

Wyatt Earp's Family Was From Ohio County, KY

By Jerry Long



Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) about 1886



**Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, Silver Threads
Among the Gold edition, 16 May 1968, p.7B:**

Wyatt Earp's Ancestors Were From Ohio County

The life and legend of Wyatt Earp had its beginnings in the sturdy Ohio County pioneers who were his ancestors. Wyatt's grandfather purchased a large tract of land in Ohio County in the early 1800's and settled there with his two sons, Lorenzo and Nicholas Earp. Nicholas remained in Ohio County, sometimes reading law with his father, but oftener working on the land. His brother Lorenzo preceded the rest of the family to Illinois, where he found the land extremely rich.

Nicholas married Virginia Ann Cooksey of Ohio County and added more land to his ownership. He had developed the land successfully and was doing very well when Lorenzo's

glowing tales of the extravagant richness of the land in Illinois stirred him to sell the land (at a sizable profit) and move his family to Monmouth, Illinois. There he obtained more land which he cultivated and was commissioned a deputy sheriff. There also, March 19, 1848, the future frontier marshall Wyatt Earp was born. Wyatt was named for his father's commanding officer In the Mexican War, Col. Wyatt Berry Strapp.

When Wyatt was two years old his family moved again, this time to Pella, Iowa.

While Nicholas and his family were moving farther and farther from their Ohio County home, Lorenzo's son, Walter Cooksey Earp, felt a yearning for Kentucky. He returned to Ohio County where he met and married. Annie Allen d Rosine and spent the rest of his life in Ohio County, with his wife and his only son, Russell Earp of Horse Branch and Indianapolis.

Nicholas Earp took his family over the mountains to the West in 1864 to establish another temporary home. It is imagined that Wyatt inherited the courage and daring of both Nicholas and Virginia, his mother. Virginia never retreated when protecting what she loved even against the threat of Sioux Indians.

After a time in California, Nicholas again moved his family back to Monmouth, Illinois, but Wyatt, already showing signs of his restless courage, remained in the West. When he returned to Monmouth for a visit to his parents, he met and married a young woman there who was tragically stricken with typhus and died shortly after their marriage.

Wyatt returned to the West where he became a United States Marshall at Dodge City and Tombstone and began enacting the many exploits which are so famous today as portrayed on many of our Westerns such as notably "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp" and to a lesser degree on "Gunsmoke." Earp's good friend, Bat Masterson helped to perpetuate many of Earp's adventures when he wrote a series of articles for the Tombstone Epitaph about "Famous Gun Fighters of the Western Frontier".

Virginia Earp's brother's son, Jim Cooksey followed the careers of both Wyatt and his brother, who was a Wells Fargo rider for many years, and kept Walter Earp informed of his cousins' activities.

Other relatives of Wyatt in Ohio County are Russell Earp, Mrs Eva Cooksey Park and Phillip Cooksey of Horse Branch and Mrs Bertha Cooksey Schroader of Beaver Dam.



Fogle's Papers: A History of Ohio County, Kentucky, McDowell A. Fogle, Ohio County Historical Society, 1970 (first printing) & 1981 (fourth printing, McDowell Publications, Utica, KY), pp.187-189:

Wyatt Earp

I am grateful to my good friends and fellow Ohio county "native sons," Lonnie M. Render, retired Louisville banker; William P. Ranney, circuit court clerk; William M. "Mike" Riley, proprietor of a drug store at Livermore; Walter Wedding, local painting contractor, and J. C. Casebier, Hartford restaurateur, for calling my attention to another celebrity in the person of Wyatt Earp. Far West pioneer peace officer, who, though not a native of Ohio county, did have a rather extensive family background and kinship in this county.

The current interest in Earp has been initiated, apparently, by the rather extensive reading which has recently, in this part of the country, been given his biography by Stuart N. Lake, titled "Wyatt Earp, Pioneer Marshall," and published by "Bantam Books, New York," by arrangement

with Houghton Mifflin Company. The title page describes the hero as "Marshall, Hunter, Pioneer, Gambler and Gunfighter... whose name is legend from Arizona to Alaska..." His law enforcement exploits were decisive in bringing law and order to the far-flung territory tributary to Wichita, Dodge City, Tombstone and their prototypes when, according to the old Western saying "there was no law west of Kansas City and west of Fort Scott, no God."

The author of the popular Earp biography recites in the first chapter, second page, that the family was of Scotch origin and that the first of the name to come to America settled in Fairfax county, Virginia in the latter half of the 17th century, that quite a number of the family fought in the French and Indian Wars and the War for Independence in the Colonial armies and that as early as 1760 some of them had ventured into the Ohio Valley. It is stated that Wyatt Earp's great-grandfather sold his Virginia land shortly after the Revolution and settled near the later site of Wheeling, West Virginia, on land received for military service, when Wyatt's grandfather, Walter was a mere boy. The latter was sent back to the seaboard to study law, but returned to the frontier village of Wheeling where he opened a law office, at the same time farming nearby. There he married the daughter of a neighboring family, also of Scotch descent, and to this union Wyatt Earp's father, Nicholas Porter, was born in 1813.

