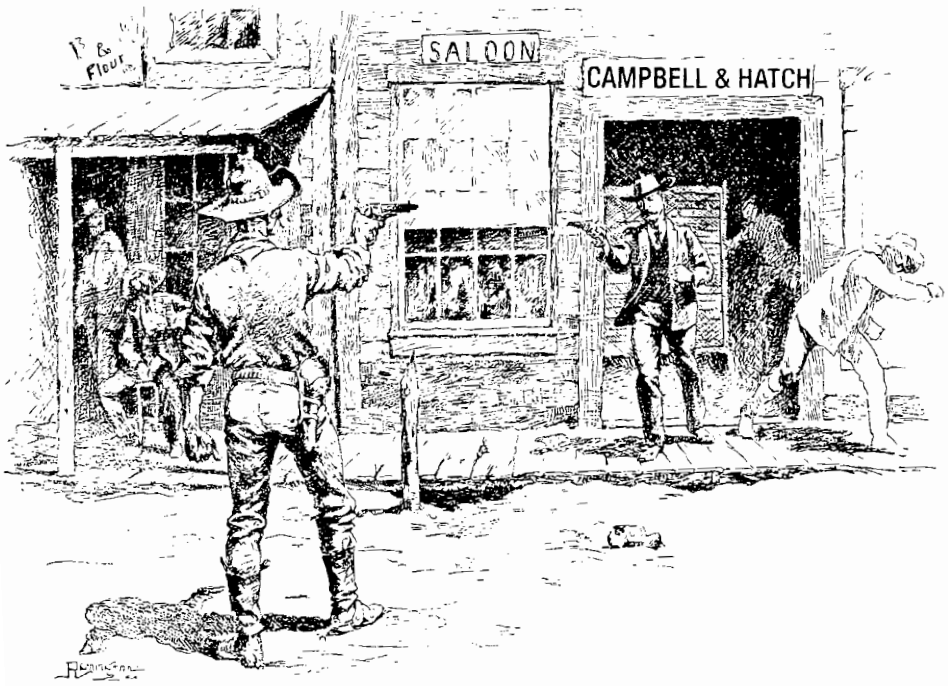
Tombstone's Violent Years, 1880-1882

As Remembered By

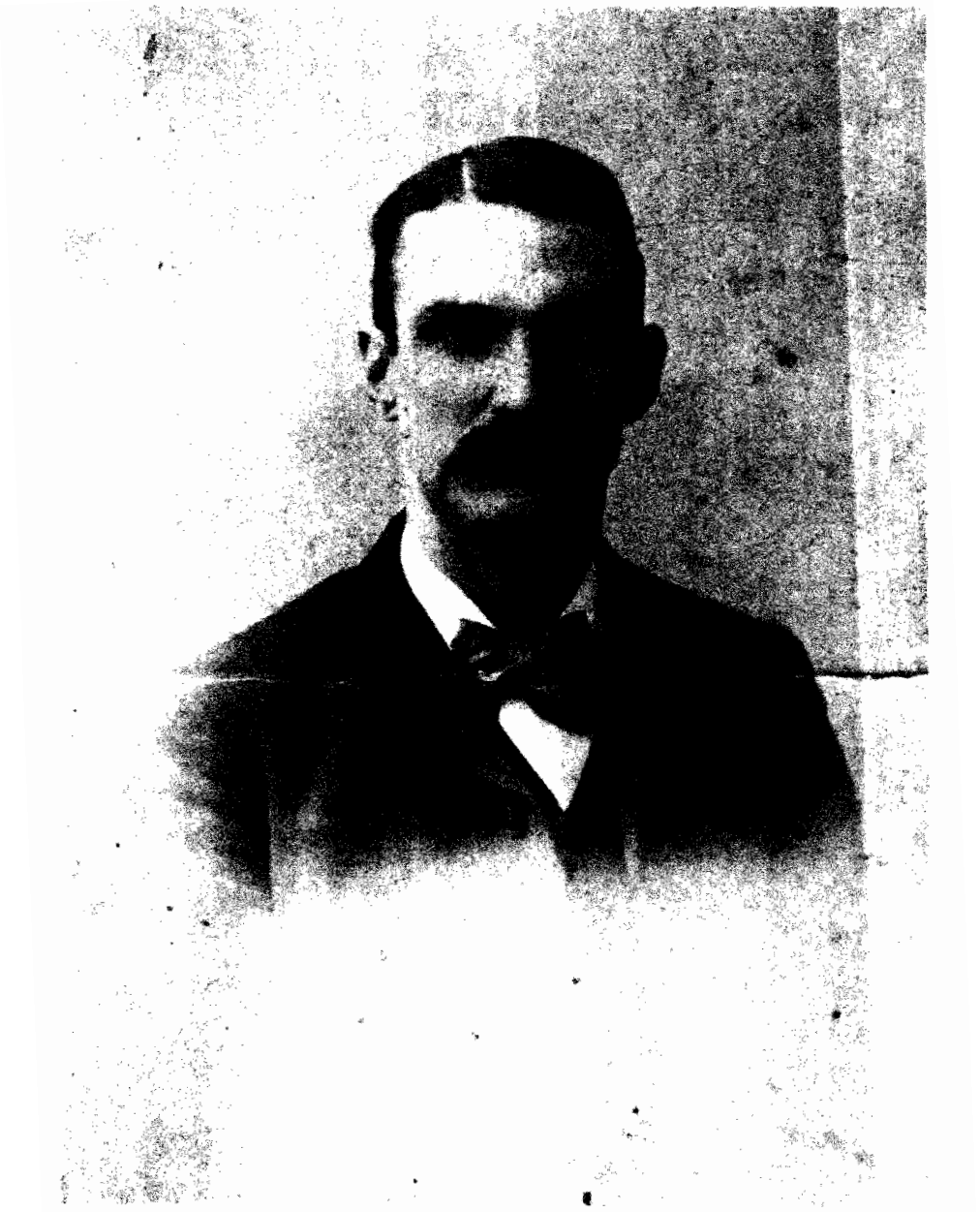
JOHN PLESENT GRAY



Edited By

NEIL B. CARMONY

CONTENTS



John Plesent Gray at the age of thirty-four. Photo taken in San Francisco in 1894. Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, #8297.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Earp brothers . . . Doc Holliday . . . the Clantons . . . Curly Bill . . . John Ringo . . . . These names evoke images of shootouts, holdups, bushwhackings, and desperadoes riding Hell-for-leather with lawmen in hot pursuit. They are known to Old West enthusiasts everywhere. John Gray knew these men firsthand, and he wrote about them with style and flair.

In the 1920s and '30s a number of Tombstone pioneers wrote or dictated to others the stories of their exploits in the "town too tough to die." This group included Wyatt Earp, Billy Breakenridge, Fred Dodge, and John Clum. And John Gray did likewise. Late in life Gray prepared an autobiographical manuscript detailing his youthful adventures in southeastern Arizona and adjacent New Mexico during the period 1880-1893. In 1940 he placed the document in the archives of the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson. About one fourth of the memoir, the part in which Gray discusses early Tombstone (1880-1882) and the characters who made the town famous, is presented here.

The Author: John Plesent Gray, the first son of Michael and Sarah Ann Gray, was born February 29, 1860, in Sacramento, California. He had two older sisters, Mary and Amanda Margaret ("Maggie"). The Gray family moved to Guaymas, Sonora, in 1861, and John's only brother, Dixie Lee "Dick" Gray, was born in Guaymas the next year. After a time the family relocated to Mazatlán, Sinaloa. In 1866 the Grays returned to California.[1]

John spent his youth at Gilroy, California, a small town a few miles south of San Jose. Evidently he was a good student—in the spring of 1880 he graduated from University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree. In June 1880 the proud UC alumnus traveled by rail and stage to Tombstone. There John joined his mother, father, brother, and now-widowed sister, Maggie Gray Hall. They had come to the raw, frontier town the previous year. (John's sister Mary passed away in Gilroy before her family moved to Arizona.)[2]

During the summer of 1880 John Gray worked for Pima County recorder Sidney Carpenter in Tucson. Then he briefly labored in a Tombstone mine—probably the "Way Up," which, for a time, was partly owned by his father. The elder Gray bought a half interest in the Way Up in November 1879; he sold his share of the mine in December 1880. The 1880 census listed "bookkeeper" as eighteen-year-old Dick Gray's occupation, and advertisements in several issues of Tombstone's *Daily Nugget* during December 1880 disclose that he was working out of the family home on the southwest corner of Fremont and Sixth streets as a notary public and "conveyancer"—a person who prepares deeds, leases, and similar documents.[3]

In the spring of 1881 Michael Gray acquired a sizeable tract of grazing land in Animas Valley, a wild, grassy expanse located just east of Arizona in New Mexico's Boot Heel. According to John Gray, the ranch was purchased from the notorious badman Curly Bill Brocius for $300. John and his brother began spending most of their time in Animas Valley, building a

ranch headquarters and otherwise getting the operation underway (their parents remained in Tombstone). But disaster loomed on the horizon. Dick Gray was murdered near the ranch on August 13, 1881. Owing to this tragedy, the Grays lost enthusiasm for their Animas Valley enterprise and gradually phased it out. In September 1882 Mike Gray agreed to sell the property to George Hearst, the California millionaire, and his partners for $12,000. The deal was finalized in November 1883, and the Grays' Animas Valley acreage was incorporated into the large "Diamond A" operation. Despite their short tenure, the place is still known as the "Gray Ranch."[4]

