , on August 15 , 1873 , when news accounts and Thompson 's own contemporary account about the episode do not mention his presence . He also told Lake that he had hunted buffalo during 1871 and 1872 , but Earp was

arrested three times in the Peoria area during that period for " Keeping and being found in a house of ill @-@ fame . " He was arrested and jailed on a horse theft charge on April 6 , 1871 . However he was not convicted of the last charge and was released .

In the same interview , Earp claimed that George Hoyt had intended to kill him , although newspaper accounts from that time report differently . He also said he and Bat Masterson had confronted Clay Allison when he was sent to Dodge City to finish George Hoyt 's job , and that they had forced him to back down . Two other accounts contradicted Earp , crediting cattleman Dick McNulty and Long Branch Saloon owner Chalk Beeson with convincing Allison and his cowboys to surrender their guns . Cowboy Charlie Siringo witnessed the incident and left a written account .

= = Modern image = =

Wyatt outlived his brothers , and due to the fame Wyatt gained from Lake 's biography and later adaptations of it , he is often mistakenly viewed as the central character and hero of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral . In fact , Virgil Earp , as Deputy U.S. Marshal and Tombstone City Marshal , actually held the legal authority in Tombstone the day of the shootout . Virgil had considerably more experience with weapons and combat as a Union soldier in the Civil War , and in law enforcement as a sheriff , constable , and marshal than did Wyatt . As city marshal , Virgil made the decision to enforce a city ordinance prohibiting carrying weapons in town and to disarm the Cowboys . Wyatt was only a temporary assistant marshal to his brother .

= = = Cultural image as Western lawman = = =

Earp 's modern @-@ day reputation is that of the Old West 's " toughest and deadliest gunman of his day " . He is " a cultural icon , a man of law and order , a mythic figure of a West where social control and order were notably absent " . Due to Lake 's fanciful biography and because Wyatt outlived all of his brothers , his name became famous and he is the source of many movies , TV shows , biographies and works of fiction .

Western historian and author John Boessenecker describes Earp as an " enigmatic figure ... He always lived on the outer fringe of respectable society , and his closest companions were gamblers and sporting men ... Wyatt never set down roots in any one place ; when the money stopped coming in or his problems became too great , he would pull up stakes and move on to the next boomtown ... For his entire life was a gamble , an effort to make money without working hard for it , to succeed quickly without ever settling in for the long haul .

= = = Josephine Earp memoir = = =

One of the most well known and for many years respected books about Wyatt Earp was the book I Married Wyatt Earp , originally credited as a factual memoir by Josephine Marcus Earp . Published in 1976 , it was edited by amateur historian Glenn Boyer , and published by the respected University of Arizona Press . It was immensely popular for many years , capturing the imagination of people with an interest in western history , studied in classrooms , cited by scholars , and relied upon as factual by filmmakers .

In 1998 , writer Tony Ortega wrote a lengthy investigative article for the Phoenix New Times for which he interviewed Boyer . Boyer said that he was uninterested in what others think of the accuracy of what he has written . " This is an artistic effort . I don 't have to adhere to the kind of jacket that these people are putting on me . I am not a historian . I 'm a storyteller . " Boyer admitted that the book is " 100 percent Boyer " . He said the book was not really a first @-@ person account , that he had interpreted Wyatt Earp in Josephine 's voice , and admitted that he could not produce any documents to vindicate his methods .

Boyer and the University Press ' credibility was severely damaged . In 2000 the University referred all questions to university lawyers who investigated some of the allegations about Boyer 's work . Later that year the Press removed the book from their catalog . The book has been discredited as a

fraud and a hoax that cannot be relied on .

As a result , other works by Boyer were subsequently questioned . His book , Wyatt Earp 's Tombstone Vendetta , published in 1993 , was according to Boyer based on an account written by a previously unknown Tombstone journalist that he named " Theodore Ten Eyck " , but whose identity could not be independently verified . Boyer claimed that the manuscript was " clearly authentic " and that it contained " fascinating revelations (if they are true) and would make an ace movie " . Boyer later said the character was in fact a blend of " scores of accounts " , but could not provide any sources .

