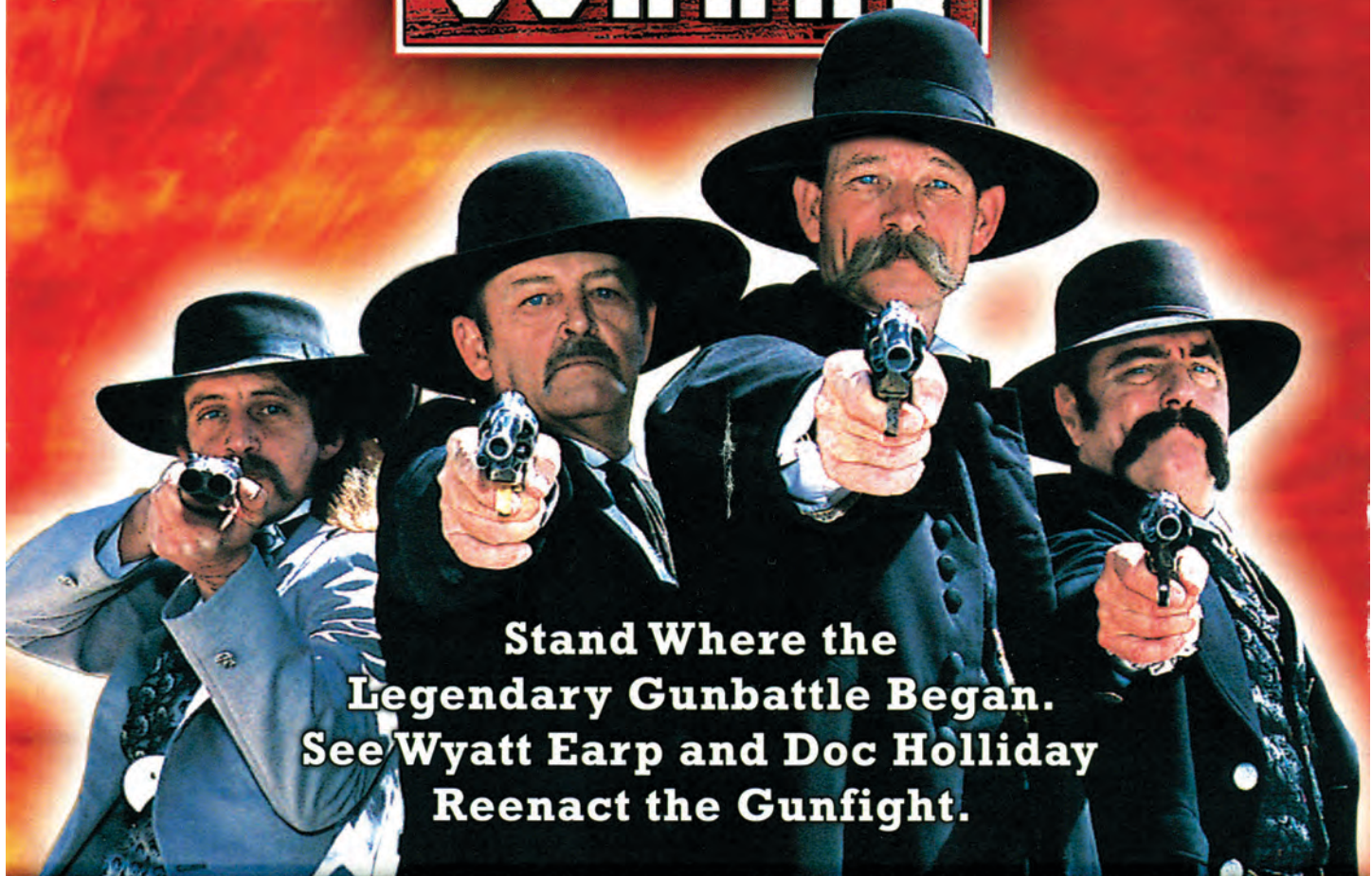


# GUNFIGHT AT THE



Stand Where the  
Legendary Gunbattle Began.  
See Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday  
Reenact the Gunfight.

## TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA

**Gunfight  
Daily!**

Photo courtesy the OK Corral - [www.okcorral.com](http://www.okcorral.com)