Camp Rucker, a small military post located about forty miles east of Tombstone in the western foothills of the Chiricahua Mountains, would play a role in the lives of the Gray family for many years. Rucker was established in 1878 in White River Canyon (now Rucker Canyon), and in 1880 the camp was downgraded to a picket station. Soon the army totally abandoned the place, and in 1882 the land the post had occupied became available for homesteading. Never one to let an opportunity pass him by, in December 1882 Michael Gray took possession of the site. He and his family moved to Old Camp Rucker and began developing it as a cattle ranch. Cochise County records show that on December 16, 1882, the Grays paid Tombstone lawyers Ben and Briggs Goodrich $6,800 for 341 head of cattle to stock the new spread. John Gray recalled that these animals were the remnant of a herd sent to graze in Arizona by John Chisum, the famous New Mexico cattle baron. The Grays raised cattle in the beautiful Chiricahua Mountains for fourteen years.[5]

In the summer of 1882 Tombstone postmaster Fred Brooks hired John Gray as a clerk. (Brooks was postmaster from June 1882 to January 1885.) John worked in the post office for about two years, taking time off now and then to help his father at the ranch. By 1884 John Gray was living and working full time on the Camp Rucker property, in partnership with his father.[6]

John Gray moved back to California about 1893—he is listed in the Cochise County great register for 1892 but not in that for 1894. The severe drought that began in the summer of 1891 and continued throughout 1892, a weather event that devastated Arizona's heavily-grazed rangelands and put many stockmen in a financial bind, may have prompted his departure.[7] On April 30, 1894, John married Lannie Marianne Charles in San Francisco. John was thirty-four years old, Lannie was twenty-three. The couple eventually had five children. Their first, John Jr., was born in San Francisco on February 4, 1895; a second son, Rucker C. Gray, was born in California in March 1896.[8] The San Francisco city directory for 1895 lists two John P. Grays, one was a clerk, the other was involved in the livestock business.

About 1898 John and his family returned to Arizona and joined John's father at a ranch near Pearce, a settlement about twenty miles northeast of Tombstone (the Grays had sold the Camp Rucker ranch in 1896). On May 17, 1899, the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board appointed John "live stock inspector and detective" for Pearce and its environs. The 1900 census reveals that the Gray household included John and his wife, Lannie; their sons, John Jr. and Rucker; John's father, Michael; and Lannie's brother.

Herbert Charles. John gave "cattle raising" as his occupation; seventy-three-year-old Michael Gray described himself as a "capitalist." John Gray was the census "enumerator" for the Pearce district.

Sarah Ann Gray, John's mother, and Maggie, his sister, are not mentioned in the 1900 census. On September 8, 1883, Maggie married Robert H. Cavill in Tombstone and left the shelter of her parents' home.[9] She was thirty-five years old and married to a man named Fred Barrow when she died in California in November 1893.[10] Sarah Ann Gray passed away on February 20, 1894. She was sixty-three years old at the time of her demise.[11]

Another son, Robin, was born to John and Lannie on March 10, 1901, while they were living near Pearce. Unlike his father, John is not included in the 1902 great register for Cochise County—evidently he and his family had returned to California. John and Lannie's only daughter, Sallie, was born on May 26, 1905, in San Francisco. Harry Lee Gray was born May 6, 1908, in Ukiah.[12] Lannie Gray died in Ukiah on August 22, 1920.[13] She was forty-nine years old. While in Ukiah John was employed as a clerk and bookkeeper. In 1920 his employer was the Snow Mountain Power Company, which was located a few miles outside of Ukiah in Potter Valley. The 1920 census indicates that all five of his children were still living at home. John is not listed in the 1922 Mendocino County great register, so he may have left the area soon after Lannie's death. About 1928 John Gray moved to Los Angeles, where he spent his retirement years. He died in Los Angeles on January 11, 1943, at the age of eighty-two.[14]

The Author's Father: Michael "Mike" Gray became an important figure in early Tombstone and therefore a review of his varied career is in order. He was born in Tennessee on April 1, 1827; his family moved to Texas in 1831. It seems that Mike was a precocious lad and became a soldier before he was old enough to shave. John Gray wrote: "At the age of 14 years my father enlisted in the army being organized by General Sam Houston for the defense of that new country. He always remembered that date as it was then he donned his first pair of pants—a necessary covering required by a soldier! Previously, like all the boys of that time and country, he had worn only the regulation long-tail hickory shirt and always went barefoot. Father followed Colonel Jack Hays throughout the Mexican War and reached the rank of first lieutenant."[15]

The Gray clan joined the rush to the California gold fields in '49, and there Mike became involved in mining and trading in mineral claims. The former Texas Ranger was sheriff of Yuba County from April 1852 to September 1855. On July 23, 1852, he oversaw the hanging of a thief named George Tanner, a rare instance of a man being legally executed for stealing. Mike Gray married Sarah Ann Robinson in Marysville, the Yuba County seat, in 1853, and their daughters, Mary and Maggie, were born in Marysville in 1854 and 1858. By 1860 the Grays were living in Sacramento, the state capital and birthplace of John Gray. In 1861 Mike Gray served as sergeant-at-arms for the California Assembly, as the lower house of the state legislature was called. When the Civil War broke out later that year Mike was offered an officer's commission in one of the regiments of the

California Volunteers, a force being organized to fight in defense of the Union. But he respectfully rejected the proposal, owing to his Southern sympathies. He and his family spent the war years in Mexico. Mike Gray ran a hotel in the port city of Guaymas, Sonora, and he invested in nearby mines. His last child, a son, was born in Guaymas in 1862. Mike and Sarah Ann named him Dixie Lee in honor of the South and its most illustrious military leader. Soon attractive mining opportunities enticed the Grays to move to Mazatlán, Sinaloa.[16]

In 1866 unrest caused by the effort by Mexican patriots to oust Maximilian of Hapsburg and the French interventionists who had installed him as "emperor" of Mexico induced the Gray family to leave their home in Mazatlán and return to California. A Santa Clara County atlas and business directory published in 1876 reported that the Grays settled in Gilroy in 1869 and that Mike was a saloon keeper. Early in 1872 an elaborate hoax produced a diamond-hunting fever that infected mining men throughout the West. Mike Gray became caught up in the excitement, and he and several companions spent weeks prospecting for diamonds, rubies, and other precious gems in the Navajo country of northeastern Arizona—without success, of course. The renowned geologist Clarence King exposed the scam in November 1872. Mary Gray died at Gilroy in 1876 at the age of twenty-two. By 1877 the nomadic Grays had moved a few miles north to Alameda. But they didn't live there for long. When Mike Gray learned of the richness of the Tombstone silver discoveries, he and his family packed up and headed for southeastern Arizona, arriving in May 1879.[17]

Soon after settling in Tombstone, Mike Gray was appointed justice of the peace, opened a boarding house, acquired shares in a promising mineral claim, and was named the town council's secretary or clerk. But these were not his most notable activities. In July 1879 Mike Gray bought into the infamous Tombstone Townsite Company (founded in the spring of 1879), and he and his partners aggressively set out to make their investments pay off. The owners of the Townsite Company declared that a townsite claim filed in accordance with the federal land laws gave them title to all of Tombstone's town lots. Therefore, anyone residing within the townsite boundaries (which encompassed preexisting homes and businesses) had to pay them for the privilege. However, their assertions were hotly disputed by people already occupying parcels of land. Many Tombstone residents had purchased property from mineral-claim holders and other parties they believed to be legitimate sellers, and they were not about to knuckle under to the Townsite people and pay for the same land twice. The situation became tense and threatened to explode into violence. The ownership of town lots debate dominated the January 1881 Tombstone municipal election. John Clum, editor of the *Tombstone Epitaph* newspaper and an ardent opponent of the Townsite Company, won the race for mayor by a large majority. But the dispute didn't end with the defeat of the Townsite Company's candidates at the polls. The bitter battle over the ownership of Tombstone town lots was fought in the courts for years.[18]

By 1883 Mike Gray had disposed of his interest in the Townsite Company, was no longer a justice of the peace, and was living on his ranch

where Sulphur Spring Valley gives way to the Chiricahua Mountains.[19] But he was not isolated from public affairs. A natural wheeler-dealer and politician, Mike Gray served several terms in the Arizona legislature. Although his first (1880) bid for a legislative seat was unsuccessful, Cochise County voters elected the staunch Democrat to the Arizona House of Representatives in 1886, 1892, 1898, and 1900.[20]

In January 1892 Mike Gray returned from a trip to Texas with four bloodhounds he had purchased from officials at the state prison at Huntsville. Mike believed the nefarious Apache Kid was rustling his cattle, and he planned to use the hounds, renowned for their ability to locate escaped convicts, to track the Kid down. But the Apache Kid was too crafty to be caught by bloodhounds—the renegade disappeared into the Sierra Madre and into legend, his ultimate fate unknown.[21] On September 11, 1896, Mike Gray sold the Camp Rucker property to Mathilde and Theodor Hampe, formerly of San Francisco, for $2,500. Mike then relocated to a homestead on the outskirts of Pearce. He was still living at Pearce in 1905, but the end was near. The old frontiersman's right forearm became cancerous and the malignancy spread rapidly. In May 1905 he went to San Francisco to consult physicians there about treatment. His doctors amputated the afflicted arm, but the operation did not restore Mike's health. Mike Gray died in San Francisco on September 8, 1906, at the age of seventy-nine.[22]

The Memoir: John Gray's unique perspective on many topics makes his memoir especially interesting. Consequently, many writers have used Gray's account in their research and have quoted it extensively in books and articles. This apparent endorsement by scholars tends to give readers the impression that the work is highly reliable. However, Gray's memoir, while great reading, is not an impeccable source of factual information. Written a half-century after the described events took place, the narrative is the product of human memory, always a fallible instrument. As a result, like so many accounts related by Tombstone pioneers in old age, Gray's reminiscence contains significant errors. The annotated excerpt presented here is intended to demonstrate how risky it is to take such writings at face value. But Gray's basic sincerity is not in doubt. He simply recalled things in a way that sometimes differed from the historical record and now and then succumbed to the temptation to make a good story better. As a source of historical facts, the memoir has its shortcomings; as a spirited description of frontier life, it is unsurpassed.

