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Wyatt Earp in San Bernardino

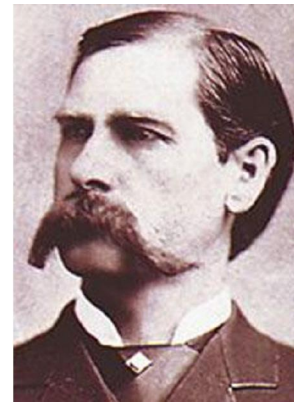
(From the book, "The Earp Clan: The Southern California Years", by Nicholas R. Cataldo)

EARP CLAN MOVES TO SAN BERNARDINO

He spent more of his life in San Bernardino County, California, than anywhere else. But, if the man had to depend on his exploits here to justify his claim to fame, he'd be remembered only as a citizen who preferred the solitude of the desert to the bustle of the gambling halls and saloons of Kansas and Arizona, where he drew more attention.



Wyatt Earp at about age 21



Wyatt Earp at 38-years-old

The fact is, Wyatt Earp, whose name has been immortalized for his exploits in Tombstone and other wild camps, spent five times as much of his life as a mine developer in San Bernardino County than he did as a frontier lawman.



James (Jim) Earp, from a photo found in the album of Adela Earp. From the Boyer Collection

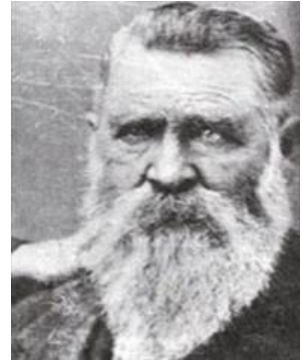
Plans of moving the Earp Clan out to this area from their home in Pella, Iowa, began shortly after brother Jim's discharge from active duty in 1863 as a Union Soldier in the Civil War due to a severely wounded shoulder.

While brothers Newton and Virgil were still fighting in the raging conflict, Wyatt's father, Nick, quit his job as assistant provost marshal and pulled up stakes for a move out to a beautiful valley in southern California that he briefly passed through on his way home from prospecting back in 1851...San Bernardino.

In 1864 Nick organized a wagon train made up of three other Pella families, the [Rousseaus](#), the Hamiltons, and the Curtises; and on May 12, 1864, they embarked for the trip out west.

The train started out with 30 people who included Wyatt, his parents, older brother, Jim, and younger siblings, Morgan, Warren, and Adelia. Three children were born to the other families later on during the journey.

[Mrs. Rousseau](#), who kept a diary of the trip, mentioned that after they made their first night's camp, seven more wagons straggled in late. By the time the wagon train reached its destination there were about a dozen wagons in all.



Nick Earp when he was 65.
Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino
[Historical and Pioneer Society](#)

During the arduous journey across the barren plains, the desolate Mojave Desert, and through the rugged [Cajon Pass](#), Nick and Jim did most of the driving. Sixteen year old Wyatt spent much of the time riding around with the [Rousseau](#) kids, doing necessary chores such as fetching water and food, baby-sitting 3 year old Adelia, and occasionally helping out by driving a wagon.

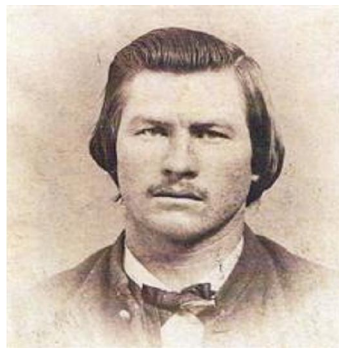
The caravan reached San Bernardino on December 17, 1864 and set up camp just east of what is today Sierra Way and [Court Street](#). After a few days the Earps rented a farm on the banks of the Santa Ana River in what is now the northern section of [Redlands](#).



Third Street in downtown San Bernardino looking east from "D" shows how a part of the "Old West" the town was in 1864.