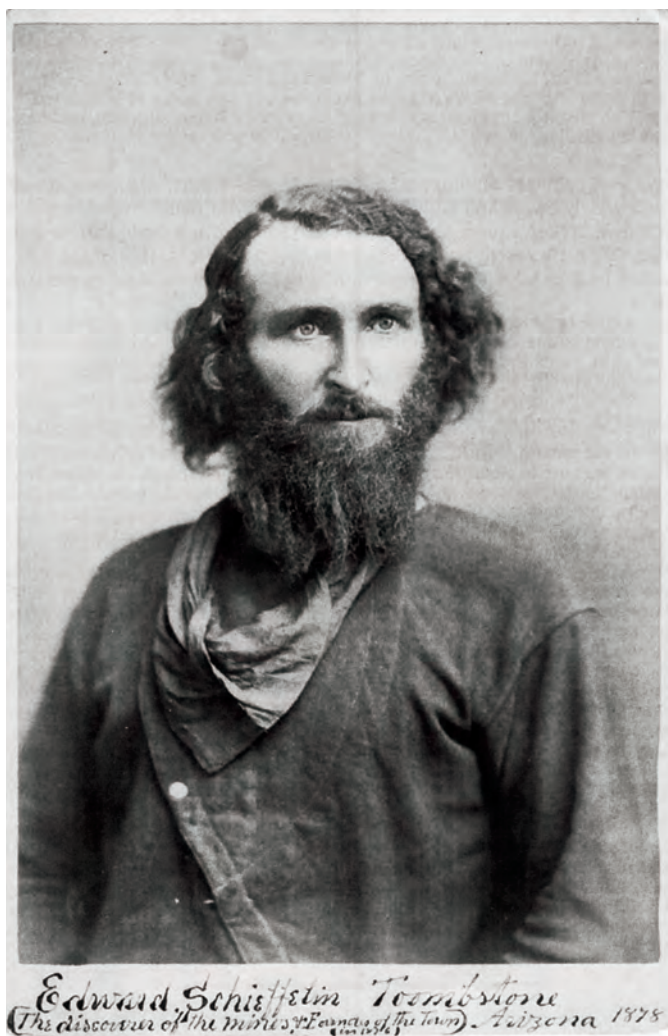
## TOMBSTONE IN FANTASY AND REALITY

by Kevin Mulkins

There are three Old West towns that stand out in legend and history; they are Deadwood, Dodge City, and Tombstone. The town of Tombstone, Arizona Territory, is shrouded in myth, folklore, and legend — perhaps rightfully so but perhaps not. Tombstone, of course, is my passion and focus. To me, its true story, not legend, personifies the Old West... it has it all.

Thanks to Hollywood movies and numerous books, both good and bad, the old mining camp has taken on an air of non-stop gunfights and violence as if that is all that happened in Tombstone. But such is not the case. The original old mining camp slumbers now, but once, long ago, it was magnificent and full of life! The real history of Tombstone would make for a better movie than anything Hollywood has produced to date, but as we find in much of our history, the legend has usurped the true history. What follows here is a brief, but incomplete history of the old mining camp.

Born in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, in 1847, Ed Schieffelin, a determined but penniless prospector, made the initial discovery of silver in the rugged hills east of the San Pedro River in 1877 (Photo 1). The soldiers from nearby Ft. Huachuca had chided and warned him saying “the only thing he would find in that country was his tombstone.” The grizzled prospector named his first silver claim “The Tombstone,” perhaps to spite or honor the soldiers who had mocked him (Photo 2). It took him almost a year after this discovery to find his brother, Albert, in north central Arizona and gather enough money and provisions to return to the San Pedro River country in southeast Arizona. So, early in 1878, he partnered and returned with his brother and Richard Gird, a well-known mining man, who had assayed Ed’s ore samples and saw great potential and a chance to become very wealthy (Photo 3). The news traveled fast and in no time others began to join the rush for mineral and wealth in southeast Arizona. Some arrived by stagecoach or covered wagon, others walked, one man pushed a wheelbarrow with his belongings in it, still others rode horses or mules — it seemed all roads led to Tombstone.



**Photo #1. A grizzled Ed Schieffelin, founder of Tombstone, circa 1877 (Craig Fouts Photo Collection).**

Watervale, later known as Lower Town, was the original primitive town site near where Schieffelin discovered silver. It is located about 2 miles northwest of the Tombstone we know today. Because of its close proximity to the mining activities and access to water, which sold for 3 cents a gallon, it seemed like the best location for a growing community of prospectors, miners, and those seeking their fortune. Within months the town would be relocated to Goose Flats, also known as Upper Town, and quickly renamed Tombstone. The new town site was laid out by surveyor Solon Allis and is as we find it today. The main east/west streets were named Fremont, Allen, and Toughnut and the main north/south streets were First

(Tumbstone Mine)  
Notice is hereby given that I the undersigned  
have located and do claim (500) hundred  
feet on this lode or ledge of mineral bearing  
quartz commencing at this notice and  
running (1500) fifteen hundred feet in south  
westerly direction to a monument to gether with  
all dips angles and spurs also (200) three hundred  
feet on either side for working purposes This  
shall be known as the Tumbstone Mine and  
is located as follows. About  $4\frac{1}{2}$  four and  
one half miles in a north easterly direction from  
the Bronco Mine and about (4) four miles in an  
easterly direction from the San Pedro River  
and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  one quarter of a mile from the  
foot of a low range of hills that runs from  
the north west end of the Cuale Mountains in  
a north westerly direction to within about two  
miles of the east bank of the San Pedro River  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1877 Pima Co. A. T.

C. L. Schieffelin  
Filed and recorded at request of W. F. Griffith  
September 3<sup>rd</sup> Ad. 1877 at 15 Omin past 3 Oclock  
C. M.  
Sidney W. Carpenter  
County Recorder

Photo #2. Schieffelin's official claim,  
dated September 3, 1877  
(Cochise County Recorder's Office).