In this publication the editor has attempted to point out Gray's most glaring mistakes but has avoided nitpicking every detail that might be a little off the mark. Editorial notes are given in brackets. Gray told his story as a series of sketches of people and events, and these have been placed in chronological order. Spelling and punctuation have been adjusted for the sake of readability, but otherwise Gray's prose has been carefully preserved. The complete document, edited by W. Lane Rogers, was published in March 1998 under the title *When All Roads Led to Tombstone*.

TOMBSTONE'S VIOLENT YEARS, 1880-1882

By John Plesent Gray

A College Boy Arrives in Arizona: A few miles east of Tucson, Arizona, is the Southern Pacific railway station Pantano, and that point marked the end of the Southern Pacific Railroad in June of 1880. There were about thirty passengers on the train arriving at Pantano the morning of June 4th of that year, all headed for the promised land of Tombstone. That mournful name did not seem to dampen the ardor of any of the thirty, of which I was one. If it had borne the name of "Hell" it is probable our enthusiasm would have been none the less.

That last morning on the train we had stopped for breakfast at Tucson, and we were told they had just finished celebrating the arrival of the "iron horse" and had wired the Pope at Rome that the "Ancient and Honorable Pueblo" of Tucson was now in touch with the rest of the world. Signed by Mayor Bob Leatherwood, the cablegram put Tucson on the map as the "Ancient and Honorable Pueblo," afterward abbreviated to the "A. and H. Pueblo," a title still preserved by old-timers.

[*The Southern Pacific tracks reached Tucson from the west in March 1880. The story about the town's mayor sending a message to the Pope informing him of the great event is thought to be folklore. In any case, the rails entered western New Mexico in the fall of 1880, and by the spring of 1881 the nation's second transcontinental rail system was in operation.*[23]]

It had been a rather disappointing sight we had experienced of the little flat [*roofed*] town of drab adobe houses—Tucson. Because in age it is close to being the oldest town in the United States, we naturally expected something different. [*Tucson was founded as a presidio or fort by the Spanish in 1776.*[24]] With its square-built adobe houses standing flush with the streets, narrow and treeless, apparently bare of any sort of plant life, it had made us still more homesick than before for the bright flower gardens and cheerful paint that graced California towns. But in time we discovered that many of these rough-looking mud houses had an inside court or patio with as pretty flower gardens as any California home could boast of. Our railroad tickets billing us to Tombstone had cost us ninety-eight dollars apiece and most of the party, including myself, would land in Tombstone practically broke, so we didn't waste too much time getting the blues over what we didn't like in Tucson.

I remember how eager we were to pile out of the train and into the stagecoach standing ready by the track with its six-horse team that seemed as impatient as we were to get away. Our railroad ride from California had been very tiresome, for in those days the roadbed was new and, despite the slow speed of the train, caused much jolting of the passengers. The dust crept in through window casings and every conceivable place even when the car windows were all closed, and that, with the desert heat, which was a new and trying experience, had about exhausted all of us.

That day's stage ride will always live in my memory, but not for its beauty spots. Jammed like sardines on the hard seats of an old-time leather-spring coach (a Concord) leaving Pantano, creeping much of the way, letting the horses walk through miles of alkali dust that the wheels rolled up in thick clouds, of which we received the full benefit, we couldn't then see much romance in the old stage method of traveling. But the driver said that was his daily job, which made us ashamed of our weakness. We still wondered, however, why the Concord coach was ever invented, as it seemed such a crude creation, especially so now that we look back and compare it to later horse-drawn vehicles. But there is no question about its ability to withstand rough usage. It was evidently built for mountain travel, and many a Concord stage has gone off the grade and still held together to continue in use. It is always a mystery to the passenger how many people can be wedged into and on top of a stagecoach. If it had not been for the long stretches when the horses had to walk, enabling most of us to get out and "foot it" as a relaxation, it seems as if we could never have survived the trip.

We had a good dinner at our first stop, a stage "stand" near where Benson was afterward founded, and this revived us and saved the day. This was our initiation to the frontier, and often since I have found that a good, hearty meal is the best cure-all for weariness, of mind as well as of body. I can hardly believe a suicide could occur following a good dinner!

In our company that day were at least two men destined to figure in Tombstone's future. One of them was Sol Israel, whose bookstore became a well-known business on Allen Street, and another, Bob Crouch, started the "Sandy Bob" stage line, and in time it absorbed the entire stage business between Tombstone and the railroad.

Tombstone at Last: I will always remember our thrilling entry into Tombstone about sundown. Our driver cracked his long whip over the six weary horses and forced them into a gallop up Allen Street, then with a grand flourish brought the coach to a stop in front of the Cosmopolitan Hotel owned and operated by A. C. Bilicke and son who founded there the fortune that later grew to millionaire proportions in Los Angeles. [*Gray is referring to Carl G. F. Bilicke and his son, Albert C. Bilicke.*] Everybody it seemed had gathered on the street, as was the custom, to meet the incoming stage. The glad hand extended us made us feel at home at once. I looked in vain for any guns or so-called gunmen. I learned later that it was one of the town's first ordinances that no guns were to be permitted in any public place, and Tombstone always was a quiet, safe town for the man who minded his own business. Tombstone was new then, less than one year old. That was before the coming of the Earps, Doc Holliday, and the late discordant elements.

[*James, Virgil, and Wyatt Earp, together with their wives, arrived in Tombstone in December 1879, six months before John Gray showed up. Morgan and Warren Earp came to town later, as did the consumptive dentist and gambler John H. "Doc" Holliday.* [25]]

"Sandy Bob" Crouch started his "opposition" stage line almost at once after his arrival in Tombstone. On July 4th, 1880, he drove his first stage,

pulled by four gray horses, out of Tombstone for the new town of Benson, which was making its debut into the world on that day. [*Benson is about twenty-five miles northwest of Tombstone and fifty miles east of Tucson.*] I was one of his passengers, and his "mud wagon," as that style of stage was commonly termed, was well loaded, for Sandy Bob was starting his opposition to the Walker Stage Line at reduced fare. I remember that our driver—Sandy Bob himself—tried desperately to pass the big six-horse stage, but the latter had the lead and we had to take his dust all the way. That was a Red Letter Day in more ways than one.

The Southern Pacific Railway Company was auctioning off the town lots of Benson and it was there we met a big excursion train from Tucson. It looked as if all the inhabitants of Tucson had come to the sale. I was on my way to Tucson and had to wait at Benson till the sale was over and the excursion train ready to return to its starting point. In Benson there was not yet a single house erected but a few tents were up, these being used for saloons and restaurants, which were doing a good business. Anyway, they were on that day. I expect, however, that Benson was a livelier place on that 4th of July than at any other time of its career. And it was astounding the prices lots were bid up to that day. I venture to say that at no time since has Benson real estate ever risen to the peak prices of that day, its advent to the life of a city. The main bidders were Tucson people, and the bidding was an amazing thing to witness out on that desert spot along the railroad track—a spot which apparently had no redeeming features as to location except, as the auctioneer stressed, its being a possible junction point for a future branch line to Guaymas, Mexico. [*A rail line between Benson and the port city of Guaymas, Sonora, via Contention City and Nogales, was completed in October 1882.*[26]] I feel sure that auctioneer never did a better business for the railroad company, and if Benson had lived up to that day's promise it would be a thriving city today instead of just another railroad station. (But maybe it has moved up a step since I knew it.)

[*There are some problems with Gray's story about his trip to Benson. First, the auction of Benson town lots took place on June 21, 1880, not July 4.*[27] *Second and more importantly, Robert Crouch did not start running stages to Benson at that time. An article and an accompanying advertisement in the August 21, 1880,* Tombstone Epitaph *reported that his "Daily Accommodation Line to Benson" would begin serving the public that day at the bargain fare of $2 per passenger. Nonetheless, Gray did travel to Tucson via Benson about the time of the lot auction. The June 24, 1880, issue of the* Arizona Daily Star, *a Tucson newspaper, noted that J. P. Gray of Tombstone had checked into the Palace Hotel.*]

From that time on the order was to take the stage at Benson for Tombstone. All roads led to that Mecca—the promised land for the toiler, the down-and-outer, the confidence man, and last but not to be ignored, the gunman, who seemed to figure always in our frontier outposts . . . .