History Professor William Urban also described " the questionable scholarship of Glenn Boyer , the dominant figure in Earpiana for the past several decades , who has apparently invented a manuscript and then cited it as a major source in his publications . This does not surprise this reviewer , who has personal experience with Boyer 's pretentious exaggeration of his acquaintance with Warren County records . "

= = In popular culture = =

When a post office was established in 1930 in the unincorporated settlement of Drennan , near the site of some of his mining claims , it was renamed Earp , California in his honor .

= = = Ship Wyatt Earp = = =

Arctic explorer Lincoln Ellsworth became fascinated with the Earp legend . Ellsworth completed four expeditions to Antarctica between 1933 and 1939 , using a former Norwegian herring boat as his aircraft transporter and base that he named Wyatt Earp after his hero .

Ellsworth befriended Earp 's widow , Josephine Earp . After Wyatt 's death , she wrote him that she was sending him Wyatt 's handgun , a shotgun , pipe , and wedding ring . She said she was sending him a .41 @-@ caliber Colt revolver , which she said Wyatt referred to affectionately as his " baby pony . " However , Ellsworth actually received a .45 @-@ caliber Colt revolver with a 7 ½ " barrel . Its serial number indicates it was originally shipped from the Colt factory on January 30 , 1883 . The shotgun was a 16 gauge double @-@ barreled hunting shotgun and case belonging to Wyatt . Ellsworth 's widow donated this pistol to the Arizona Historical Society in 1988 .

= = = Earp weapons auctioned = = =

On April 17 , 2014 , the family of deceased Earp amateur historian Glenn Boyer put much of his Earp collection and many artifacts up for auction . Among the 32 boxes of documentation , files , pictures and memorabilia for sale was a Colt .45 caliber said by Earp descendants to have been owned by Wyatt Earp . Also included in the auction was a Winchester lever @-@ action shotgun belonging to Wyatt Earp .

Earp was known to carry a .45 caliber pistol , as he did on the night of the Fitzimmons @-@ Sharkey fight in 1896 . Historians have credible evidence that Wyatt used a .44 caliber 1869 American model Smith & Wesson during the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral . This weapon was given by Earp to John Flood , who left it to Earp historian John D. Gilchriese .

Descendants of Wyatt Earp 's cousins assert that Earp carried the pistol featured in the auction and while in Tombstone , although the grips , barrel , and cylinder have been replaced . Only the frame is original , and its serial number has been filed off . But X @-@ ray testing showed an original serial number , 5686 , which matches a batch of revolvers purchased by the U.S. Army in 1874 .

The history of the items is controversial because they belonged to Boyer . John Boessenecker , a respected author of numerous articles on the American Old West and a collector of American Old West guns and memorabilia , said that it would be " impossible to separate the authenticity of the auction items from Boyer 's own troubled history . " This is particularly true because the provenance of the weapons is based on letters written by or given to Boyer . The authenticity of the revolver displayed at the auction is attested to by a typewritten letter dictated by Bill Miller to his daughter

LaVonne Griffin . Miller was married to Estelle Edwards , the daughter of Adelia Earp Edwards , Wyatt 's sister . Before his death , Boyer completed a sworn affidavit attesting that the Colt .45 belonged to Earp . The affidavit is included with the revolver along with other expert findings . Critics challenge the authenticity of the letter because Boyer signed an affidavit in 1994 and stated again in 1999 , long after Bill Miller 's death , that he did not have any documentation from Miller . LeRoy Merz , the owner of Merz Antique Firearms , is the nation 's largest dealer in antique Winchesters in the United States . Despite Boyer 's affidavit , he said the missing serial number is a " kiss of death , " he says . " No serious collector will want that . "

The Wyatt revolver from Boyer 's estate was expected to fetch from \$ 100 @, @ 000 and \$ 150 @, @ 000 . On the day of the auction , more than 6 @, @ 400 online bidders and over 400 collectors from 49 countries took part in the auction . The revolver attributed to Wyatt Earp was sold to an unnamed phone bidder from New Mexico for \$ 225 @, @ 000 . The Winchester lever @-@ action shotgun also said to be Wyatt Earp 's sold for \$ 50 @, @ 000 , below the high value estimate of \$ 125 @, @ 000 .