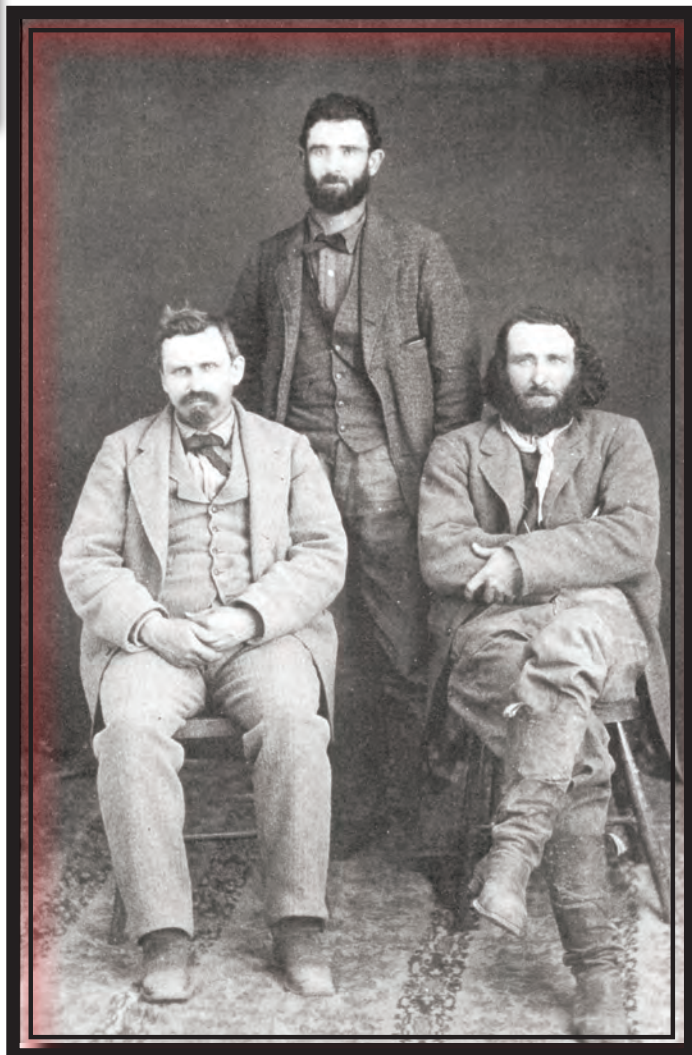


Photo #3. Richard Gird, and Albert and Ed Schieffelin,  
circa 1878  
(Sharlot Hall Museum Photo Collection).



**Photo #4. Tombstone in April 1880, taken by old west photographer Carelton Watkins (Arizona Historical Society photograph).**

through Seventh. By this time, in early 1879, Tombstone was a town of shanties, tent saloons, and boarding houses with people from all walks of life; all of them there to get rich if possible. Other town sites were promoted in the areas around the new town site but they never caught on (Photo 4).

Watervale, later known as Lower Town, was the original primitive town site near where Schieffelin discovered silver. It is located about 2 miles northwest of the Tombstone we know today. Because of its close proximity to the mining activities and access to water, which sold for 3 cents a gallon, it seemed like the best location for a growing community of prospectors, miners, and those seeking their fortune. Within months the town would be relocated to Goose Flats, also known as Upper Town, and quickly renamed Tombstone. The new town site was laid out by surveyor Solon Allis and is as we find it today. The main east/west streets were named Fremont, Allen,

and Toughnut and the main north/south streets were First through Seventh. By this time, in early 1879, Tombstone was a town of shanties, tent saloons, and boarding houses with people from all walks of life; all of them there to get rich if possible. Other town sites were promoted in the areas around the new town site but they never caught on (Photo 4).

People and money began pouring into Tombstone. Hard rock Cornish miners, tradesmen, laborers, freighters, gamblers, saloon keepers, prostitutes, lawyers, doctors, professional engineers, mill men, lumbermen, and wives were arriving daily. "Boomers," the term given to those who followed the mining camp boomtown phenomena, were there too, in great numbers.

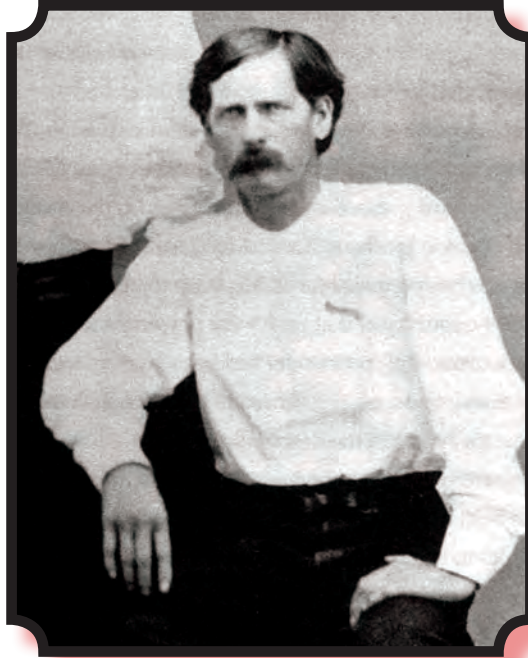


**Photo #5. The Weekly Nugget was Tombstone's first newspaper and was said to have a Democratic political leaning (Kevin Mulkin Collection).**

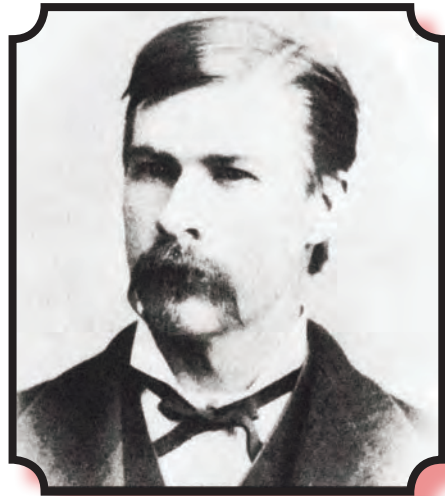
**Photo #6. Ed Schieffelin poses with his Sharps Model 1874 Sporting Rifle (Arizona Historical Society Photo Collection).**



**Photo #7. Wyatt Earp,  
Dodge City, circa 1877.**



**Photo #8. Virgil Earp**



**Photo #9. Morgan Earp**



**Photo #10. Doc Holliday**

## **The Earps Come to Tombstone**

In early December of 1879, without the fan-fare depicted in the movies, frontier gambler and part-time lawman, Wyatt Earp, with his brothers, James and Virgil, and their common-law wives Mattie, Bessie, and Allie arrived in Tombstone (Photos 7, 8, and 9). On November 27, 1879, as they passed through Tucson on their way to Tombstone, Virgil was appointed as a Deputy US Marshal for Southern Arizona by the US Marshal for the Arizona Territory, Crawley Dake. Upon his arrival in Tombstone, it is fair to say most of the people there had never heard of Wyatt Earp. Doc Holliday and his common-law wife, Mary Katherine, and Wyatt's brother, Morgan, and his common-law wife Louisa, would arrive in early 1880 (Photo 10). Eventually, the Earp's youngest brother, Warren would briefly join his four brothers.