[*In February 1882 trains began running between Benson and Contention City, located ten miles west of Tombstone, and stage traffic between Tombstone and Benson was much reduced. A railroad spur into Tombstone itself was not built until after the turn of the century (1903).*[28]]

The Tombstone Townsite Dispute: My father was among the first to arrive on the ground after Ed Schieffelin's discovery of the Tombstone mines [*in 1877*]. Early in 1879 he located and filed on a 320-acre townsite plot which lay mostly on a comparatively level mesa just east of the hills in which the mines were located. To give the new town a start, father gave to the business houses already at the camp their choice of lots on Allen Street, which became the center of Tombstone's busy years. But as a real estate venture the townsite business did not pay. My father was granted a U.S. patent for the townsite and his title was without flaw, but it was the old story of most all mining camps—lot jumping was considered a legitimate business. A hastily constructed shack would be hauled onto, or erected on, a vacant lot by night, and the jumper would be in possession the next morning.

[*In the spring of 1879 five businessmen formed the Tombstone Townsite Company. Mike Gray was not among this group. He bought into the company in July 1879, and he and James S. Clark, who also owned a share of the business, assumed responsibility for overseeing the company's activities in Tombstone. By the fall of 1881 Mike Gray was no longer a partner in the enterprise.*[29]]

Endless lawsuits for the ejectment of squatters followed, and, as soon as the squatter found that he was to be dispossessed, he would pick up his shack (always by night) and next morning he would be sitting snugly on some other lot and a new ejectment suit would have to be started. Much bad feeling resulted, and "Townsite Gray," as my father was called, became the object of much abuse—unjustly so—by the lot jumpers. At one time the lot jumpers made a desperate effort to have my father's U.S. patent rescinded. Carl Schurz was then secretary of the interior and he was appealed to. The patent had already been mailed at Washington, and the document was located en route at the Chicago post office. Secretary Schurz asked the Chicago postmaster to return it to Washington, but this he refused to do. His action was upheld at Washington, as it was decided that a mailed letter or parcel must go unmolested to its destination. The patent came through to the Tombstone Townsite Company [*on November 5, 1880*], and the squatters were left without any lawful rights. But by the time lawsuits were settled, the glory of Tombstone began to fade, and real estate values vanished almost in a night. [*See Walker 1979 for a more thorough and less biased discussion of the Tombstone Townsite controversy.*]

Life in Early Tombstone: In the early days of Tombstone it was all Pima County extending south of Tucson [*the county seat*] to the Mexican border and east to the New Mexico line. [*Cochise County, with Tombstone as county seat, was created by the Arizona legislature on February 1, 1881.*] Tombstone had a unique place among the mining camps of the West. It stood alone, in its prime, as the newest-going discovery, and, as such, for awhile all roads led to Tombstone. Bodie in California had blown up. The Comstock [*in western Nevada*] had seen its best days, and the big strikes at Cripple Creek and Leadville in Colorado were as yet uncovered to the world. [*Leadville burst on the scene as a boomtown about the same time Tombstone rose to prominence.*] Thus all the adventurers, prospectors,

gamblers, and other wanderers pulled up stakes wherever they were at the moment and hit for Tombstone. And it might be close to the truth to say that Allen Street in Tombstone was the meeting place for all the world's wandering population—the flotsam and jetsam of civilization in the eighties.

There were no restrictions on nationality, color, or reputation; but the city marshal was on hand as the loaded stages came in and saw to it that all exposed firearms were deposited away from view. The man who ventured on Allen Street with a derby or high hat would soon lose sight of said head covering, also. Off it would fall, and first one and then another would bunt it along with a kick, soon making it an object not worth recovering. But the owner generally took this playfulness good naturedly, soon falling in line by wearing the regulation sort of cowboy headgear. Often the crowd would chip in the price of a new hat for the tenderfoot.

Of course many men of doubtful occupation drifted in to ply their "trade" upon the innocent or gullible citizens. But most of these soon found the climate was not suitable and as quickly drifted out. I remember a man was brought up before my father, then justice of the peace, on a charge of passing counterfeit money. The evidence positively showed his guilt, but my father thought the light jail sentence he could give the man would not serve much good. So he appealed to the audience, consisting mostly of hard-boiled miners, to give him a severe lesson. That meant that the guilty party must immediately leave town and keep going. So a lane was formed, and at the given word the criminal was ordered to start going. As he hurried down the lane he was "helped" along by kicks and slaps which left him almost a wreck before he managed to disappear down the highway leading to elsewhere. So far as known he never came back, and passing bad money was not considered a paying business thereafter.

In its rush days Tombstone's Allen Street presented an interesting jumble of humanity. Even the stranger would be carried away by the constant hurry, with something doing every minute. Saloons, restaurants, hotels, well-stocked stores, and barbershops—all brightly lighted for those pre-electric days—kept open house on both sides of Allen Street away into the night. And the music from dance halls and all the hubbub that a crowd of men away from their homes, tired and seeking excitement, can make, all of this filled the air with a confused "roar of the crowd." It could be heard miles away by the lonely cowboy or prospector wandering in to join the gang.

In daytime Allen Street was generally like an ordinary country crossroads town, but at nightfall everybody was milling about and giving vent to all their suppressed feelings and good fellowship. It was like a jolly crowd of grown boys out for a night of fun, and most business houses did a better business at night than in the daytime. Some of those early eating places gained fame beyond the confines of the city limits. A sheriff of Cochise County took a trip to New York City and upon his return to Tombstone asserted that no place in New York City—not even Delmonico's—could set a better meal than the old Can Can Restaurant in Tombstone. The Can Can was well named, for in those days in a place like

Tombstone the can opener was about the only way of arriving at a dinner.

And the beef was the toughest thing in the camp. Cattle ranching had not been started [*on a large scale*] and the butchers got their cattle mostly from rustlers who rushed them in from fifty or more miles away, as a rule from across the border in Mexico, and the poor cattle were surely rushed. The rustlers would bring in the old longhorns, which were good travelers and so able to get a move on, and the butcher had time to get the hides off and hid away before the owner proper had time to trail up the "lost" animals. This was cheap beef for the butcher, and when an animal was found so poor that the meat had a bluish tinge he put that particular beef on the market as "veal." The Tombstone butchers and the rustlers had the time of their lives, but of course this was only at the beginning. But Tombstone hardly had a begin-ning before the end of prosperity came. No doubt much the same story can be told of all mining camps, even though they have produced millions . . . .

In its palmy [*prosperous*] days, a nervous man would not have been happy with the methods of life in Tombstone. If you sought a peaceful sleep at night you might be suddenly awakened by some unearthly noise, musical or otherwise, from "Promenade to the Bar" at some dance hall, a yell of "Keno" from some rejoicing gambler, to a pistol shot by some shoot-'em-up Dick just to keep things moving. But you could sleep on in the midst of this if you could simply consider it as harmless as the noise of a boiler factory. And as to danger from holdup men, even the name itself was unknown. A man's roll was perfectly safe unless he spent it of his own will. In those days many carried their money in the shape of a neat roll made by shaping greenbacks like a roll of ribbon kept intact by a rubber band. I wonder how long one could keep his bankroll nowadays in his inside coat pocket.

One summer evening Allen Street was stirred by the appearance of a Gypsyish-looking man wearing big hoop earrings and leading a huge cinnamon-colored bear by a short chain. In a few minutes these stray visitors absorbed the attention of the whole population of Tombstone, and all other business was definitely at a standstill. The Gypsy man was not there for his health, however, and soon he had the sturdy miners interested by offering to bet five dollars a side, the bear against anyone in a wrestling match—the winner being the one who could lay the other down on the street. At first it looked easy for a husky miner, but when the bear stood on his hind legs his head reached over a foot above the tallest miner, and no man's arms were long enough to encircle His Cinnamon-colored Highness around the middle. One miner after another took his turn, but the bear hardly moved from his tracks, no matter what tactics were used against him. Some thought they could pick up one of the bear's feet and thus throw him off balance, but the monster stood like a statue and no one was able to lift the bear's leg even the least little bit from the ground.

The bear showed wonderful patience, as if he were sure of his power. After prolonged efforts of an opponent to no avail, his owner would speak one word and Mr. Bear would place his paws around his opponent's body, gently lift the man off the ground, and as gently lay him down in the dust of the street. Nearly every miner wanted a turn at it and the five dollar bills fell

on the Gypsy like rain. It was more fun to the crowd than anything that ever happened in Tombstone. Even when it got too dark to continue with the performance, the crowd kept urging the bear's owner to come back the next day for more. But Gypsy and bear disappeared that night for good, and it was rumored that the saloons, gambling joints, and dance halls had bestowed a good-sized purse on the Gypsy in order to get him to beat it out of town with his bear game . . . .

At the height of its prosperity Tombstone's population was estimated at twelve thousand. Probably at that time more transients passed through Tombstone than many big cites would see. Many came just for curiosity, to "look-see," as the Chinaman would say. But most came to make their fortunes in mining or at the gaming table. Win or lose, both are fascinating games, and there are no quitters.

