

Baxter Warren Earp

It seems that absolutely nothing about the Earp family is without some controversy, no matter how small it may be. There are just about as many writers that write about Baxter Warren Earp as there are those that write about Warren Baxter Earp. His original wooden head stone read Warren B. Earp and his newer metal stone reads Warren Baxter Earp. I am not going to settle the issue, but believe it to be Baxter Warren, and the confusion might be that he was always known as Warren.

Warren was not the only Earp to be killed while the brothers were in Arizona but he is the only one that is buried in the state. He was the youngest brother of Wyatt, Morgan, Virgil, James and Newton. Like Wyatt and Morgan, he was too young to join his older brothers, James, Virgil and Newton, in their service to the Union Army during the Civil War. The time of his arrival in Tombstone, Arizona, is not known for sure. He probably was not there at the time of the big gun fight. But he was there when Morgan was killed and he was a part of the murderous rampage that followed, known as "Wyatt's Vendetta Ride." Morgan's body was sent to the parents in Colton, California, for burial.



Warren was born on March 9, 1855, in Pella, Marion County, Iowa, and when he was nine years old the family moved to California by wagon train. Four years later they once again packed up and went back to Missouri by wagon. The older brothers were gone from home and Warren did not get involved with their business of horse stealing, gambling and running houses of ill-repute. He stayed close to home and helped his family on the farm and in their grocery store. In 1877, he once again joined his family in a move back to California. At 23, he decided to join his brothers in Tombstone.

He probably spent a good deal of time traveling back and forth between Tombstone and the parents' home in Colton. When he received word of the gunfight he returned to Tombstone to lend a hand as both Virgil and Morgan had been wounded. His brothers found odd jobs for him. Virgil, who was serving a dual capacity as U.S. deputy marshal and chief of police for Tombstone, hired him to do some tax collecting. We don't know whether he pocketed some of the tax revenues as his brothers had done back in Iowa. He did a stint as a policeman, patrolling the streets to prevent looting after the June 22, 1881, fire almost destroyed the town.

After the "vendetta" ride in March of 1882, the Earp posse, including Wyatt and Warren, plus Doc Holliday, "Turkey Creek" Jack Johnson, Sherman McMaster and "Texas Jack" Vermillion were indicted for murder and

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forced to flee from the Arizona lawmen and headed for Colorado where they split up.

Warren returned to Arizona in 1891 and drove the mail stagecoach between Willcox and Fort Grant and also did some bartending in Willcox. In 1900, he was 45 years old and allegedly working as a range detective for the Arizona Cattlemen's Association. He was known as a bully and not well liked by the folks of Wilcox. His temper was such that his brother Virgil was sure it would get him killed.

On July 6, 1900, Warren was in Brown's Saloon in Willcox at the same time as Johnny Boyett. Some say they had been enemies for a long time and some speculate they were rivals for a girl's affections. Bystanders reported that Warren was inebriated and lit into Boyett, and that they "never heard any man take such abuse." Warren was then quoted as saying, "Boyett, get your gun and we will settle this thing right here. I've got my gun. You go and get yours."

Boyett left the bar, acquired two pistols and returned to find there was no Warren. Just as Boyett called out, "Where is the son of a bitch?" Warren appeared in the door. Boyett fired two shots and missed. Warren stepped out of the saloon onto the side walk and Boyett missed with two more shots. Warren returned to the saloon by another door and opened his coat to show he had no arms. Warren commenced to advance on Boyett who commanded him to stop several times. Earp continued to advance and Boyett's fifth shot penetrated his heart. A partially opened pocket knife was found in his hand.

Justice of the Peace W. F. Nichols held an inquest on the same day as the shooting. Because of the knife and Warren's aggressive actions, Nichols failed to indict Boyett as he felt that no jury would convict him.

Many of the Old West history writers report that the court's verdict did not satisfy the old and crippled Wyatt and he is said to have sneaked into town under an assumed name to interview witnesses. He decided it was "cold-blooded murder even if Warren was drunk and abusive at the time." Boyett disappeared from Willcox and that led some writers to believe the Earps once again got their revenge. More than likely, Wyatt was in Alaska when he heard of Warren's death and remained there. Recent findings show that Johnnie Boyett was not killed by the Earps, despite many claims to the contrary, but moved to Texas and is buried there. There are many John Boyetts buried in Texas and some fall within the dates that would fit our story but I have no evidence that any of them are the man who shot Baxter Warren Earp.

Warren Earp, who had a reputation as a "merciless bully," was buried in the Willcox Pioneer Cemetery at the expense of Cochise County. The original wooden marker is gone and the exact location of his grave has been lost to history. Friends from Tombstone have placed a metal monument in the cemetery, but it is merely an epitaph.

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Sources: Wild West History Association: [wildwest history.org/research/bios/Earp_Warren.asp](http://wildwesthistory.org/research/bios/Earp_Warren.asp)

Home of Warren Earp at:
www.panhistoria.com/Stacks/Novels/Character_Homes/home.php?CharID=488