Saloons stood at each corner of that intersection, prompting the interesting moniker "Whiskey Point."
Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino [Historical and Pioneer Society](#)

Shortly after arrival, young Wyatt made it known that he wasn't cut out to be a farmer. One day he decided to run away for a few days vacation only to return home for a whipping from the old man who then kicked him off the farm.



Rare photograph of Virgil Earp at age 19, taken in 1862 in Monmouth, IL by E.S. Cleveland. Virgil was saloon keeper in San Bernardino and a Constable in [Colton](#). Photo courtesy of Craig Fouts, San Diego.. Photo courtesy of Craig Fouts, San Diego.

Virgil then took Wyatt with him driving a freight wagon to Salt Lake City and later got them both a job on the Union Pacific which was building west-- Virgil as a teamster and Wyatt as a pick and shovel man.

In the fall of 1868, Nick Earp, frustrated that none of the boys were home to help out on the farm, left California and headed back east. By then Jim had gone to the mining towns of Montana, taking young Morgan with him. Nick headed east by wagon and caught a train at the Union Pacific railhead in Wyoming. Somewhat cooled off by now, he looked up his boys near the railhead, and they all made the trip back to the mid-west.

Little did young Wyatt realize at the time, however, that he had not seen the last of San Bernardino.

EARP CLAN LEFT THEIR MARK IN SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY

The story of the Earp brothers lives on in books, movies, and even a 1950's television series. The focus has always been on their "lawman" escapades in Tombstone. The truth is, they lived there just a little over two years.

What is not well known is the time that the family spent in the San Bernardino Valley.

After a series of misfortunes in Missouri, Nick and Virginia Earp decided to head back to California in 1877 with their two youngest children, Warren and Adelia. A decade earlier they unsuccessfully tried to maintain a ranch near San Bernardino...unsuccessful because their sons didn't "give a hoot" about [farming](#).

After first stopping in Temescal, the clan went back to the San Bernardino Valley and found a new home in the sleepy little town of [Colton](#) where Nick became justice of the peace.

Meanwhile, the Earp boys spent much of their lives roaming from boomtown to boomtown throughout the west in search of fortune. Sometimes lawmen, sometimes gamblers, town lot speculators, prospectors, and undercover agents--they ventured into almost anything that might turn a profit.

Wyatt and Jim had moved on to the Kansas cow towns of Wichita and Dodge City, where Wyatt worked as an assistant marshal and Jim worked as a bartender. Virgil began working as Deputy U.S. Marshal in Arizona Territory while Morgan was exploring Montana.

Two years later the brothers reunited in the Arizona silver mining town of Tombstone where Virgil, Wyatt, and Morgan had their celebrated shootout with the Clantons and the McLaurys.



This is the only known authentic photo of Morgan Earp and was provided by the grand-niece and nephew of Morgan's common-law-wife, Louisa Houston Earp. From the Boyer Collection.

Following the "Gunfight at the O. K. Corral" there was the murder of Morgan and a nearly fatal ambush of Virgil. After Morgan's body was returned to his parents' home in [Colton](#) inside a coffin, accompanied by the grievously wounded Virgil and the brothers' wives, Wyatt headed up a posse which resulted in the retaliated killings of members of the cowboy gang before he and Jim ventured for a while out to the gold rush mining towns in Idaho.

During the next few years, Virgil, despite his permanently damaged left arm, worked as a constable and then was elected as the first city marshal in [Colton](#). Meanwhile, Nick continued serving as justice of the peace in [Colton](#) and Jim returned to town working as a "hack driver" in and around San Bernardino before opening up the Club Exchange Saloon with a man named J.H. Anderson.



Warren Earp at age 25.

Courtesy of San Bernardino [Historical and Pioneer Society](#).

Warren, Wyatt's youngest brother, a self-proclaimed "capitalist", was living at the King House in San Bernardino. In 1893, Warren moved to Arizona. Almost 19 years after the famous street fight in Tombstone, often referred to as the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral", Warren was gunned down in a Willcox, Arizona saloon.

Wyatt, on the other hand, had moved on to such places as Denver, San Diego, and San Francisco, occasionally stopping in the San Bernardino area for extended periods to visit his family, especially with his folks at their home on the corner of [Mt. Vernon](#) and "I" Street in [Colton](#).