[*Many writers have overestimated Tombstone's population. Starting from zero in 1878, Tombstone grew rapidly and in the summer of 1882, at the peak of the silver boom, a special census counted 5,300 people living in the town. But soon the mines began to fail, and by 1890 only about 1,900 people called Tombstone home.*[30]]

You never heard a hard-luck story in Tombstone. Everyone had great expectations. He might not have a dollar in his pocket—but he had millions in sight! He could draw from his pockets a bunch of mining locations, each showing title to fifteen hundred by six hundred feet of untold wealth along some lead, lode, or vein that only needed a little development to become a second Comstock! Meanwhile, one could eat on credit at most restaurants, especially the Chinese ones. And you might even, with a few glowing words, manage to exchange some location notice for a suit of clothes at a store, especially if the merchant were a late arrival and hence more susceptible to taking chances in the mining game. And, too, if the merchant were a Jew, he was found to be the easiest victim for the prospector's story. It was the day of what we termed the "two-bit capitalist." We were all "Colonel Sellers" [*incurable optimists*] with millions in sight . . . . [*Colonel Mulberry Sellers is the principal character in the satirical novel* The Gilded Age *(1873) by Mark Twain and Charles D. Warner.*]

The Gilded Age Mine: There was a passenger who rode into Tombstone on that hot day of June 1880 who later made quite a stir on busy Allen Street. Most people looked upon Duke [*Edward*] Field of the Gilded Age Mine as something of a nut, but maybe we were all wrong and he was but playing a part.

[*Edward Field was in Tombstone much earlier than June 1880. Court records indicate that he took possession of the Gilded Age claim in December 1878, prior to the formation of the Townsite Company, and as early as September 1879 he and Townsite officials were quarreling, each party accusing the other of trespassing.*[31]]

The Duke was a rather small, stockily-built man, bald-headed, always smooth-shaven, and always nattily-dressed. In fact, he was by far the best-dressed man who ever walked the dusty streets of Tombstone. Without fail, I think, he always appeared in the mornings in a well-tailored, dark business suit. In midday the Duke's form would be clothed in an immaculate white

coat and trousers, and he would be wearing a straw hat. His evening attire was the regulation dark blue or black cutaway and striped pants. "Make way for His Royal Highness the Duke!" was often heard on Tombstone streets, but he was always good-natured. He had a way of heading off any attempts at familiarity, however, and I never heard of anyone working the Duke for a friendly loan or any investment scheme. It was soon apparent that the Duke, on his part, did have some big fish on his line, for overnight, as it were, he became a mining magnate.

A mining claim had been located across [*overlapping*] the townsite of Tombstone which had been named the "Gilded Age," and on this claim the Duke started to sink a shaft [*in September 1879*]. In those days mining shafts were liable to appear anywhere, as money was spent lavishly in sinking a hole even though the surface showed no sign of a mineral ledge or any suggestion of mineral wealth hidden down below. No one thought much of Duke and his mine. Needless to say, no sign of pay dirt was ever found at the Gilded Age, though the shaft was sunk several hundred feet in depth.

There were times when the Duke would lay off his crew of miners, and he himself would disappear for a month or more. Meanwhile, with no one delegated to look out for the work already done, the shaft was used by that section of town as a dumping place for all kinds of refuse and rubbish. Then he would be back again, apparently flush with money, to start up the mine. On Duke's return, to resume work he had to pay ten dollars a day for men until the shaft was put back in condition. It was a mystery for quite a while where the Duke got his money.

This intermittent mining went on for several years, but in time it was apparent that the Duke's resources were at a low ebb. The mining work was stopped, and in a desperate effort, evidently to recoup his finances, the Duke tried to collect rent from the residences within the boundaries of the surface line of the Gilded Age. In fact, the Tombstone townsite patent dated from before the time the Gilded Age had been located, and hence the court eventually ruled in favor of the townsite titles—but the Duke had run a bluff anyhow.

Our home place was partly on Gilded Age surface. The line of the mining location just cut off one room, but the hallway leading to this room was outside the Gilded Age lines. So one day when I was alone at home, my folks being away on a trip to the country, there appeared at the front door the county sheriff and a deputy to serve a court order to give the sheriff possession as a receiver to our one room claimed by Duke Field! It was rather an odd situation. My father had anticipated this trouble and told me not to allow the sheriff any possession rights, so I told the officer I would resist any attempt to take possession and that he must stay out. I guess it was lucky for me that the sheriff seemed a little doubtful about his authority when I convinced him that the door of the room was not on the mining claim and his only entrance would be through the window. He retreated, and in a few days the court ruled against the Duke's surface rights to any land except the small piece necessary for working the mine. And so the Duke had made his last stand and he disappeared for the last time from the Tombstone scene.

[*In March 1880 Edward Field filed suit against the Townsite Company to establish ownership of the surface of the Gilded Age claim. Contrary to Gray's account, in May 1880 the district court ruled in favor of Edward Field and the Gilded Age Mining Company and against the Townsite Company in their land-ownership dispute. The Arizona supreme court upheld the lower court's ruling in April 1881 and ordered Sheriff John Behan to put Field in possession of the town lots covered by the Gilded Age claim. The Townsite people appealed the decision to the U.S. supreme court, and in July 1882 the justices ruled in Field's favor, but on a procedural technicality—the high court did not consider the merits of the case.*[32]]

Dr. Ayer and Napa Nick: A short time thereafter, there came to Tombstone old Doctor Ayres [*Ayer*] of the well-known pill fame. This old patent medicine man was no doubt the source of Duke Field's money-getting. But if Duke Field had worked the Ayres pill factory to a finish, the old doctor himself fell also to the lure of the faro banks. He lingered on in Tombstone for several weeks and from all accounts dropped a small fortune trying to beat the faro game. General rumor placed Doctor Ayres' gambling loss in Tombstone at sixty thousand dollars. This was probably a much larger sum than Duke Field had received from him. The old professional gambler Napa Nick was in the dealer's chair during most of the attack on his faro bank by Doctor Ayres, and the table was always surrounded by an interested crowd of spectators.

[*Dr. James C. Ayer of Lowell, Massachusetts, accumulated a huge fortune manufacturing and selling "Ayer's Cathartic Pills" and other nostrums. However, John Gray's notion that Edward Field and Dr. Ayer were business associates is in error. Field's partner in the Gilded Age Mine was Horatio S. Sanford of New York.*[33] *Nor did Dr. Ayer play cards with Napa Nick in Tombstone. The wealthy purveyor of patent medicines died in Massachusetts on July 3, 1878, well before anything that could be called a town had developed near the silver lode discovered by Ed Schieffelin in 1877.*[34]]

Napa Nick was an interesting study. A professional gambler of the old school, he looked more like a sedate judge. He was often called "Judge" by many. He was white-haired, wore "Uncle Sam" chin whiskers, and was always dressed in a sedate black suit. But in a way, Judge Nicholls [*Nichols*] was a man of mystery.

At that time I worked as a clerk in the Tombstone post office, and one day a couple of new arrivals by stage asked me concerning the whereabouts and business of one Judge Nicholls of Napa City, California. They thought he must have a law office. The only Nicholls I knew of was the old gambler, so I directed them to Napa Nick's faro bank and saloon, where, sure enough, they recognized their man dealing the cards at a faro table. They were much taken aback and came around to tell me about it. They said the Nicholls' residence at Napa was one of the show places of the town and that the judge's wife and two pretty daughters moved in the best circles. They said that although the judge was away most of the time, still he was a liberal contributor to many worthy functions of social welfare. I never heard how

Napa Nick explained his life to these friends from the old home town. But I venture to say nothing could phase the sedate appearance of the old judge, who, sitting opposite old Doctor Ayres, slowly turned the top card that perhaps meant a small fortune to come to him or go out of his bank—he seemed indifferent to the result. I imagine Napa Nick was dreaming of the day when he could retire and be again "Judge Nicholls" of California. And it is quite probable that that dream came true.

[*John Marshall Nichols, aka "Napa Nick," was a Tombstone merchant, saloon keeper, and gambler for most of the 1880s. According to Cochise County voting records, he was fifty-four years old in 1882. Gray's report that prior to coming to Arizona Nichols had lived for many years in Napa, California, has been confirmed, but it seems that Nick was a saloon keeper in Napa, not a judge.*[35] *Apparently John Nichols was a friend of Wyatt Earp. Wyatt was arrested following the October 26, 1881, shootout with the Clantons and McLaurys, and the October 30, 1881, issue of* The Nugget, *a Tombstone newspaper, reported that J. M. Nichols contributed $2,000 toward Wyatt's bail bond.*]

The Way Up Mine: Soon after my father's arrival in Tombstone in 1879 he located and secured title to the "Way-Up Mine." Ed Schieffelin had located a number of claims to cover his find in the Tombstone Hills when he wandered in there in 1878 [*1877*], finding his fortune where his friends had predicted he would find only his tombstone. But between one of the claims, called the "Tough Nut Mine," and the big ravine, always known thereafter as Tombstone Gulch, lay a small, irregular-shaped hillside, and it was with Ed Schieffelin's advice that my father got hold of this. My father named it the "Way-Up Mine," hoping it would prove a way up to us from the many lean years of the past to a better future.

[*Cochise County records show that on September 26, 1878, James P. Wheeler located (and named) the Way Up claim. Mike Gray and a partner, Thomas E. Farish, bought the Way Up from Wheeler on November 11, 1879, for $1,300. On December 27, 1880, Gray sold his share of the Way Up to James S. Clark for $7,250.*[36]]

It was not until the following year, 1880, that we were able to start development of the Way-Up. In that year a shaft was started near the west end of the claim where it joined the Tough Nut surface line where lay some limestone outcroppings. [*The Goodenough claim lay between the Way Up and the Tough Nut claims. Both the Goodenough and Tough Nut were owned by the Tombstone Mill and Mining Co.*[37]] No mineral was in sight, but a small crack running through the crust of limestone rock showing on the surface was followed in sinking this shaft, in hope it might lead to pay ore. And so it did. At a depth of 105 feet this crack we were following suddenly widened into a large pocket of silver chloride ore assaying as high as $300 to the ton.