= = = Gunfight sketch sold at auction = = =

John H. Flood Jr . , Wyatt Earp 's secretary , who he regarded like a son , drew a sketch of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral in 1926 under Wyatt 's supervision . The drawing placed participants and selected witnesses on Fremont Street in Tombstone , and Earp annotated it with lines indicating how the participants moved during the 30 @-@ second shootout . It was sold at auction by Alexander Autographs in early October 2010 , for \$ 380 @, @ 000 .

= = = First depiction in film = = =

Earp 's good friend William Hart produced and wrote the first movie to depict Wyatt Earp , the seven @-@ reel epic Wild Bill Hickok released by Paramount in 1923 . Hart played Wild Bill Hickok and Bert Lindley played Earp . Earp served as a technical adviser on the film . This was the first movie that depicted Wyatt Earp , and the only movie that included his character before he died in 1929 . The role of Earp 's character in the movie was small . Bert Lindley is not listed on some descriptions of the movie and this portrayal of Earp is often overlooked . Alan Barra , author of *Inventing Wyatt Earp : His Life and Many Legends* , overlooked this movie in his biography .

In the film , Earp joined Calamity Jane , Bat Masterson , Doc Holliday , Charlie Bassett , Luke Short and Bill Tilghman in cleaning up a wild cowtown . Promotional copy for the film prominently mentioned Earp : " Back in the days when the West was young and wild , ' Wild Bill ' fought and loved and adventured with such famous frontiersmen as Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp . " Earp was described in the promotional copy as " Deputy Sheriff to Bat Masterson of Dodge City , known as one of the three greatest gun @-@ men that ever lived , along with Bat Masterson and ' Wild Bill ' Hickok " . In reality , Earp was a virtually unknown assistant marshal in Dodge City when Wild Bill Hickok was murdered in 1876 .

= = = Depiction of Old West lawmen = = =

Wyatt Earp both directly and indirectly influenced the way movies depict lawmen in the American Old West . While living in Los Angeles , Earp met several well @-@ known and soon @-@ to @-@ be famous actors on the sets of various movies . He became good friends with Western actors William S. Hart , and Tom Mix . Stuart Lake 's book *Wyatt Earp : Frontier Marshal* was the basis for how Earp has been depicted as a fearless Western hero in a large number of films and books . The book was first adapted into a movie for *Frontier Marshal* in 1934 . Josephine Earp successfully pressured the producers to remove Wyatt 's name from the film , and the protagonist was renamed " Michael Wyatt " . The film was made again in 1939 . Josephine sued 20th Century Fox for \$ 50 @, @ 000 , but with the provision that Wyatt 's name be removed from the title , and after she received \$ 5 @, @ 000 , the movie was released as *Frontier Marshal* starring Randolph Scott playing

Wyatt Earp . Sol M. Wurtzel produced both films .

Lake wrote another book about Wyatt Earp titled *My Darling Clementine* in 1946 that Director John Ford developed into the movie *My Darling Clementine* , which further boosted Wyatt 's reputation . The book later inspired a number of stories , movies and television programs about outlaws and lawmen in Dodge City and Tombstone . Lake wrote a number of screenplays for these movies and twelve scripts for the 1955 - 61 television series *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp* starring Hugh O 'Brian as Earp .

The popular movie *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* released in 1957 starring Burt Lancaster as Earp cemented his place in Western history as a hero lawman . The movie also altered the public 's perception of cowboys , who in Earp 's time and locale were outlaws , but in the movies were reinvented as good guys assisting the lawmen in their fight against the outlaws .

Director John Ford said that when he was a prop boy in the early days of silent pictures , Earp would visit pals he knew from his Tombstone days on the sets . " I used to give him a chair and a cup of coffee , and he told me about the fight at the O.K. Corral . So in *My Darling Clementine* , we did it exactly the way it had been . " When Ford was working on his last silent feature *Hangman 's House* in 1928 , which included the first credited screen appearances by John Wayne , Earp used to visit the set . John Wayne later told Hugh O 'Brian that he based his Western lawman walk , talk and persona to his acquaintance with Wyatt Earp , who was good friends with Mix . " I knew him ... I often thought of Wyatt Earp when I played a film character . There 's a guy that actually did what I 'm trying to do . " Wyatt Earp 's character has been the central figure in 10 films and featured in many more . Among the best @-@ known actors who have portrayed him are Randolph Scott , Guy Madison , Henry Fonda , Joel McCrea , Burt Lancaster , James Garner , Jimmy Stewart , Hugh O 'Brian , Kurt Russell and Kevin Costner .