Pima County Sheriff Charlie Shibell, in Tucson, hired Wyatt Earp as one of his regular deputies in Tombstone on July 27, 1880, but accepted his resignation on November 11th of the same year. Wyatt Earp's record as a Pima County Deputy Sheriff in Tombstone was honorable and efficient. He resigned, hoping to be named the first Cochise County Sheriff. Sheriff Shibell, however, a loyal Democrat and a career government employee, immediately appointed fellow Democrat John H. Behan, who had recently arrived in town, to replace Republican Wyatt Earp as a full-time deputy in Tombstone. The politically well-connected and affable Behan went on to be appointed the first Cochise County Sheriff — an event that did not sit well with the politically inept Wyatt Earp.

## **Tombstone Grows Rapidly**

As 1880 opened, Tombstone was progressing rapidly. Another newspaper, The Tombstone Epitaph, Republican oriented, made its debut (Photo 11). In that year, the Cosmopolitan Hotel, located on the north side of Allen Street between Fourth and Fifth Street added a second story. The magnificent three-story Grand Hotel, located on the south side of Allen, almost across the street from the Cosmopolitan Hotel, was also completed. Both of these hotels were Tombstone showpieces. They conveyed to the visiting mining men, investors, and the common traveler the town's progress and wealth. Restaurants with the finest accoutrements and delicacies were becoming common. Ice cream parlors were the rage (Photo 12).



**Photo #11. The Tombstone Epitaph was a Republican-leaning newspaper with its editor, John Clum (Kevin Mulkin Collection).**

During this year, the Tombstone Common Council considered Ordinance #9. It prohibited any person, other than an officer of the law, to have or carry in the Village of Tombstone any firearms, or any other dangerous weapon, concealed about his person without a written permit



**Photo #12. Fifth and Allen Streets, downtown Tombstone in January 1881 (Arizona Historical Society Photo Collection).**

from the mayor. Violators faced a \$50 fine or 30 days in jail. Also in 1880, the finer Tombstone saloons began to serve the very best liquors, beers, and wines money could buy. Ice was initially shipped from Tucson to Tombstone. The town's own ice company became operational in September. Bartenders became "mixologists." Mint juleps, whiskey cocktails, gin slings, and other exotic drinks were common. Goods of all kinds were shipped to Tombstone by freight wagons (Photo 13).

On March 20, 1880, the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in nearby Tucson. In a matter of months tracks were laid and it arrived in Benson and eventually a spur was built to the town of Contention, and later to Fairbank, just a



**Photo #13. A heavily laden freight wagon en route from Tucson to Tombstone, circa 1880 (Huntington Library Photo Collection).**

few miles from Tombstone. Tombstone, however, would not have a railroad line until 1903. With the arrival of the railroad close to Tombstone, the town's politicians and businessmen tried very hard to make the mining town as progressive and cosmopolitan as possible by providing the finest merchandise available for resale. The sky was the limit to many of them! Some of the residents enjoyed the convenience of having a better supply and selection of goods; other residents didn't pay much attention at all. It must be remembered, Tombstone always was a self-centered sort of place. As a mining town, its very existence depended less on social commitments and norms than on a steady ore supply. No one realistically considered a long-term future there. Mines and boomtowns in the Old West, generally, were not permanent. In its heyday, the total population in Tombstone approached 6000 residents (Photo 14), while the total number of miners never exceeded 450!

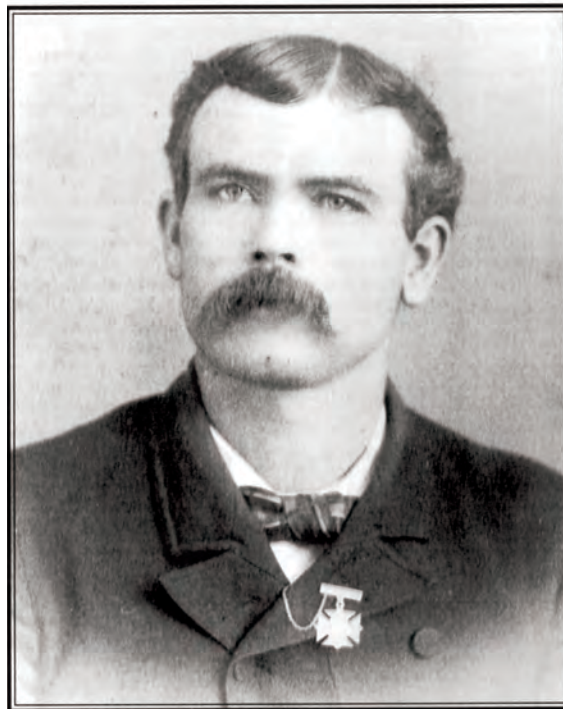
Tombstone saw its share of gunplay in 1880. One of the episodes was the tragic October shooting death of 31-year-old town Marshal Fred White, erroneously depicted in the 1993 movie "Tombstone" starring Kurt Russell and Val Kilmer as a pot bellied old man (Photo 15). White was neither. Behind where the Bird Cage Theatre is located today, the young Marshal confronted Curly Bill Brocius and others, who were shooting their pistols randomly, and ordered Curly Bill to surrender his pistol. Marshal White grabbed the barrel of the pistol while Curly Bill still had his finger on the trigger. Wyatt Earp, at the time a Pima County Deputy Sheriff, suddenly came from be-



**Photo #14. Experienced Cornish miners toiled underground, following the silver veins to depths exceeding 500 feet (Tombstone Court House State Historical Park Photo Collection).**

hind and pulled Curly Bill back. Of course, the gun went off, killing Marshall White. They called it an accident, but one can't help but think the incident might have had a different outcome had the two lawmen not been pulling in different directions at the same time.