We had struck it rich! And what a glorious feeling to see sudden wealth of unknown proportions lying before us deep in the ground, awaiting only the act of digging it out; a wealth that was ours by the right of discovery; a wealth that no man could accuse us of obtaining by fraud or by any so-called illegitimate manner or business deal with our fellow man. [*Gray is*

obliquely referring to the charges of fraud leveled at his father by Epitaph *editor John Clum and others during the ownership of Tombstone town lots controversy.*] No title to riches seems quite so sure as that of discovery—finding wealth never known to man before.

But strange as it seems, but too true, often a strike of riches buried for centuries has been the cause of most desperate contentions, interminable lawsuits, and often murder. So, although we started the Way-Up Mine with every sign of peace and the most hopeful of prospects, almost at once, like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky, trouble fell upon us in the form of a lawsuit and injunctions which compelled us to stop working our claim. Quickly we had taken out and milled at a local custom mill ore that returned us some $30,000—and the fight was on. It proved to be a right royal battle of high-priced lawyers and higher-priced experts, and it was a case of the poor man being squeezed dry in a death struggle to hold what was his by right of discovery.

It was that old question of "the dip of the ledge." Our mining laws allow the location of a mining claim as a piece of land 1,500 feet in length and 300 feet on each side of a ledge containing minerals. But subsequent rulings of courts allow the location to follow that ledge on its lateral dips without regard to where it might lead. It is a law that has caused endless litigation and confusion of rights and has given cause for tying up valuable properties. In fact, it has often resulted in the absolute ruin of both litigants.

The original owners of the big Tombstone Mill and Mining Company properties were its discoverer, Ed Schieffelin, and Dick Gird, the latter having backed Ed in his prospecting trip. [*Albert Schieffelin, Edward's brother, was also a partner in the mining company.*] But they had sold out to a Pennsylvania group of capitalists who had sent out to take charge of the property a Professor [*John A.*] Church.

[*The Schieffelin brothers sold their interest in the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company to a group of Philadelphia investors in the spring of 1880. Richard Gird continued to manage the company until he sold out in the spring of 1881. All three left the territory wealthy men.*[38]]

It was this Professor Church who proved to be our evil spirit. He claimed that our Way-Up strike was only a dip of the Tombstone ledge, and, though well outside his boundaries, that the summit of our ledge was rightly on his side of our dividing line. This was a farfetched theory but in law was considered a sufficient cause to enjoin the Way-Up from working. My father was very much enraged at this legal outrage, and it was difficult for us to restrain him from personal attack on this man Church who had started what proved to be an almost interminable strife.

That we fought back with every legal weapon available goes without saying. The Way-Up Mine secured the services of Garber & Thornton of San Francisco, then the most noted mining attorneys of the Pacific Coast, and also secured the expert services of Professor Blake of Pennsylvania, then a leading geologist, and the court fight was on.

[*Although not a Pennsylvanian, William P. Blake was indeed one of the most respected geologists and mining engineers of his time. Among his many honors, in 1895, at the age of sixty-nine, he was made director of the*

School of Mines at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He served in this capacity for ten years. Blake's opponent in the court battle, John A. Church, was also a nationally-known mining expert.[39]]

For weeks [*for several days in December 1881*[40]] the little courtroom in Tombstone was the crowded scene of the legal battle and the learned discourses of geologists on rocks, fossil remains, and all imaginable kinds of rock formations. They told how the Tombstone Hills were once the bottom of an ocean and the resultant limestone [*was made of*] fossils' shells. But strange to relate, the expert geologists agreed on but few points when it came to formation of ledges and ore deposits. And in this, the main point at issue, it seemed a purely partisan affair involved in the earning of the big fee.

Despite the riches of the Tombstone Mining Company, spent lavishly in the fight, and in spite of every subterfuge used to crush the Way-Up defense, our Professor Blake was simply superb in his learned exposition of the Tombstone Hills. [*He said*] that no well-defined ledge could exist in such a formation, stating that all [*the ore*] deposits were simply pockets deposited in cracks and caves that were left by a volcanic upheaval of the limestone from its ocean bed. In a word, the "dip of the ledge" theory had no possible standing in the case. With this defense by Professor Blake and the ability of Mr. Thornton of Garber & Thornton, who handled the case, the Way-Up Mine won.

If that had been the end of it, all would have been well with us. But this man Church had started something and was determined to go the limit. In those days Arizona was a territory and the district judges were appointees from Washington. What kind of influence was brought to bear on Washington it is needless to speculate upon, but a new judge [*Wilson W. Hoover*] was appointed [*in July 1882*] to replace the one [*William H. Stilwell*] who had tried the case. The territorial court of appeals was then composed of all the district judges, one of whom was the new judge lately appointed. But even with this substitution, which had the appearance of providing a stuffed court against the Way-Up, the appellate court upheld the trial court, and the case went on to the supreme court at Washington. In those days, as today, the supreme court was looked upon as the court of "wise old men" who were the bulwark of justice, and we felt confident they would uphold the trial court—which they did in course of time.

But time, as the lawyers say, is the essence of most human trials; and the two long years before our case was reached by the supreme court were our undoing. With our mine in forced idleness, our opponent, Church, had tapped our ore deposit from below. When the supreme court finally cleared our title, it left us only a gutted mine and an attachment suit for damages. Unfortunately, such an attachment can be levied only on the improvements and property on the surface of the mine. And in this case such property consisted of a hoisting works and some elevated tramways, which were of no value now that the Tombstone Mill & Mining Co. had been worked out and then all business closed down.

Nothing is more worthless and dead than an abandoned mine, and at the time of our supreme court decision all the once-busy mines of Tombstone

were closed down and the bottom had dropped out of the once-busy camp. All but a few hundred people had gone on to other fields, and you couldn't give away a house and lot! [*Silver production at Tombstone was in serious decline by 1884 and all but ceased in 1886. The town's population bottomed out in 1900 when the census counted 646 people residing there.*] Since then Tombstone has revived to the point that [*in 1940*] a population of about 800 people make a living there and still find enough paying ore by chloriding and working-over old dumps. But at the time of the big shut-down the stampede to get away became almost a panic. The Way-Up Mine had won the right to take the $30,000 which had been mined and milled from its depths and divide it between Professor Blake, the law firm of Garber & Thornton, and sundry other expenses of fighting that Professor Church, who had long since lost his job—that occurring when he lost his case before the supreme court. Left with a worthless writ of attachment and a hole in the ground as our only consolation for our empty pockets, we had the feeling that we had fought and won—but lost again. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been.'" But life must go on, and there is always mañana (tomorrow).

[*John Gray's discussion of the court battle between the Way Up Mining Company and the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company is interesting, but, as has been pointed out, the trial took place a year after Mike Gray disposed of his interest in the Way Up.*]

The First County Election: I remember our first [*Pima*] county election in Tombstone. [*The Pima County Board of Supervisors incorporated Tombstone as a "village" in November 1879. The next general election took place November 2, 1880.*] [*Charles*] Shibell of Tucson [*the incumbent*] was running for [*Pima County*] sheriff on the Democratic ticket, and his opponent was Bob Paul, a Republican. In those days every man of age could vote, and many a bunch of illiterate Mexicans was herded to the polls, handed the ballot of the right party, and directed to drop it into the ballot box. If any objections arose or the voter was challenged in any way, it was a simple matter to swear-in the voter, and under the direction of the boss who had brought him to the polls that was easily handled.

At the first county election in Tombstone I served as one of the tally clerks. A heavy vote was cast, as the sheriff's office was well worth striving for, and each candidate had runners out to bring in all available voters. They came into town by wagon loads, and it was rumored that all available men on both sides of the Mexican line cast their votes that day. I remember we were all night counting the votes, and it was far into the next day before some of the returns came in, as it was one hundred miles or more to some of the outlying polling places.

The count for sheriff was running close, with the Democratic candidate about fifty votes behind his opponent. But there seemed to be an unaccountable confidence among the Democrats that they would win out. They kept repeating, "Wait 'till the returns from the San Simon get here." And it was just as day was breaking that the rapid hoofbeats of a horse were heard far up Allen Street, and there soon appeared a jaded horse and rider, the latter waving a bundle of papers—the returns from far away San Simon,

which was the headquarters of Curly Bill [*Brocius*] and his rustlers. The lone rider was Curly Bill himself.

With all due formality we opened the package and tallied the votes—one hundred straight Democratic votes for Shibell—which were so counted in. There was one lone Republican ballot for Bob Paul, to show, as Bill said, that the vote was on the square! This of course elected Shibell, and a right royal celebration was staged by the Shibell following. But in the final election count all this came to no avail, for Paul carried the election into court and the San Simon vote was thrown out. For what were probably very good reasons, Curly Bill and his outlaw gang failed to appear in court to answer the subpoenas, and, as they constituted the entire voting strength of the San Simon, their case was lost by default.