Then Walter Earp moved westward again, this time here to Hartford, Where, his biographer says, he bought a large acreage of land and resumed the practice of law. It is also related that Nicholas here married for the first time, his wife living only a short time after the birth of her only child, Newton. As his second wife he took Virginia Ann Cooksey in July 1840 here at Hartford. The Cookseys are described as an English family which had settled in the eastern part of Virginia in the early 18th century and, somewhat later, had moved to an Ohio Valley grant where Virginia Ann was born in 1823. Lake says that Nicholas and Virginia bought a "plantation" near Hartford on which two sons were born to them, James in 1841 and Virgil in 1843. The latter was associated with Wyatt and a younger brother, Morgan, in the fabulous career of "The Fearless Earps." Nicholas read law with his father here at Hartford and occasionally appeared at the bar, but his main interest and abilities were agricultural. He cultivated both his own and his father's farm until both sold out at a good profit in "the boom of 1843." which resulted from a fresh influx into Kentucky of settlers with ready cash. Lorenzo Earp, brother of Nicholas, had already moved to Illinois and his accounts of the opportunities there decided his father and brother to follow him there in the summer of 1843. Thus Wyatt's immediate family passed from the Kentucky scene.

Wyatt Earp's birth occurred March 19, 1848, his given name being that of the commanding officer of his father, who had, in the meantime, become a captain in the Mexican War and had been invalided home. The Captain had also served as circuit judge in Illinois and his son, Nicholas, as deputy sheriff. Then the family hegira continued, to Iowa and finally to California. Lake gives this accolade to Wyatt's mother: "While the influence of Nicholas Earp was the more apparent in his children's lives, Virginia Ann Cooksey unquestionably contributed no small portion of that high courage for which her sons were famed. Certainly, in one outstanding test of the qualities through which pioneer men and women might survive, her fearless initiative in the face of a greater danger than any man may know equaled that displayed by any of forty frontiersman in her company at the time."

Incidentally, Wyatt Earp knew during his earlier days in the Wild West a number of other youngsters who were also destined for future fame, including Edward L. Doheny, who attained great wealth through oil; Eddie Foy, who became a popular comedian; Charles E. Chapin, then also an actor but later to become a celebrated newspaper editor; James Hemingway, who became U. S. senator from Indiana; and Champ Clark, a fellow Kentuckian, fated to almost attain the

Presidency of the United States. When Wyatt and Champ met, the former was deputy marshal of Wichita, Kansas, while young Clark, yet a briefless lawyer, was acting as "receptionist" for a local surgeon, waiting for the day his finances would let him go to Missouri, where he later climbed to fame.

The statements of Mr. Lake as to the connection of Walter and Nicholas Earp with Hartford and Ohio county, are, in the main, borne out by county records. There are only three legal instruments involving Earp of record in the county clerk's office here. The first, dated Nov. 5, 1839 is a mortgage from L. D. Earp to Tucker D. Ragsdale and Nicholas Earp in consideration of their going on L. D. Earp's bond in a suit in the Ohio county court and to insure them against loss thereon. The land thus encumbered was described as consisting of 100 acres and the person from whom obtained was given, but there was nothing to indicate where it was located. I surmise that L. D. Earp was Lorenzo Earp, brother of Nicholas, who, according to "The Frontier Marshal" narrative, preceded the other members of the family to Illinois.

The next Ohio county Earp record is a quit-claim deed, dated Feb. 26, 1840, to Nicholas. The consideration was \$300 and the land concerned was described as 150 acres on Caney Creek. The other record is a power of attorney from Virginia Ann Earp to her husband, Nicholas, dated Nov. 1, 1841. It gave Nicholas general powers to representation and then stated specifically that it included authority to represent Virginia Ann in any proceedings concerning the Virginia property of her grandfather, Phillip Cooksey. It was signed by mark.

As to Earp marriages in Ohio county, the records show the following:

James Earp married Anthony Ann Clark, Oct. 5, 1840; L. D. Earp, bondsman; Rev. John Phipps, minister.

Josiah Earp married Elizabeth Storm April 17, 1837 bondsman, Nicholas Earp; minister, Rev. James Holding.

Nicholas Earp married Abigail Storm, Dec. 19, 1836; L. D. Earp, bondsman; Rev. James Holding, minister.

Nicholas P. Earp married Virginia Ann Cooksey, July 27, 1840; J. H. Blane, bondsman; Rev. J. G. Ward, minister.

As to Lakes statement that both Walter and Nicholas Earp were lawyers, I have no information. H. D. Taylor, in his reminiscences, makes no mention of an early Ohio county attorney named Earp and the name does not appear in the list of county lawyers prepared for the Court House Edition of The News, but it is not unlikely that one or both of them may have been attorneys. Circuit Clerk Ranney has kindly offered to check on the possible occurrence of the name of Walter or Nicholas as attorneys in the records of lawsuits of the late '30's and early '40's when he, before a great while, will be indexing records of that period in his office.