Although never fathering children, Wyatt was very fond of them. However, his quiet and deliberate demeanor combined with his steely blue eyes nevertheless sometimes left the young ones a bit weary of him.

A prime example of this dilemma was a story about Wyatt revealed by Nathalie Daggett, granddaughter of Adelia, to genealogist, Marsha Patrick, in an interview in 1993. Mrs. Daggett recalled her mother mentioning that one day while Adelia was living in Mentone Wyatt brought a big bag of candy for the kids. However, he had to leave it in the middle of the floor because the kids were so afraid of his piercing eyes.

During Wyatt's family visits in the San Bernardino area, it was not uncommon for him and Virgil, whose H Street home was just a short distance from his parents' residence, to ride through the [Cajon Pass](#) and on to Lone Pine Canyon where their good friend, Almon Clyde, owned a large ranch. The brothers would often stay a couple weeks at a time at the ranch while all three of them hunted deer during the day. The Earp brothers also helped out their friend by cutting and baling hay on the property.

Besides the Clyde family, Wyatt spent a good deal of time visiting friends in other areas of the San Bernardino Valley.

According to local legend, on at least one occasion Wyatt found refuge after a long day's ride in a boarding house in the small community of Etiwanda, now commonly known as the Isle House.



Nick and Virginia Ann Earp posing for a photo when celebrating their 50th wedding Anniversary.
Courtesy of the San Bernardino [Historical and Pioneer Society](#)

While visiting his family in the San Bernardino area soon after returning from the Klondike gold fields in Alaska in 1901, Wyatt along with Virgil applied for a gambling hall permit in [Colton](#), but was turned down. [Colton](#) was one of the few frontier towns that actually had more churches than gambling establishments and with their father's retirement of several years, the little influence that the Earps had left was gone now.

Frustrated for having been turned down, Wyatt left town with his wife, Josie (nicknamed Sadie), for "greener pastures".

He'd be back before long.

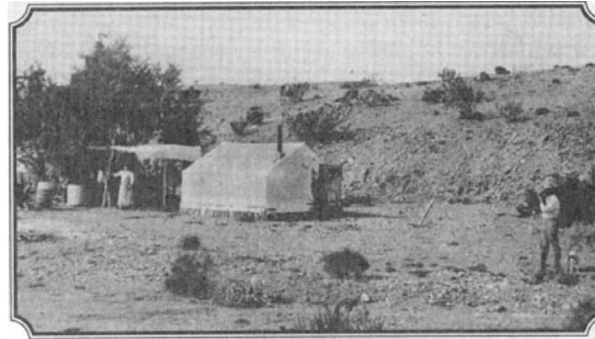


Josephine Sarah "Sadie" Earp, c. 1880. Copy of a photo in the possession of Carmelita Mayhew (photographer unknown). According to Carmelita this photo was copied extensively after the death of Johnny Behan for whom it was made. Boyer Collection.

WYATT EARP, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF

After a life time's worth of adventures that saw him work as a buffalo hunter, gambler, officer of the law and prospector in the Klondike gold fields, 58 year old Wyatt Earp decided to get away from it all in 1906. That year, he and his wife, Josie, moved out to the remote southeastern corner of the Mojave Desert near the Whipple Mountains and discovered their beloved "Happy Days" Mines. The initial claims -"Copper Accident", "Colorado", "Cave", "Giant", "Hercules", "Happy Day", and "Lucky Day"-were spread out about four miles west of the Colorado River crossing at Parker, Arizona.

Although the prospects were probably not bad, it is doubtful they ever took much paying ore from these stakes, which consisted of some gold but mostly copper. Basically, Wyatt and Josie wanted a place to go and meet with friends---not to make a fortune. Their mining interests (which eventually increased to nearly 100 claims) were simply an excuse to be out there.



Over the next twenty years they frequently camped out next to the Happy Day Mines during the fall, winter and spring months while also maintaining a more substantial house at Vidal, about 25 miles to the southwest.