[*Gray's story about Curly Bill bringing the San Simon ballots to Tombstone is a tall tale. On October 28, 1880, five days before the general election, Deputy Sheriff Wyatt Earp arrested Curly Bill in Tombstone for the shooting of town marshal Fred White. Later that day Wyatt took Curly to Tucson (the county seat) to await a hearing to determine whether he should be tried for the assault on White. Curly Bill was behind bars in Tucson for several weeks. He was finally cleared of all charges and released in late December. But regardless of who brought them, the San Simon ballots were indeed suspicious. In April 1881 the Arizona supreme court ruled that there had been voting fraud in the San Simon precinct and declared Robert Paul the winner of the November 1880 election for Pima County sheriff.*[41]]

Cochise County Is Formed: It was soon thereafter that the territorial legislators met and [*on February 1, 1881*] a bill passed dividing Pima County, and all the southern and eastern part became the County of Cochise, named after the old Apache chief whose old stronghold in the Dragoons lies just east and in plain view of Tombstone. Tombstone became the county seat. The first county officers were appointed by the territorial governor [*John C. Frémont*]. Johnny Behan was made sheriff and M. [*Milton*] E. Joyce was chairman of the board of supervisors. These were the most important offices and eventually held control of the county's affairs.

Billy Breakenridge, Johnny Behan's undersheriff, has vividly told much of the doings of that administration in his [*book*] "Helldorado" [*published in 1928*]. [*Harry Woods was Behan's undersheriff (second-in-command), Breakenridge was a deputy sheriff.*] "Breck," as he was familiarly called, was the mainstay of the sheriff's office and deserves about all the credit where credit was due. Johnny Behan was a "good fellow," but it takes more than a good fellow to make a good sheriff. He loved to sit in a poker game with those old professionals Dick [*Richard B. S.*] Clark and Napa Nick, and I guess they in turn liked to have him sit opposite them with his customary canvas sack full of gold and silver. The sheriff's office in those days was easy money, with its generous fee of ten percent of all tax collections to fall into the sheriff's hands. And as the Southern Pacific Railroad, with its many miles of rails across Cochise County, paid most of that county's taxes, the cost of collection was practically nothing. [*Sheriffs in territorial Arizona were ex-officio county assessors and tax collectors. As Gray indicated,*

being a sheriff was potentially a very lucrative situation.]

Curly Bill: In those days one of the pastimes of the would-be bad men passing under the name of "rustlers" was the practice of "shooting-up the town." This generally consisted of the charging through the main street by a reckless bunch of horsemen who shot out all the lights. Only once do I remember an attempt of this kind of being made in Tombstone and that was by Curly Bill and some of his rustlers. But City Marshal [*Fred*] White was on the job and, single-handed, interfered and checked the gun play at once. Unfortunately, however, the marshal received a wound which proved fatal within a few days. Curly Bill surrendered himself and acknowledged having shot White, but claimed it was an accident.

[*Curly Bill shot Marshal Fred White shortly after midnight on October 28, 1880. Wyatt Earp, then a deputy Pima County sheriff, arrested Curly on the spot. White died on October 30, two days after the fracas, and was buried the next day.*[42]]

When brought before my father (who was justice of the peace) on the following morning, Bill was held to answer before the district court at Tucson and was rushed immediately out of town on his way to the Tucson jail. As the feeling among the people of Tombstone was strong against Curly Bill's gang, they were glad to escape to safety. [*The Pima County Board of Supervisors appointed Mike Gray justice of the peace for Tombstone on July 7, 1879. He served through December 1880.*[43]]

When the trial [*preliminary hearing*] came up at Tucson [*in December 1880*], Curly Bill put up a defense that his pistol would go off at half cock, and that in handing over his pistol to Marshal White at the latter's command it was accidently discharged without intent on Bill's part. No doubt the truth of the matter was that Curly Bill, as was the custom among the rustler gang, had filed off the safety catch of his pistol so that by lifting the hammer with a slight touch of the thumb it would drop back and explode the cartridge immediately. By this method the holder of the pistol could fan the six shots in rapid succession. And as being quick on the trigger was the mainstay of the gunman, to perfect himself in this was his pride. At all events there were no witnesses to disprove Bill's defense, as Marshal White, the only witness against him, was dead. The case was dropped and Bill was again a free man, but I doubt that he ever came to Tombstone again.

[*The December 28, 1880,* Arizona Daily Star *(a Tucson newspaper) reported that at a hearing held the previous day Justice of the Peace Joseph Neugass had ruled the shooting of White unintentional and had ordered William Brocius released from custody. Neugass' decision was based on White's deathbed statement exonerating Brocius and on Wyatt Earp's testimony that he, too, believed the shooting was inadvertent.*]

John Ringo: Among the colorful characters of those days, John Ringo stands out as much superior in calibre to the other rustlers, if there could be made such a distinction. Ringo was tall, dark, rather an heroic type of man, always quiet in his manner and apparently of some education. No one knew much of him. He seemed to be Curly Bill's right-hand-man and was no doubt feared most by the Earps of all the rustlers. In fact, most everyone was expecting it to end in a gunfight. And their expectations were not far

wrong, for a gunfight came dangerously near one day, there on Allen Street.

Ringo, on horseback, was riding out of town when he saw three of the Earps together in front of the Crystal Palace Saloon. Ringo rode up and dismounted near them and called out to Wyatt that they had just as well have it out there and then. Ringo pulled from his neck his big, red silk handkerchief, flipped it in the air towards Wyatt, and told him to take the other end and say when. Of course Wyatt Earp was too wise to be caught in such a trap, but to the few scattered onlookers it seemed a critical moment. Both men were of undoubted courage, but the Earps knew it would not do to take up the challenge at that time.

And so Ringo rode out of town and never came back. In fact, within a week thereafter he was found dead in a cañon of the Chiricahuas, sitting with his back against a tree and a bullet hole through his body [*head*]. It was never divulged who did this or caused it to be done, but many of Ringo's friends felt they knew. Evidently it was a cowardly murder, whatever the motive. Some believed that Frank Leslie was the agent sent out by the Earps for this work, but I hardly think the charges justified, as Buckskin Frank had never shown any evidence during his career which could make one think he could be guilty of such a cowardly deed.

[*John Gray's story about John Ringo's fuss with Wyatt Earp on a Tombstone street contains a number of errors. According to a recent biography of Ringo, what happened is this: On January 17, 1882, John Ringo confronted Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp on Tombstone's Allen Street. (The meeting wasn't near the Crystal Palace because the saloon didn't exist at that time. The first Crystal Palace went out of business in 1880; the second and most famous one was built after the big fire of May 25, 1882.*[44]*) Hard words were exchanged between Ringo and Holliday, but the precise nature of their dispute is not clear. Policeman James Flynn separated the men before any damage was done. Both Ringo and Holliday were later fined by Judge Albert O. Wallace for carrying weapons in town. The anecdote about the handkerchief challenge is pure folklore.*[45]

Gray's account of Ringo's death is also confused. Passersby found John Ringo's body in the Chiricahua Mountains (about forty miles east of Tombstone) on July 14, 1882. He had been dead for about a day. This was six months after his squabble with Doc and Wyatt, not a few days later as Gray recalled. Holliday and the Earps were long gone from Arizona when Ringo breathed his last. Cochise County officials concluded that John Ringo committed suicide.[46] *A few writers have suggested that Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp, after fleeing Arizona in April 1882 under threat of arrest for murder, surreptitiously returned to Arizona from Colorado and killed Ringo.*[47] *But most authorities reject this scenario, citing court documents placing Holliday in Colorado at the time of Ringo's death and Wyatt's assertion in an 1893 interview that he didn't know who killed the rustler.*[48]]

Buckskin Frank Leslie: Once at our Animas Valley Ranch in New Mexico, when Jim Crane was an occasional visitor, Frank [*Leslie*] came out and reported his mission was to arrest Jim Crane and take him to Tombstone on the charge of stage robbing. At that time Jim was in the habit of riding to the ranch about noontime and eating lunch there. I told Frank

that this was his custom and said also that I did not think he would be able to arrest Jim without killing him and that I objected to any such method being sprung at our house. Both men would be our dinner guests and I expected that hospitality to be undisturbed by either party. However, my warning was not necessary.

[*Jim Crane was believed to have been involved in an attempted robbery of the Tombstone to Benson stage that took place on March 15, 1881. No treasure was lost, but the stage driver and a passenger were killed in the abortive holdup. Along with Crane, Bill Leonard and Harry Head were implicated in the crime, and even Doc Holliday was rumored to have taken part in the dastardly deed.*[49]]

Jim Crane rode up at his usual time on a fine saddle mule, unmistakably a refugee from some army post. And as dinner was ready, I asked both in to the meal. It happened we three were alone, except for our old cook, Moody. Jim packed his carbine—a short Sharps rifle—into the cook tent and sat down on Leslie's right, with the gun across his lap and the muzzle in Frank's direction. I don't think any one of us relished that meal much, and I know I should have preferred to be elsewhere. As might have been expected, all of us were on edge, but no sign of conflict appeared. Leslie did not even mention the purpose of his mission, but simply said that he must start for Tombstone at once. Immediately after lunch he mounted his horse, held out his hand to me to bid me good-bye, and said in a low voice so Jim wouldn't hear, "Tell Jim if they want him someone else will have to serve the warrant." When I repeated this to Jim he simply smiled and said, "I guess so." I heard later that Leslie had reported back to his office [*?*] that he could not find his man. [*Jim Crane was killed on August 13, 1881. Obviously, the encounter described above must have taken place before that date.*]

The same "Buckskin Frank," as he liked to be called, had a more checkered career than most gunmen. He was a man of much intelligence with all his gun plays. He would tell of years with Buffalo Bill, and, when dressed-up in his buckskin suit with his silver-mounted guns, he looked the part. He was an expert bartender and up to all that old-time trade's fancy stunts in mixing and pouring drinks, and was for a long time the chief attraction at the Oriental Saloon of Supervisor Joyce in Tombstone.