There are members of the Earp family still living in Ohio county: I am informed that one on the distaff side bears the name Virginia, another example of the fitting custom of retaining old family names through succeeding generations, which often is also a quite conclusive indication of membership in the same family group. The Cooksey family is also still fairly well represented in this county. Our present-day Earps and Cookseys are, no doubt, collateral kin of Walter, Nicholas and Wyatt Earp.



Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY,
“Lineage Lines” column by Harry D. Tinsley, 8 June 1989:

The Earp Legend

By James Park

Writers should be warned to beware attacking a legend. The Wyatt Earp happenings, as most legend builders, have some historic basis, and will outlive the attackers long after the vulgarians have died with their boots off. Sour-grapes, personal hatreds, and pulp magazines have hit the legend from all angles in a non-hero era. We have yet to learn we do not sit in judgment of another time and place. If we could walk in their moccasins.

I grew up like Miss Kitty as a saloon keeper in "Gunmoke", and interest in clannish vendetta is kept alive today with the popularity of "Dirty Harry" and the "Death Wish" series.

Many of the Earps of the eastern Fall Line area, along with marriage relatives of the Cooksey, Early and Weeks families, were soldiers in the American Colonial Wars Service land grants brought them to the Caney Creek section of Kentucky. Judge Walter and Martha Early Earp lived in Olaton; son Nicholas Porter Earp married here his second wife, Virginia Ann Cooksey, and returned, at last one more tie, to Farquier County, Virginia to collect the inheritance Phillip Cooksey bestowed on his granddaughter. A relative recommended large holdings of fertile land in Monmouth, Illinois. From this new surrounding, Nicholas was off to serve in a cavalry unit amid the Mexican War.

Eventually, the final family count was eight children, and the five boys became the fearless Earps: James, Virgil, Wyatt, Morgan. and Warren; the three girls, Martha. Virginia and Adelia. Nicholas was elected captain of a wagon train and on one of his caravan crossings took his remaining-at-home family West. When they were attacked by Sioux Indians trying to stampede the horses, the clearing dusty air revealed Wyatt (18) and Morgan (13) still in possession of the horses entrusted to them and Virginia Ann holding her favorite pony by its picket-rope. The family settled in Colton, California. Cousin James Cooksey of the Pony Express aided in bringing reports, letters, and photographs back East to relatives.

Wyatt was a boxer as a youth, and at 20 would referee bouts of one camp boxer against a champion from another camp. In 1896 he was given a plume by the National Athletic Club in being selected to referee the Fitzsimmons/Sharkey fight. The losing fighter, Fitzsimmons, backed down on what he said he would do when he made eye to eye contact with Wyatt. Earp could be eerie when any person attempted bullyragging in his presence. Both he and Doc Holliday had such power of concentration there was no room for thoughts of possible personal injury. They plowed in, could walk on the hands of a crowd if need be. Bat Masterson named Wyatt the best poker player he had ever seen, said he revealed a sharp sense of humor.

Of the three wives Wyatt had there was not a Clementine in the lot. The third wife , Josephine Sarah Marcus, was kin to the organizers of the department store chain.

Adela Rogers St. John, noted as one of the more factual Hollywood writers, told of her father Earl's praise for a circle of close L.A. friends: Wyatt, Tom Mix, William S. Hart, Harry Carey, et al. Surely, the noted lawyer had some commendable basic standards for judging character.

President McKinley offered through Attorney General of California, Judge W. F. Fitzgerald, the position of U.S. Marshal of Arizona to Wyatt. Earp replied, "I am wanted for murder there." Fitzgerald: "The Supreme Court quashed the indictment."

For those who say Wyatt died in poverty – within sight of his burial spot is Cypress Lawn, and the crypt of William Randolph Hurst.

The gunslinger is only about four per cent of the Wyatt Earp story. A "for instance" for writers – what cases were Morgan and Wyatt assigned as detectives for Wells Fargo? Don't you remember those disguises that fell out of the closet when Big Nose Kate Fisher bumped the doorknob? The locals latched on to a rumor that those were used as accessories in helping to rob stagecoaches:

Books About Wyatt Earp

(1) Lewis, Alfred Henry, *The Sunset Trail*, 1905; (2) Masterson, William Barclay (Bat), *Famous Gunfighters of the Western Frontier*, 1907; (3) Beach, Rex, *The Barrier*, A.L. Burt Co., 1908; (4) McClintock, James H Arizona, *the Youngest State*, 1916. (5) Bechdolt, Frederick R., *When the West was Young*, 1922; (6) Burns, Walter Noble, *Tombstone: An Iliad of the Southwest*, Grossett and Dunlap, 1927; (7) Rains, William MacLeod (William M. Breakenridge), *Helidorado*, 1928; (8) Clum, John P., *It All Happened in Tombstone*, Arizona Hist. Review, April 1929. (9) Lake, Stuart N. (Earp article), *Saturday Evening Post*, 8 March 1930; (10) Lake, Stuart N., *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshal*, Houghton Mifflin, 1931; Lockwood, Frank C., *Pioneer Days in Arizona*, 1932; (12) Scullin, George, *The Killer*, Holiday Magazine, 1954. (13) Henry, Wm., *Who Rides With Wyatt?*, Random House, 1955; (14) Holbrook, Stewart H., *Wyatt Earp U.S. Marshal* (for youngsters), Random House, 1955; (15) Jahns, Pat, *The Frontier World of Doc Holliday*, Hastings House, 1957; (16) O'Connor, Richard, *Bat Masterson*, Doubleday, 1957. (17) McCarty, Lea Franklin, *Gunslingers of the Old West*, Arizona Highways, November 1958; (18) Waters, Frank, *The Earp Brothers. of Tombstone*, Clarkson N. Potter, 1960; (19) Bartholomew, Ed, *Wyatt Earp: the Untold Story*, Frontier Books, 1963; (20) Bartholomew, Ed, *Wyatt Earp: the Man and the Myth*, Frontier, 1964. (21) Adams, Ramon F., *Burs Under the Saddle*, 1964; (22) Krepps, Robert, *Hour of the Gun*, Fawcett, 1967; (23) Lyon, Peter, *Wild, Wild West*, Funk, 1969; (24) Faulk, Odie B., *Tombstone: Myth and Reality*, 1972. (25) Drago, Harry Sinclair, *Legend Makers*, Dodd, 1975; (26) Garrett, Richard, *Famous Characters of the Wild West*, St. Martins, 1975; (27) Boyer, Glenn G., "Postscripts to Historical Fiction about Wyatt Earp in Tombstone", *Arizona and the West*, Autumn 1976; (28) Earp, Josephine Sarah Marcus, *I Married Wyatt Earp*, University of Arizona, 1976. (29) Metz, Leon Claire, *Shooters*, Mangan Books, 1976; (30) Turner, Alford E., *The Earps Talk*, Creative Pub., 1980; (31) Boyer, Glenn G., *Wyatt Earp*, Bissette, 1981; (32) Tuska and Piekarsk, *Encyclopedia of Frontier and Western Fiction*, McGraw-Hill, 1983.

Films about Wyatt Earp

(1) 1932, "*Law and Order*" with Harry Carey and Walter Huston, based on *Saint Johnson* by William A. Burnett, Director: Edward L. Cahn, Universal; (2) 1934, "*Frontier Marshal*" with George O'Brien, Director: Lewis Seiler, Fox; (3) 1939, "*Frontier Marshal*" with Randolph Scott, Director: Allan Dwan, 20th Century Fox; (4) "*Tombstone (The Town Too Tough to Die)*" with Richard Dix, Director: William McGann, Paramount. (5) 1946, "*My Darling Clementine*" with Henry Fonda, Director: John Ford, 20th Century Fox; (6) 1950, "*Winchester '73*" with Will Geer, Director: Anthony Mann, Universal; (7) "*Wichita*" with Joel McCrea, Director: Jacques Tourneur, Allied Art; (8) 1955, TV, "*Wichita Town*" with Joel McCrea, series. (9) TV, 1956-59, "*The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*" with Hugh O'Brian, series; (10) 1957, "*Gunfight At the O.K. Corral*" with Burt Lancaster, Director: John Sturges, Paramount;

(11) 1958, "*Badman's Country*" with Buster Crabbe, Director: Fred F. Sears, MGM; (12) 1964, "*Cheyenne Autumn*" with James Stewart, Director: John Ford, Warner Brothers.

(13) 1965, "*Duel At Rio Bravo*" with Guy Madison; (14) 1967, "*Hour of the Gun*" with James Garner, Director: John Sturges, United Artists; (15) 1971, "*Doc*", with Harris Yulin, Director: Frank Parry, U.A.; (16)1988, "*Sunset*" with James Garner, Director: Blake Edwards, U.A.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 30 May 1992,
"Kentucky Portrait" – Kentucky Bicentennial Edition, p.24:**

Wild west gunfighter Wyatt Earp had roots in Ohio County

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

Wyatt Earp, the famous lawman and gunfighter of the Old West, had roots in Ohio County.

His grandfather, Walter Earp, moved to Hartford from Wheeling in western Virginia in the early 1800s, bought a large farm and began a law practice. His two sons, Nicholas and Lorenzo, grew up in Ohio County.

Nicholas practiced law with his father, became a land developer and married Elizabeth Cooksey at Hartford in 1840. They had two sons, James, born in 1841, and Virgil in 1842.

Nicholas cultivated both his and his father's farms and sold them at a good profit in 1843. By that time Lorenzo had moved to Illinois and his accounts of the opportunities there persuaded Walter and Nicholas to leave Kentucky.

They moved to Monmouth, Ill., where Walter practiced law and became a circuit court judge, and Nicholas was appointed deputy sheriff. In 1846, Nicholas fought with a U.S. Cavalry regiment in the Mexican War.

It was in Monmouth following the war that Nicholas' third son, Wyatt, was born March 19, 1848, and named for Nicholas' commanding officer in Mexico, Wyatt Berry Strapp.