As the turbulent year of 1881 dawned, Tombstone was at its pinnacle of progress. In February, it would become the county seat of the newly formed Cochise County. The Tombstone Epitaph newspaper reported the town's population at the end of 1881 to be 5956 people. Tombstone's



**Photo #15. Tombstone City Marshall Fred White (Tim Fattig Photo Collection).**



**Photo #16. Stagecoach rides from Tucson to Tombstone typically took up to 12 hours to complete. Horses in front kicked up fine, powder-like dust along well-traveled, unimproved roads, choking the dozen or more passengers. The smell from unbathed passengers must have been putrid in the days before deodorant (Eric Bauman Photo Collection).**

population was, to say the least, fluid and varied at any given time, thus population quotes must be taken with a grain of salt. Certainly, in my opinion, a population of 5956 people would be the most Tombstone ever had.

The mines and mills were producing silver ore and bullion in great quantities. The Miners Exchange building, a virtual mining stock exchange, was in the new prestigious Gird Block on Fremont Street. The impressive Schieffelin Hall, built for social events, was also completed. Important mining men and eastern capitalists filled the fine hotels. They demanded the best in food, drink, and accommodations. Tombstone strived to fill the bill... fresh oysters, vegetables, fruit, and fish were common. St. Louis beer, Sonoma California wines, French champagnes, and the finest liquors were carried in the better saloons and restaurants. People who could not afford the train fare were still arriving on stage coaches from Tucson and from Benson (Photos 16 and 17).

The town had progressed dramatically. The Tombstone Social Club sponsored dances. Benefits, traveling shows, and theatrical plays were presented at Schieffelin Hall and other venues, too. Many fraternal organizations were formed. Political parties became more prominent and very vocal. The anti-Chinese movement, encouraged by John P. Clum's Epitaph newspaper, seemed to gain favor and galvanize many of the local citizens. At the time, there were 24 nationalities represented in Tombstone. Of those, only 245 residents were Chinese. More than any other



**Photo #17. Typical ad in the *Arizona Citizen* newspaper, dated January 8, 1880. Competing stage lines included Ohnesorgen & Walker, and the Tucson & Tombstone Stage Line.**

time there was, perhaps false, but nonetheless, a sense of community in the booming mining town.

However, make no mistake, there was a genuine fear among Tombstone residents of the Apache renegade Geronimo and his band of resisters (Photo 18). After their escape from the San Carlos Reservation and the subsequent Indian depredations taking place in southern Arizona and northern Mexico, Tombstone residents feared Geronimo and his warriors, perhaps more so than the stage robberies, shootings, and cattle rustling attributed to the so-called "Cowboys."

### **The Gunfight at the OK Corral**

The Earps and the Cowboys disliked each other intensely. In the morning of October 26, 1881, a drunken Ike Clanton boasted that he would kill the Earps and brandished his Winchester repeater, in violation of Tombstone Ordinance #9. Town Marshall Virgil Earp confronted Ike, violently striking him in the head and taking away his rifle. He was taken to the Justice of the Peace, paid the \$25 fine for carrying a weapon within town limits, and was released.. Soon after, young Tom McLaury, also boasting he would "fight the Earps anywhere," was confronted by Wyatt Earp who slapped and "buffaloed" him in a face-to-face confrontation, knocking him to the ground.





**Photo #18. The feared Apache warrior Geronimo was active throughout the 1870s and 1880s in Southern Arizona Territory (Randall photograph, Arizona Historical Society Photo Collection, colorized by Ron Paxton).**

The Earps had enough. Townspeople told them that the Cowboys were gunning for them near the vacant lot next to C.S. Fly's Boarding House on Fremont Street — and they were fully armed! Knowing that a confrontation was imminent, Virgil deputized Wyatt, Morgan, and Doc Holliday. Departing from Haffords Wholesale Liquor Store at the northeast corner of Fourth and Allen Streets, the Earps and Holliday proceeded north on Fourth Street toward Fremont Street (Photo #19).

Opposing politics and these frequent personality clash-



**Photo #19. Hafford's Wholesale Liquor Store.**



**Photo #20. Ike Clanton**



**Photo #21. Tom McLaury**



**Photo #22. Frank McLaury**



**Photo #22. The fight begins, and legends are made (drawing by Bruce Greene).**

es eventually culminated in the street fight near the OK Corral on Fremont Street on Wednesday, October 26th. The participants were Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan Earp, and Doc Holliday against brothers Tom and Frank McLaury and 19-year-old Billy Clanton (Photos 20 and 21). Cochise County Sheriff John Behan, a friend to the Cowboys, attempted to reassure the Earps by stating that he had just disarmed them, a lie that the Earps disregarded as they proceeded west along Fremont Street. Virgil took Doc's walking cane from him, replacing it with a double-barrel shotgun!

Billy Clanton's older brother Ike, who most assuredly provoked the deadly situation, fled from the small lot on Fremont Street just before the confrontation began, as did Billy Claiborne. People gathered along Fourth and Fremont Streets to watch the Earps and Holiday walk down to the vacant lot to, as Town Marshal Virgil Earp put it, "disarm them." Well, as they say, the rest is history. In about 25 seconds with about 30 shots fired, Frank and Tom McLaury were dead and Billy Clanton was near death (Photo 22). Smoke from the black powder weapons was so thick it was difficult to see. Virgil Earp was on the ground with a "clean through" bullet wound to the calf of his leg. Morgan Earp was also on the ground with a serious horizontal gunshot wound from shoulder-to-shoulder. Doc Holliday was limping after a bullet had grazed

his hip fired by the already-wounded Frank McLaury. This would be the cowboy's final shot before a head shot from either Morgan or Doc instantly killed him. Wyatt Earp walked away unscathed. Ike Clanton was found hiding in a Mexican dancehall over on Toughnut Street. Billy Claiborne had departed his cowboy friends with great haste when he saw the Earps and Holliday walk into the tiny lot.