With the emergence of television in the 1950s , producers spun out a large number of western @-@ oriented shows . At the height of their popularity in 1959 , there were more than two dozen " cowboy " programs on each week . At least six of them were connected to some extent with Wyatt Earp : *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp* , *Bat Masterson* , *Tombstone Territory* , *Broken Arrow* , *Johnny Ringo* , and *Gunsmoke* .

= = = Earp legend in film and television = = =

Frontier Marshal (1934) ? The first film adaptation of Stuart N. Lake 's novel . George O 'Brien plays " Michael Wyatt " .

Frontier Marshal (1939) ? Randolph Scott as Wyatt Earp .

Tombstone , the Town Too Tough to Die (1942) ? Stars Richard Dix .

My Darling Clementine (1946) ? Stars Henry Fonda and directed by John Ford .

Wichita (1955) ? Stars Joel McCrea .

The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp TV series (1955 - 1961) ? Starring Hugh O 'Brian as Wyatt Earp .

Gunfight at the O.K. Corral (1957) ? Stars Burt Lancaster .

Hour of the Gun (1967) ? Stars James Garner in the first of two movies with Garner as Earp .

Doc (1971) ? *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* from Doc Holliday 's point of view . Stacy Keach as Doc and Harris Yulin as Wyatt .

Tombstone (1993) ? Stars Kurt Russell .

Wyatt Earp : Return to Tombstone (1994) ? Film combines colorized footage of *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp* with new scenes filmed in Tombstone .

Wyatt Earp (1994) ? Stars Kevin Costner .

Wyatt Earp 's Revenge (2012) ? Stars Val Kilmer .

= = = Earp as a character or adaptation of the legend = = =

Law and Order (1932) ? Walter Huston as Frame Johnson , inspired by Wyatt Earp .

Dodge City (1939) ? Errol Flynn as Wade Hatton , inspired by Wyatt Earp .

Winchester '73 (1950) ? James Stewart wins a rare Winchester rifle that is stolen . Will Geer portrays Wyatt Earp .

Gun Belt (1953) ? Outlaw Billy Ringo tries to go straight .

Masterson of Kansas (1954) ? Bat Masterson is assisted by Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday .

Badman 's Country (1958) ? Pat Garrett catches up to Butch Cassidy 's gang and calls in Wyatt Earp .

Alias Jesse James (1959) ? Bob Hope stars and Hugh O 'Brian briefly appears as Wyatt Earp .

The Secret World of Eddie Hodges (1960) ? TV musical starring Jackie Gleason and Hugh O 'Brian as Wyatt Earp .

Cheyenne Autumn (1964) James Stewart as Wyatt Earp and Arthur Kennedy as Doc Holliday .

Desafío en Rio Bravo (1965) ? Guy Madison as Wyatt Earp .

" The Gunfighters " (1966) , an episode of Doctor Who ? The TARDIS materializes in Tombstone prior to the gunfight .

Hour of the Gun (1967) James Garner as Wyatt Earp .

" Spectre of the Gun " (1968) , an episode of Star Trek : The Original Series ? Officers of the USS Enterprise are cast as the Cowboys . Ron Soble plays Wyatt Earp .

Alias Smith and Jones ? Cameron Mitchell as Wyatt Earp and Bill Fletcher plays Doc Holliday .

I Married Wyatt Earp (1983) ? Based on the supposed memoir . Marie Osmond as Josephine Earp .

Sunset (1988) ? Bruce Willis as Tom Mix and James Garner as Wyatt Earp .

Deadwood (2006) ? Gale Harold as Wyatt Earp .

Hannah 's Law (2012) ? Greyston Holt as Wyatt Earp .

Wyonna Earp (TV Series) (2016) ? Ryan Northcott as Wyatt Earp and Tim Rozon as Doc Holliday .

= = Additional reading = =