

## This Day in History... January 13, 1929

### Death of Wyatt Earp

After a life of wandering the frontier as a lawman, businessman, and gambler, Wyatt Earp died on January 13, 1929.

The third of five sons, Wyatt Earp was born on March 19, 1848 in Monmouth, Illinois. His father was often restless and frequently moved his family throughout the unsettled American West, hoping to strike it rich. Wyatt had this same restless spirit that led him to wander the frontier for most of his life.

Earp was 13 when the Civil War broke out. He anxiously wanted to leave his family home to join his older brothers in the Union Army. However, every time he ran away, Earp was caught and returned home before he could join a battle. Earp was finally able to leave his family at the age of 17, when he took a job hauling freight. He then worked grading track for the Union Pacific Railroad. It was also during this time that he learned to box and began a life-long love of gambling.

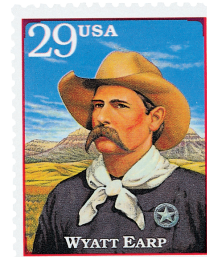
In 1869, Earp moved closer to his family, then living in Lamar, Missouri. After replacing his father as constable, Earp married Urilla Sutherland who became pregnant shortly after. However, she contracted typhus and died before giving birth. Earp was devastated by the loss and returned to a life of aimless wandering. He spent much of the next few years frequenting saloons and brothels and working as a strongman.

Earp then moved to Wichita, Kansas, where his brother Virgil owned a brothel. While there, Earp worked as a part-time police officer, rounding up criminals. It was an exciting job that earned him a small amount of press, both of which appealed to Earp. He enjoyed it so much that the next job he took was as city marshal of Dodge City, Kansas.

In spite of his newfound success as a lawman, Earp's restlessness and desire to search for riches returned. In 1879, he and his brothers Virgil and Morgan moved to Tombstone, Arizona, hoping to find silver. When their efforts proved fruitless, Earp returned once again to law work.

In 1881, Earp was tasked with finding a group of cowboys that had robbed a stagecoach. To improve his chances of finding them, Earp struck a deal with a local rancher – Ike Clanton. However, Clanton soon became paranoid that others would find out about their deal. He turned on Earp, announcing that he would kill one of the brothers.

*Earp was a deputy US Marshal and lawman.*



*Earp has been called the "toughest and deadliest gunman of his day."*

Then, on October 26, 1881, the three Earp brothers, as well as their friend Doc Holliday, met Clanton and three others at the O.K. Corral. In just 30 seconds, one of the world's most famous gunfights was over. After the smoke cleared, all three of Clanton's men were dead and all of Wyatt's men were wounded. He was the only one to leave the gunfight unscathed. Clanton later went on a rampage, shooting Virgil and killing Morgan. With the death of his brother, Wyatt set out for revenge. Though he never caught Ike, he and his posse launched a killing spree that was both praised and condemned for taking on the outlaw culture of the West.

In the coming years, the West became more settled and civilized. Earp found a new companion, who joined him in running saloons in California and Alaska. Earp finally settled in Los Angeles, where he became overly concerned with his legacy. He hoped for a movie to be made about his life, but didn't see it happen by the time he died on January 13, 1929. Two years later, Stuart Lake published a greatly-embellished biography of Earp that made him a Western hero. That book was turned into a movie in 1934, and was the first of several silver screen depictions of Earp.

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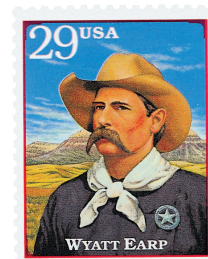
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