When Wyatt was 2 years old, his parents moved to Pella, Iowa, where they had two more sons, Morgan and Warren, and a daughter, Adelia.

In 1864, the Earps joined a wagon trail and went to California.

Wyatt stayed in the West for a while but his family returned to Monmouth after a short stay in California. On a visit to Monmouth, Wyatt married a young woman. But she died of typhus and he returned to the West.

He worked as a stagecoach driver and buffalo hunter, and was a part-time professional gambler by the time he settled in Wichita, Kan., in 1874. Two years later, he moved to Dodge City, where he served two terms as assistant marshal from 1876 to 1878.

He supplemented his income by dealing faro at the Long Branch Saloon. Late in 1878 he left Dodge for Tombstone, Ariz., where recent silver strikes promised opportunity. He worked for a time as a Wells Fargo messenger and then as a gambler and guard in the Oriental Saloon, while his brother Virgil became town marshal.

Earp had a falling out with a gang led by Ike Clanton in 1881 and the dispute threatened to erupt into gunplay. Virgil Earp deputized Wyatt and their other brother, Morgan, and the three along with Doc Holliday, a mean-tempered alcoholic former dentist, forced the now famous showdown with the Clantons Oct. 26, 1881, at the OK Corral.

Afterward, Earp wandered north to Colorado and traveled widely, later returning to California where he lived out his last years on the income from mining and real estate interests. He died in Los Angeles in 1929.

Back in the East, Walter Cooksey Earp, a son of Lorenzo Earp, had moved back to Ohio County from Illinois, married Annie Allen of Rosine and spent the rest of his life there with his wife and son, Russell.

In the 1950s, when the television series "Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp" was sparking new interest in the frontier marshal, newspaper reporters tracked down Earp's relatives in Kentucky.

They found that Russell Earp was one of four of Wyatt's cousins who were living in Ohio County. The others included Eva Cooksey Parks and Phillip Cooksey, both of Horse Branch, and Bertha Cooksey Schroader of Beaver Dam.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 21 September 2004, pp.64 & 67:

Family's travels shaped lawman Earp

By David Blackburn, Messenger-Inquirer

One of America's famed gunslinger lawman might not have gotten a taste of the Wild West, or learned the skills to survive in it, had it not been for the nomadic ways of his Hartford-reared father.

Nicholas Earp moved his family - including son Wyatt Earp in his pre-O.K. Corral-gunfight days - between the Midwest and the then-unsettled West several times in the mid-1800s.

During an 1864 trip to California, a teenage Wyatt Earp learned to hunt and defend against American Indian raids.

He first became a peace officer about 1870 in Missouri after living two years in Wyoming, according to "A History of Ohio County, Kentucky."

The 1963 book, compiled from the papers of Hartford attorney and newspaper editor McDowell Fogle, also draws from Stuart Lake's 1931 biography "Wyatt Earp, Pioneer Marshal."

Nicholas Earp's parents moved from Virginia to Hartford soon after his birth in 1813. As an adult, he joined his father's law practice and later became a farmer, barrel maker and bootlegger.

Nicholas Earp married first wife Abigail Storm in 1836. She died after giving birth to their second child.

In 1840, he married Virginia Ann Cooksey, who later gave birth to Wyatt Earp's brothers James (1841) and Virgil (1843).

Among the Ohio County records Fogle cited as detailing the Earps' lives are:

- Two marriage licenses for Nicholas Earp.
- An 1839 mortgage from Nicholas Earp's brother Lorenzo to Nicholas Earp and Tucker D. Ragsdale for about 100 acres somewhere in Ohio County as part of a lawsuit.
- An 1840 quit-claim deed to Nicholas Earp for 150 acres on Caney Creek near Horse Branch in eastern Ohio County.
- An 1841 power-of-attorney from Virginia Earp to Nicholas Earp allowing him to represent her in any proceedings dealing with her grandfather's property in Virginia.

Another Earp tie to Ohio County is Walter Earp, a cousin of Wyatt's, who served as Rosine postmaster from 1914 to 1918.

Wyatt Earp was born on March 19, 1848, about three years after his family moved from Hartford to Monmouth, Ill.

About 1850, Nicholas and Virginia Earp moved to Pella, Iowa, where they had five other children, including Morgan (1851).

Morgan and Wyatt Earp served as deputies to U.S. Marshal Virgil Earp at the O.K. Corral gunfight in Tombstone, Ariz., in 1881.

Nicholas Earp is credited with stopping Wyatt Earp as the 13-year-old boy tried to run away and join the Union army with Virgil, James and half-brother Newton Earp in 1861.

Nicholas Earp was convicted of selling liquor in 1859 and lost his land when the judge ordered it sold at a public auction to pay his fines.

A year later, he was sued in Monmouth for failing to pay his debts and taxes, according to Wyatt Earp's ancestry on the "Natural American in Southwest" Web site.

Between 1864 and 1870, the Earps trekked from California to Lamar, Mo., to Wyoming, then back to Lamar.

Lake's biography credits Wyatt Earp's mother with helping shape her sons as they crossed the untamed pioneer land.