The following day, the newspapers reported "the fight on Fremont Street." Just when the location was changed to the OK Corral is not known, but the name stuck. As the reporter in "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" said, "This is the West sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

The dead were buried on Boot Hill (Photo 23). To the dismay of some and the applause of others, after many long, drawn-out court appearances, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday were exonerated of any wrongdoing related to the October 26, 1881, street fight. Morgan and Virgil Earp's wounds had healed.

Virgil Earp was "bushwhacked" on the street on December 28th, and he suffered a debilitating arm injury. The day after Virgil was ambushed, Wyatt Earp telegraphed US Marshal Crawley Dake and requested and received an



**Photo #23. The only known photograph taken of the event is this one showing Billy Clanton and Frank and Tom McLaury in their elaborate coffins (Arizona Historical Society Photo Collection).**

appointment as a Deputy US Marshal for southern Arizona with the power to deputize. This was a very important appointment; it made his next actions somewhat legal! On March 18, 1882, in another concealed, cowardly retribution attack, Morgan Earp was murdered, shot in the lower back through a window in Campbell & Hatches Saloon on Allen Street while playing a game of pool with owner Bob Hatch.

Virgil Earp was “bushwhacked” on the street on December 28th, and he suffered a debilitating arm injury. The day after Virgil was ambushed, Wyatt Earp telegraphed US Marshal Crawley Dake and requested and received an appointment as a Deputy US Marshal for southern Arizona with the power to deputize. This was a very important appointment; it made his next actions somewhat legal! On March 18, 1882, in another concealed, cowardly retribution attack, Morgan Earp was murdered, shot in the lower back through a window in Campbell & Hatches Saloon on Allen Street while playing a game of pool with owner Bob Hatch.

Of the numerous books on Tombstone written, author William B. Shillingberg says it best in this excerpt from his excellent book *Tombstone, AT*,

*“What the Earps actually did fails to compare with the contributions made by local entrepreneurs or that army of nameless men who worked the mines. By contrast, the brothers and their enemies are remembered only for specific acts of violence. Rising from some deep rooted psychological urge to glorify such behavior, popular culture has reinvented the Earps, particularly Wyatt.”*

Suffice it to say, many that residents of Tombstone were glad to see the Earps leave; some didn't care one way or the other, whereas others supported their actions.

One hundred thirty-three years later, there are those who still search and delve into the minutiae of the before and after of the street fight when 5 minutes after the now historic fight, residents of Tombstone, who actually witnessed it, could not agree on what happened and argued about who was at fault. Surely then, in 2014, all these years later, how can we ever know what really happened? We can only speculate. Today, Tombstone seems to be defined by many only by this so-called OK Corral Gunfight.

In reality, the citizens of the town during the time it took place were divided as to who was at fault and considered the nationwide publicity hardly beneficial to business and the reputation of the town. More importantly, in late March of 1881, water was struck at the 520-foot level in the main shaft of the Sulphuret Mine. Mining engineers were unprepared for this because they did not expect to strike water until the 1000-foot level. While many tried to put a positive outlook on this occurrence, professional mining men and miners saw the writing on the wall. There would be no deep mining in Tombstone without incurring considerable expense, but the mines kept producing and the Tombstone economy kept booming (Photo 24).

### **Tombstone Grows, Despite Its Wild Reputation**

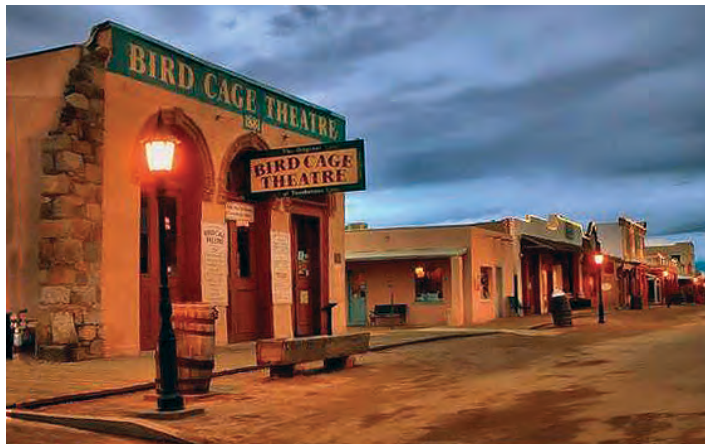
On June 22, 1881, however, Tombstone suffered its first devastating fire. Starting in the Arcade Saloon, it consumed all of the buildings for four blocks bordered by 5th Street and Fremont and 7th street and Tough Nut. The businesses, especially the saloons, quickly rebuilt using adobe blocks, while improving the furnishings in the process. It was back to business within a few months, but water was starting to show up in other mines, too.



**Photo #24. The raw and poorly developed entrance to the Toughnut Mine, first developed by Ed Schieffelin (Huntington Library Photo Collection).**

As 1881 came to a close, the Bird Cage Theater, owned by William and Lottie Hutchinson, opened on December 26th (Photo 25). Located just west of Tombstone's sizable red-light district, the bawdy Bird Cage acquired a reputation as a place where anything goes and was frequented by Tombstone's lower class.