Wyatt Earp's Camp, tent and ramada with Sadie at left, Wyatt at right, and the ever present dog. Discovered in Sadie Earp's private papers. The Boyer Collection.

And it was in Vidal during the early 1920's, that the Old West legend, best known for his lawman exploits in Dodge City and Tombstone, was presented with a San Bernardino County Deputy Sheriff's badge. San Bernardino Sun columnist, L. Burr Belden, spoke to eyewitnesses and wrote about this little known incident on June 25, 1961.

The Earp's desert home initially was at Calzona, and only in the winter months. During the hot summer, when the temperatures built up to the point where it was uncomfortable to mine the Earps moved into Los Angeles. Calzona was situated along a bumpy dirt road that led to the Colorado River ferry near Parker, Arizona. The small town consisted of a store, a railroad station, a post office and a small cluster of houses.



The Earp's Cottage in Vidal, CA, where they spent happy winters for almost a quarter of a century. Sadie called it their "dream come true." From the Boyer Collection.

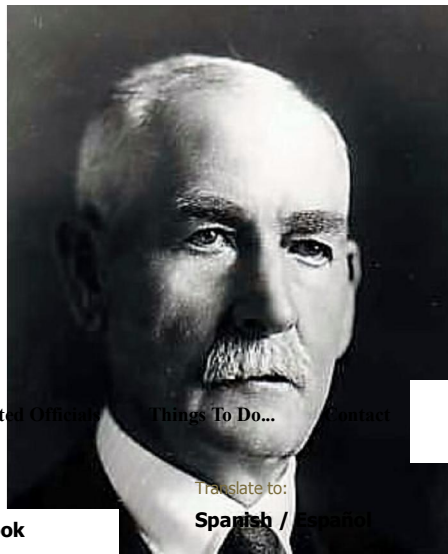
After a few years, the Earps moved four miles west to Vidal where he figured in the capture of a "badman". The guy had gotten off the Los Angeles to Phoenix train and tried to clean Charles Bunnell's general store. Bunnell managed to escape and called Constable James Wilson to arrest the intruder, who was waving a gun.

Vidal was too far from the Sheriff's Office in San Bernardino to try to get help there, so Wilson asked Wyatt to back him up. The constable mapped out his prospective capture by asking Earp to go in the store's front door while he, Wilson, waited by the back door to arrest the scoundrel as he fled.

Wyatt had other plans though. He abruptly walked in the front door and ordered the intruder to hand over his gun. The command was obeyed. Earp grabbed the man's collar, pushed him out the door and called for Wilson.

Belden mentioned in his newspaper article: "The incident brought a lot of good-natured joshing with Constable Wilson on the receiving end--particularly when it was known that Earp was not armed".

Sheriff Walter Shay sent congratulations and asked Earp to drop in at his office near old county jail on [Court Street](#) in San Bernardino the next time it was convenient. Shay commissioned Earp as a non-salaried deputy, but didn't get the opportunity to pin on the badge. The Earps stopped in town some weeks later unannounced. Wyatt went to the sheriff's office on a day when Shay happened to be out of the city, so under sheriff Tom Carter had the honor of presenting the badge.



3, his last good portrait. Glenn Boyer Collection.

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Wyatt Earp short time I renamed "Earp".

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29 at the age of 80 and is buried in the Colma, California town of Drenan, located within a few miles of Midvale, was



Josephine Sarah "Sadie" Earp on the right in 1937. She's standing with Vinolia Earp Ackerman, sister of Mabel Earp Cason, who was Sadie's co-biographer with her sister. They stopped at Earp, CA, enroute to Tombstone to do research for Jose's memoir. From the Boyer Collection.

The Earp Clan in Southern California	
Nicholas (Nick)	1813-1907
Virginia	1821-1893
James (Jim)	1841-1926
Virgil	1843-1905
Wyatt	1848-1929
Morgan	1851-1882
Warren	1855-1900
Adelia	1861-1941
Josie (Sadie)	1861-1944