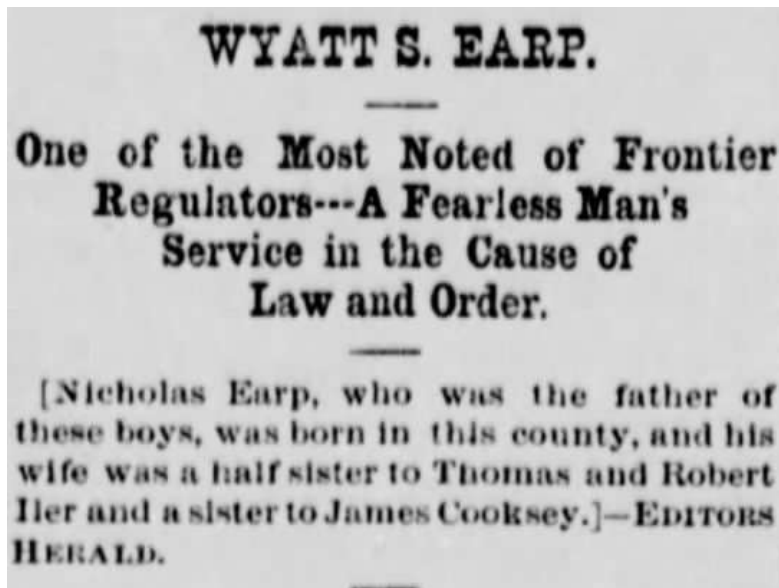
"While the influence of Nicholas Earp was the more apparent in his children's lives, Virginia Ann Cooksey unquestionably contributed no small portion of that high courage for which her sons were famed," Lake wrote.

Citing an unspecified incident, Lake added: "... Her fearless initiative in the face of a greater danger than any man may know equaled that displayed by any of 40 frontiersman in her company at the time."

Nicholas and Virginia Earp later moved to San Bernardino in southern California, where he was elected to the county court until just before his death in 1907. Virginia Earp died in 1893.



Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 7 March 1888, p.1



Wyatt S Earp is one of the most famous western characters living. Probably no man has a wider spread reputation throughout the Western territories than Wyatt S. Earp, of the famous Earp brothers, who created such a sensation a few years since at Tombstone, Arizona, by completely exterminating a whole band of outlaw cut-throats who had sought a safe refuge in Arizona's mountainous ranges They had until the advent of Earp and his three brothers done as they pleased, murdering and robbing with none to molest. This organization of the famous bandits was headed by the notorious "Curley Bill." They had for several years kept the portion of Arizona in which Tombstone is situated completely terrorized. The law was defied and the officials powerless to enforce it. Citizens. were made to throw up their hands in broad daylight and hand over whatever of value they possessed. Wells, Fargo & Co. were at the mercy of these highwaymen, and many times their coaches were "held up" and their treasury box handed down to the merciless villains who did not hesitate to kill when their demands were not complied with. Finally the "Earp boys," as they were called, made their appearance in Tombstone, and located some of the very best town property contained within the city limits. They also staked out some of the most valuable mining claims in the district.

About this time one of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s coaches was "held up" and the treasury box taken with its contents. The express company officials had heard the Earp boys spoken of as a set of very resolute men, who had been officers of the law. They determined upon securing the services of at least one of them to act in the capacity of "shotgun" messenger. The duty of the messenger would be to protect the treasury box while in transit to the railroad at Benson, some 30 miles distant. Morgan Earp was accordingly employed, and it is needless to add that after he had assumed charge of the treasury box robberies became less frequent. Morgan's acceptance of position in the express company's employ was, however, the signal for an open declaration of war between the robbers and the Earp boys. The cowboys declared that unless "Morg" Earp gave up his job as messenger they would kill him. This declaration they made known to "Morg." The latter sent them word that he intended pursuing the even tenor of his way, and that any time they saw fit to kill him all they had to do was to commence hostilities. This answer so enraged the outlaw element that they concluded one day to beard the lion in his den and see what kind of mettle the Earps were made of. Accordingly the two Clanton brothers, in company with Frank and Tom McLowry, paid their respects to the city of Tombstone, bent on bringing on an encounter with the Earps.

Virgil Earp was at this time city marshal, and as good a one as ever wore the star. After visiting warriors had filled themselves pretty full of whisky they commenced to "take in the town" They had not proceeded far, however, before Marshal Earp disarmed the leader, Ike Canton, and had him up before the police court. He was assessed \$50 and costs for boisterous conduct. After paying his fine, Ike Clanton got the balance of his party together, and after saddling their horses and getting out on the street they defied the marshal to arrest them. The marshal was not slow in getting his two brothers, Wyatt and "Morg" and the redoubtable Doc Holliday, to assist him. The famous duel was illustrated in the News It was four against four, and probably eight braver or more determined men never faced each other in a, death struggle. When within five paces of each other, the shooting commenced simultaneously on both sides, both giving and receiving the deadly missiles that flew like hail After the smoke of battle cleared away, Billy Clanton, Tom and Frank McLowry were lying on the street cold in death. Ike Clanton ran away at the first fire and left his companions to their fate, and saved his own life. "Virg" and "Morg" Earp were seriously wounded Dock Holliday also received a slight wound. The dead warriors proved on examination to have an average of six bullets each in their bodies It was the most desperate encounter that ever took place in any country. The balance of the robbers determined, after their defeat, on getting revenge, but