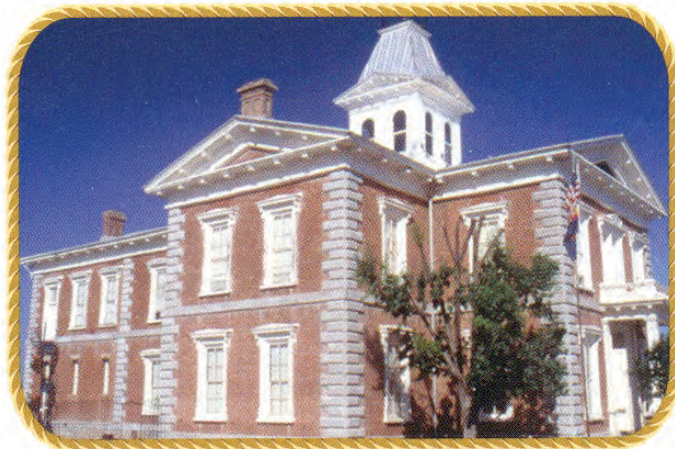
The year 1882 saw the town begin construction on a new Town Hall located on Fremont Street and the construction of a new Cochise County Courthouse, it being re-



**Photo #25. The famous Bird Cage Theatre was on Allen and Sixth Streets, adjoining the red-light district. It featured variety acts, theatrical presentations, famous singers, gambling, and heavy drinking. Cribbs on the second floor levels gave an excellent view of the stage, and provided food, drink, and carousing with unparalleled limits (Modern photograph of the Bird Cage Theatre by Gerald Hut).**

moved from any potential fire danger by being built on Toughnut and Third Streets (Photo 26).

On April 7, 1882, General of the Army, William T. Sherman and his GAR entourage paid Tombstone a visit. It was a welcome retreat from the Earp and Cowboy problems the town had been experiencing. The new Tombstone Mayor, John Carr, the former Mayor John P. Clum, and other committee members had planned a great celebration and dinner for the dignitaries. Staying at the Grand Hotel that evening they all walked across the street to the most revered Maison Doree Restaurant and heartily enjoyed Tombstone's hospitality. On April 10th, 2 days after



**Photo #26. The Cochise County Courthouse was constructed in 1882 (Tombstone Court House State Historical Park Photo Collection).**

the General left Tombstone, the Maison Doree presented its bill to the Tombstone Common Council. General Sherman his entourage and the local Tombstone politicians had consumed 26 dinners, 14 bottles of wine, and 19 cigars and the next day 10 lunches, 5 bottles of wine, and 8 cigars totaling a whopping \$114.75, this amount is equal to \$2607 in 2014 dollars! Life was good in 1882 Tombstone! The Council issued Warrant #188 and paid the bill in full! This was a substantial amount considering the most experienced underground miner was making only \$4 a day in the Tombstone mines. General Sherman and his entourage were given tours of the Tombstone mines and mills before leaving for Fort Huachuca the afternoon of April 8th.

It was learned, however, that the General was also on a fact-finding mission to Tombstone and southern Arizona for President Chester Arthur regarding the ongoing and increasing depredations across the international border by Americans and Mexicans. These depredations continued and, in fact, increased in volume after the Earps left Tombstone, thus putting an end to the myth and folklore that Wyatt Earp and his cohorts stopped illegal rustling, robberies, and other border crimes in southern Arizona by forever breaking up the Cowboy gang in Cochise County. If anything, the forces of crime on both sides of the border became even more organized and determined!

### **Tombstone On The Decline**

On May 26, 1882, Tombstone suffered its most devastating fire (Photo 27). Within minutes, the Grand Hotel was gone as was the Cosmopolitan and Brown hotels when

the fire quickly jumped across to the north side of Allen Street. In a few minutes Tombstone had lost all of its magnificent hotels and many other stalwart businesses too.

This fire, along with the flooding of the mines and the eventual declining price of silver, marked the beginning of the end for Tombstone. Many businesses were lost and many owners decided not to rebuild, so prominent businessmen moved on. In July 1882, the Tombstone Epitaph newspaper reported Tombstone's population had decreased to 5300 people. The decline had begun. Another hotel, the Occidental, was built in 1883 on the southeast corner of Fifth and Allen Streets to accommodate the visiting mining and cattlemen, but the glory days of the great Tombstone hotels had faded. The Occidental burned down in 1889.

Tombstone, however, continued as a major mining center. In 1884, labor strikes and wage reduction troubles led to miner unrest and many of the top-notch miners left Tombstone for better opportunities in other locales in and out of the Territory. Tombstone's population declined dramatically in the years to come — at its low point there were fewer than 700 people living there. Its historical buildings, specifically the Gird Block, began to be reclaimed by the elements. Many of the buildings had to be torn down after the owners removed the roofs so they could save on tax assessments. This was very unfortunate, but a common practice as Tombstone declined and aged.

In 1903, mining man E. B. Gage consolidated the Tombstone mines with major capital infusion from eastern investors. Tombstone was again hopeful of the possible



**Photo #27. Tombstone's second devastating fire occurred on May 26, 1882, destroying many wood-frame buildings (Arizona Historical Society Photo Collection).**

resurgence, wealth, and romance of the “old days.” As mentioned earlier, the El Paso Southwestern Railroad finally constructed a line to Tombstone; logical since the railroad was on its way to Douglas, AZ, where major refining operations and a smelter were located. The mine consolidation was successful for a period, but again water flooding the mines and huge pumps that malfunctioned and failed put an end to this costly mining venture. Tombstone again fell into a state of disrepair.

During World War I, the mining of the mineral Manganese gave Tombstone a much-needed boost, but the 1915 state-imposed prohibition of illegal alcohol and the 1919 Federal Volstead Act certainly did not. In 1929, the Cochise County electorate voted to move the seat of government to Tombstone’s rival town of Bisbee. This was the final devastating blow to the once great silver camp.

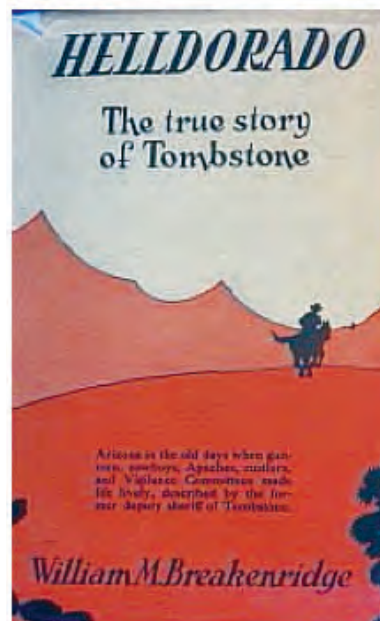
### Helldorado

Stalwart Tombstone citizens, not ones to roll over and die, put their heads together and decided to capitalize on the old camp’s colorful and historic past. Its saga was already being written about by author Walter Noble Burns in his 1927 book, *Tombstone*, followed by William Breakenridge’s 1928 book, *Helldorado*, and eventually Stuart Lake’s most popular 1931 mythmaking tome, titled *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal* (Photos 28 through , #29, #30 ). Thus, the annual Helldorado celebration was born in 1929 and along with it, the saying “The Town Too Tough to Die.” In 1959, as if to give Tombstone another setback, the state of Arizona made Fremont Street into a 4-lane highway. This destroyed one of the town’s most famous thoroughfares, forever changing the historic town’s atmosphere, not to mention the approach and site of the October 26, 1881, street fight. Ironically, on July 4, 1961, the Department of Interior declared Tombstone a National Historic Landmark District.

Very few first-generation buildings remain in Tombstone today. Among the more prominent are Schieffelin Hall and Tombstone Town Hall, both on Fremont Street; the Cochise County Court House on Toughnut and Third Streets; the Bird Cage Theatre at Sixth and Allen Streets; along with the old Pima County Agency Bank on the southwest corner of Allen and Fourth Streets; and the San Jose, Aztec, and Garland houses all on Fremont Street. The building on the northeast corner of Fifth and Allen Streets is the old Oriental Saloon. Wyatt Earp dealt faro there and was a partner of “shady” gambler Lou Ricka-

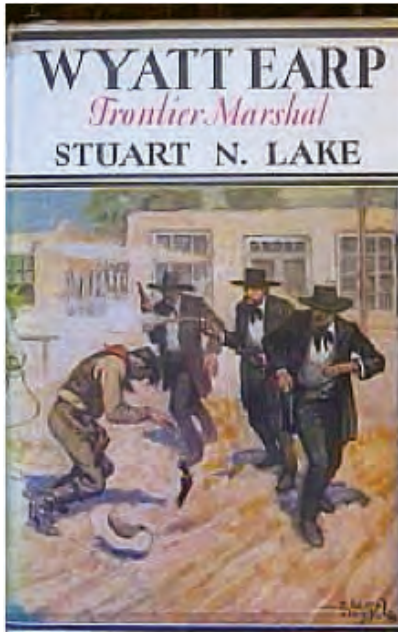


**Photo #28. *Tombstone*, written by Walter Noble Burns, in 1927.**



**Photo #29. *Helldorado*, written by William Breakenridge in 1928.**

baugh. The west side of this building was scorched, but not destroyed, by the 1882 fire. It is an original building from that period! The Crystal Palace which had been known as the Wehrfritz Brewery or the Golden Eagle Brewery in 1882 had been across Fifth Street from the Oriental but was completely destroyed by the 1882 fire. Other surviving buildings are the old fire station and the 1903 train depot, now a library, both on Toughnut Street. The Rose Tree Inn, formerly the Arcade Hotel, located on Fourth Street and Toughnut has some very interesting and authentic Tombstone artifacts and is owned by a family that has been in Tombstone since its early days. These remaining original and historic buildings provide



**Photo #30. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, written by Stuart Lake in 1931.**

us with Tombstone's epilogue... but what of the Earps and others?

James Earp, the oldest of the brothers, and most profane, died peacefully in Los Angeles in 1926; he was 84 years old.

Virgil Earp, in my opinion the real lawman of the family, died in Goldfield, Nevada, in 1905 from pneumonia. He is buried in Oregon.

Wyatt Earp, after shadowing the underworld most of his life, died on January 13, 1929, in Los Angeles, 2 months shy of his 81st birthday. His final years were spent in abject poverty.

Morgan Earp was murdered playing a game of pool in Campbell & Hatch's saloon in Tombstone on March 18, 1882, 1 day before his brother Wyatt's 34th birthday. He is buried in California.

Warren Earp, the quarrelsome and hot-headed youngest brother was shot to death in the Headquarters Saloon in Willcox, AZ, on July 6, 1900. He is buried there.

Doc Holliday, destitute, having lost his battle with consumption, died in Glenwood Springs, CO, on November 8, 1887. He was 36 years old.

Ike Clanton was shot to death in Apache County, AZ, in 1887 by range detective J.V. Brighton, while allegedly resisting arrest for stealing cows.

Josephine Earp, Wyatt's common-law wife, unquestionably a woman of many secrets, died on December 19, 1944. Her estate was valued at \$175,000.

Alvira Sullivan, Virgil's common-law wife and devoted companion, known as "Aunt Allie" outlived all of the Earp brothers and their common-law wives. She died in Los Angeles on November 17, 1947, twenty-one days before her 100th birthday. In her lifetime she went from traveling in covered wagons to seeing atomic bombs. Her memoirs of the Earp clan and the Tombstone saga are compelling, truthful, and very much worth reading.

Once nearly forgotten, Tombstone is now trapped in myth and legend, a prisoner of the 21st century entertainment spiral. Even walking along its quiet streets late at night, experienced historians find it hard to separate the truth from illusion. Your challenge then is to remember that Tombstone was a real town, not some Hollywood fantasy. It was rough, tough, rowdy, and rich with its exploits reported from San Francisco to New York. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, the original old mining camp slumbers now, but once, very long ago, it was truly magnificent.