they changed their mode of warfare They wanted no more "up and up" fights, and therefore resorted to assassination. Virg Earp, the marshal, was their first victim. They fired at him with a shotgun loaded with buckshot from a place of concealment. While they failed of their object in killing him, they succeeded in crippling him for life. "Morg" was their next victim. With him they were more successful for one night while he was playing pin pool they fired through the window, killing him instantly. The bullet broke his backbone and he died after a few moments' suffering. Wyatt then swore vengeance against every "rustler" in the territory. He gathered some of his most trusted friends together, and after arming and mounting them, started out on his mission of death. It was only a short time before Florentine, a Mexican who was known to be one of the slayers of Morgan Earp, fell a victim to Wyatt's shotgun. The next to meet a well-deserved fate. was Frank Stilwell, another of the assassins, whom Wyatt filled with buckshot on the depot platform in Tucson. The last of three of who was known to have participated in the killing of Morgan Earp was Pete Spence. He thought discretion the better part of valor and fled the country, going to old Mexico, where he still remains. The next one to bow to the unerring. aim of Wyatt Earp's shotgun was "Curly Bill", the most famous outlaw of the southwest. Wyatt killed him one evening about sundown at Whetstone Springs thirty miles from Tombstone. This last killing broke up the band. Their chief, with the majority of his following, had bitten the dust, and those who were left sought new field in which to operate.

Wyatt then left Arizona and went to Colorado During the Grand Army reunion held at Dodge City, Kans., he went in behalf of his friend Luke Short, who had received rather bad treatment there at the hands of a mob. He is a quiet, unassuming gentleman, about six feet in height, broad shouldered, and wears a large blonde moustache. He is dignified, self-contained, game and fearless, and no man commands greater respect where he is known than Wyatt S. Earp. If he has been a man-killer and avenger, he has been so in the cause of justice and in a conflict with the most dangerous and treacherous elements of life in wild communities of the frontier. - Police Gazette.



Kentucky Family Records, Vol. 13, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Owensboro, KY, McDowell Publications, Utica, KY, 1988, pp.91-92:

Earp Family Data

It is evident that more than one branch of the Karp family settled in Illinois and in other midwestern states, while several branches migrated to and from southern states. They came from Virginia and the Carolinas, through the deep south to Texas; others went to Arkansas, to Missouri, Indiana and Iowa. These soon flowed into every state and territory in the United States. Many Earps have served in positions of trust, in politics, for the church, and in the business and professional worlds. Some too, have served the law, as lawyer and lawman, as did the redoubtable Wyatt Earp of more recent fame. The Earps have belonged to every political party and subdivision, including the Republican and Democratic parties. But it seems that at least five of the sons of Nicholas P. Earp, "the fighting Earps" adhered to the Republican faith. This was evident during their fighting days in our West.

We are first concerned with the immediate family of Nicholas P. Earp, father of Wyatt. His first son was Newton Jasper Earp, half brother to the five other Earp boys; the others were James

C., Virgil W., Morgan S., and Baxter Warren, always known as Warren, and Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp, by some proclaimed as "the greatest Marshal the West has ever known."

It is necessary to study the line of descent of these famous Earps, in order to place them in their proper relationship. The father of these boys, Nick Earp, was the son of Walter Earp, having eight brothers and sisters. He was born in North Carolina, September 6, 1813. Walter and Martha Earp, grandparents of Wyatt Earp, raised the following children: Lorenzo, Elizabeth, Josiah, James, Francis, Walter, Sally, Jonathan and Nicholas. For years the family sang their own favorite family song, according to a descendant of Josiah. Here is a part of it: "There's Lorenzo D., and Nicholas P., Josiah J., and James OK., Jonathan D., and Walter C., and all the rest of the whole Earp family.

Walter Earp, grandfather of Wyatt, and the patriarch of the Earp family, was born in Maryland, but the family soon moved to Virginia. His sons were those mentioned in the Earp song, with Lorenzo, his first born. The children's birthplaces indicate the place of residence of grandfather Walter; North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky.

Nick Earp married Abigail Storm in December 1836; Abigail died October 8, 1839 leaving Nick with his young son, Newton. At this marriage Nick's brother Lorenzo was the bondsman and James Holding officiated. When in 1837, another brother, Josiah married, it was to another Storm girl, and his brother Nick was his bondsman. Newton, "the best of the Earps" eldest of Nick's sons, was the only son of the first marriage of his father. He was born October 7, 1837 and was only two years old when his mother died. A daughter was also born to this union.

Nick Earp next married Virginia or Victoria Ann Cooksey, on July 30, 1840. Their first born was James C. born on June 28, 1841 in Kentucky. Then in succession came the four "fighting Earps." Virgil W. was born July 18, 1843 in Kentucky and was always regarded the most maturely minded of the fighting brothers. Shortly after Nick and his family moved from Ohio County, Kentucky, to Warren County, Illinois, settling in Monmouth, here Wyatt Earp was born on March 19, 1848.

Father Earp moved in with grandfather, Walter Earp, with his wife and small family and started farming. Nick was a little under six feet tall and three of his sons were to be six footers. He was light complexioned, had blue eyes, as did these three tall Earp boys, so they may have taken after their venturesome father. The other two boys, disregarding Newton who was never involved with them in their troubles, were shorter like their mother. These two were James and Warren. The three boys who moved with the family in the 1840s were Newton, James and Virgil; the latter two were of the Earp-Cooksey union.

Soon grandfather Walter Earp arranged for a small farm outside Monmouth for Nick Earp and his family moved there to farm. Nick was a talkative man, seemingly well informed, active in community affairs and was well liked, evidently. He opened a business place which was a gathering center for the local farmers. He was soon the Peace Justice for his community. No doubt the boys were then too young for much farm work, but later were to have their share.



Walter Earp (1787-1853) is listed in the 1810 census of Lincoln County, NC, 1820 census of Butler County, KY, 1830 & 1840 censuses of Ohio County, KY and 1850 census of Warren County, IL. Walter is first listed in the annual tax lists of Ohio County, KY in 1827. His son, Nicholas Porter Earp (1813-1907) in Ohio County Nicholas married Abigail Storm, 19 December 1836, and Virginia Ann Cooksey, 30 July 1840. Nicholas is listed as a household head in the 1840 census of Ohio County, KY and last appears in the Ohio County tax lists in 1843.

Ohio County, Ky
 This is to certify that the riles of matrimony was solemnized between the above Banns Nicholas P. Earp & Virginia Ann Cooksey by me on the 30th of July 1840 Given under my hand this 30th July 1840
 Jos H Ward M.H.

Ohio County, KY Marriages

181	158	N. P. Earp	37 m	Superior	500	North Carolina
		Virginia A. Earp	29 f			Kentucky
		Arthur J. Earp	13 m			ditto
		James C. Earp	7 m			ditto
		Virgil W. Earp	6 m			ditto
		Martha E. Earp	5 f			Illinois
		Wyatt B. Earp	2 m			ditto

1850 federal census of Marion County, Iowa



On left: Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) & mother, Virginia Ann Cooksey Earp (1821-1893). On right: Nicholas Porter Earp (1813-1907) & Virginia Ann Cooksey (1821-1893) parents of Wyatt Earp.



The Earp brothers and Doc Holiday - From left to right: Doc Holliday, Virgil Earp, Wyatt Earp, Morgan Earp. At Tombstone



Wyatt Earp U.S. postage stamp



Grave of Wyatt Earp at Hills of Eternity Memorial Park, Colma, CA



Kentucky Historical Highway marker dedicated 18 July 2021

Nicholas P. & Virginia A. Earp are listed in the 1850 census of Marion County, Iowa. In their household was listed their son, Wyatt B. Earp, age 2, born in Illinois. Wyatt is also listed in the 1860 census of Marion County, Iowa, 1870 census of Barton County, Missouri, 1880 census of Tombstone, Pima County, Arizona, 1900 census of Nome, Alaska, 1910 and 1920 censuses of Los Angeles, California.

In the censuses of Ohio County, KY during 1860-1900 no Earps are listed. A first cousin of Wyatt Earp, Walter Cooksey Earp (1857-1917, son of Josiah J. Earp & Elizabeth Jane Allen), of Illinois, in 1900 made his home in Ohio County, KY, where his wife, Margaret Anna Allen, and their son, Alvin Russell Earp (1903-1974, are buried in the Rosine Cemetery.

See also these other local sources:

- “Wyatt S. Earp. One of the Most Noted of Frontier Regulators – A Fearless Man’s Service in the Cause of Law and Order”, Hartford, Herald, Hartford, KY, 7 March 1888, p.1.

- “Wyatt Earp’s Ohio County Cousins Take Latter-Day Notoriety Calmly”, by Margaret Morgan, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 15 March 1959, p.1B, picture of Russell Earp of Horse Branch, Ohio County, KY.
- “Know Russell Earp of Horse Branch? Wyatt’s Cousin!”, Ohio County Messenger, Beaver Dam, KY, 6 November 1959, p.2.
- “Earp relatives seek marker for ancestors”, by Joe Adams, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 4 March 1986, p.1A
- “Wyatt Earp family”, by Bill Iler, Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, 1 May 1986.
- “Legends of the Old West”, by Paul Camplin, Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, 21 July 1994, p.8B.
- “Wyatt Earp’s coat given to Museum” [Ohio County, KY Museum], by Dorothy Gentry, Ohio County Times-News, Hartford, KY, 7 September 1995, p.8B.
- “Earp part of Park’s storytelling repertoire”, by Suzi Bartholomy, Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 28 February 2014, p.1B.