A few days after my arrival in Tombstone in 1880, Leslie shot and killed Mike Killeen on the second-story porch of the Cosmopolitan Hotel. That affair had no witnesses except Killeen's wife [*May*] and she sided with Leslie's self-defense story. A short time afterward, when Frank had been acquitted, she became Mrs. Leslie.

[*On June 22, 1880, Mike Killeen got into a row with Frank Leslie. The quarrel was inspired by Leslie's romantic relationship with Killeen's wife, May. Leslie's pal George Perine showed up, shots were fired, and Killeen received a fatal wound. Leslie took credit for the shooting, claiming self defense. Nonetheless, Perine was arrested for murder on the basis of Killeen's deathbed statement. Eventually all charges were dropped, and no one was punished for the killing. On August 5, 1880, Buckskin Frank and May "tied the knot."*[50]]

A year or so later [*on November 14, 1882*] Frank committed his second killing in Tombstone. Billy Claiborne (a young cowboy of about twenty years), after an all night's carousal in town, staggered into the Oriental Saloon in the early morning when Leslie was alone on duty behind the bar. Leslie claimed that he put the boy out of the place and that "the Kid," as he termed him, went away but soon came back with a rifle in his hand. Leslie, seeing him approach, stepped out on the sidewalk and shot him down. No one was quicker on the draw than Buckskin Frank. He was again acquitted, as Buckskin Frank was the only living witness . . . .

[*William F. "Billy the Kid" Claiborne was one of the survivors of the October 26, 1881, "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral." There were a number of people in the vicinity when Buckskin Frank shot Billy, and they backed up Leslie's claim of self defense.*[51]]

The Animas Valley Ranch: Going eastward from Tombstone you cross the Dragoon Mountains into the big Sulphur Spring Valley, thence through the Chiricahua Mountains into the San Simon Valley, then through the Stein[*s*] Peak Mountains [*Peloncillo Mountains*] into Animas Valley of New Mexico. And right there, under the shadow of Animas Peak, was a big, green meadow of about one thousand acres, which was at that time covered with red-top clover and watered by numerous springs or eye holes [*ojos de agua*], as they were called. These holes were deep and apparently a part of an underground lake. There was a story that a rider once came to one of these holes and took the bridle off his horse to allow him to drink. The horse stepped in and disappeared at once from sight, leaving the rider standing there with the bridle in his hand and nothing else to show that he ever had a horse.

This was the spot we had picked for a cattle ranch, and it seemed just right for the purpose. That green spot was surely a cheerful sight to one accustomed to the dry, dusty surroundings of Tombstone. It was a virgin land, unsurveyed, and no neighbors, so it seemed a cattleman's paradise. We had hardly got started with our camp and commenced the making of the adobe (sun-dried) bricks for our ranch house when our troubles began.

A horseman appeared and presented a letter signed "George Washington Jones," which gave notice that the writer was owner of the tract of land we were on and warned us to vacate within twenty-four hours or suffer the alternative of being shot off! We had already paid Curly Bill, the rustler, three hundred dollars for his squatter claim on the land and had also a written contract or guarantee from Bill that he would uphold our rights against all claimants. It being unsurveyed land, possession, of course, was the only title possible, but we had paid this sum to Curly Bill for the sake of peaceable possession of the land in a country where law officers seldom, if ever, ventured, and self-preservation was really the only law to follow. So we told the messenger that we were there to stay and kept on with our house building.

I think it was the next morning—I was out early with wagon and team to pick up a load of dry wood for camp use and was about two miles west of the ranch when I met three horsemen. As soon as they came in sight I knew they must be the three hunted stage robbers who had tried to hold up the

Tombstone [*to Benson*] stage [*owned by J. D. Kinnear*] a few months before [*on March 15, 1881*]—Billy Leonard, Harry Head, and Jim Crane. I saw that they were well armed, but their clothing was almost in tatters and they looked wild, wooly, and hungry. [*The Haslett brothers, Ike and Bill, ambushed and fatally wounded Bill Leonard and Harry Head about June 10, 1881 (the exact date is hard to pin down), so the meeting described by Gray would have occurred before then.*[52]]

After greeting them, I asked them to come to our camp and have dinner with us, explaining at the same time what we were doing out in Animas Valley and our purchase of the rights of Curly Bill, whom, of course, I felt they knew and were associated with. After giving them a good dinner and fitting them out with what clothing we could spare, I showed them the letter from George Washington Jones. Jim Crane at once spoke up and said not to worry over it; that he knew the writer, though that was not his real name, and that he would make it a personal matter to see that he did not bother us. In other words, Curly Bill's guarantee to us was law to them. We felt more at ease but still felt that G. W. Jones might appear with an armed force of his followers and that brother [*Dixie Lee "Dick" Gray*] and I would be found alone to hold the ranch, as our few hired men at work on the house could not be expected to take a hand in our fight.

But things moved fast the next few days. One morning a rider appeared and asked if he could sell us a quarter of beef; said he was camped at the "Double 'Dobes" [*Adobes*], about eight miles away, and had killed a beef out of a herd they were holding there. This we were glad to do as we had been eating antelope steaks until we longed for a genuine beef steak again. At that time antelope were very plentiful. There was a willow thicket at a water hole about a quarter of a mile away, below our camp, and they came there to drink. Brother or myself would often go there early and lay for them in the willows, and we seldom failed in getting a good shot, for they would file in like a herd of sheep. But on this morning I drove a team over to the Double 'Dobes for the beef. And on arriving there I was surely surprised, and a little alarmed, when the place seemed to be alive with men.

Saddles and guns were lying about, and men were asleep on the grass as well as the floor of the house. There must have been fifty men, and I knew from their appearance that they were the rustler type. Jim Crane stepped out as I drove up to the house and was smiling at my apparent confusion in the midst of this small army. He told me that I need worry no more about George Washington Jones, for, as he put it, he had "fixed him good and plenty." I felt it wise not to ask for particulars, so with my quarter of beef I pulled out for the ranch, and it was several days before I heard the story.

It seems the Wells Fargo Express Company had printed and distributed circulars which offered a reward of $1,500 [*$1,200*] each for Leonard, Head, and Crane for the [*attempted*] holdup of the Tombstone stage, the offer to hold good whether they were dead or alive. This holdup had occurred in the early spring [*March 15*] of 1881, and later Jim Crane told me the story of it, which I give here in brief:

At the time, the stage left Tombstone in the evening [*each day*] and drove the twenty-five miles to Benson on the Southern Pacific Railroad.

About ten miles out from Tombstone was a deep draw crossing the roadway, and out of which the stage horses could only go in a walk. It was at this point where the holdup was attempted. Bob Paul was shotgun messenger that night but had traded places for the time with the driver, Bud Philpot, who was holding the shotgun. Paul, who was a veteran with Wells Fargo, didn't intend to be held up, so when the voice from the roadside called "Hands up!" Bob Paul plied the whip on the horses and they broke into a run up the steep roadway. Either by luck or by the good driving of Paul, they safely made a getaway. The holdup men fired volleys at the stage, killed an inside [*outside*] passenger [*Peter Roerig*] and Bud Philpot, [*the man*] with the shotgun, but Paul drove into Benson with the strongbox safe and his dead men aboard.

[*The March 16, 1881,* Tombstone Epitaph *reported that Eli "Bud" Philpot was holding the reins when the stage robbers began firing. When a bullet struck him, Philpot pitched forward and fell into the roadway. Wells, Fargo guard Bob Paul, after emptying his shotgun at the robbers, got control of the reins and drove the stage to Benson at top speed with the mortally-wounded passenger, Peter Roerig, on board. But to escape the holdup men Paul was forced to leave the luckless Philpot behind. Some authors have concluded that "Philpott" is the correct spelling of Bud's last name.*]

Jim Crane said the whole thing had been planned by the Earps. Morgan Earp was to go out that night as messenger [*shotgun guard*], and he had given the tip that about twenty thousand dollars was in the Wells Fargo strongbox. The holdup would have met with no resistance and it looked like easy money. But Bob Paul stepped in as messenger and [*had*] an iron nerve—a man who had never failed to come through—and Bob had evidently planned to hold the reins that night. Anyway he did, and simply ran away from the robbers.

The Earps, as officers of the law, made a big showing in apparent pursuit of Crane, Leonard, and Head but with no intention of finding them. I had urged Jim to give himself up and tell the whole story of the plot, thinking that he had a good chance for a light sentence. But circumstances willed it otherwise, and he met his fate tragically on his way in to Tombstone.

[*According to recently-published biographies of the Earps, a posse that included Cochise County sheriff John Behan, deputy U.S. marshal Virgil Earp, Wyatt and Morgan Earp, and other Tombstone men followed the would-be stage robbers' trail to a ranch. A man there named Luther King admitted that he had held the horses while his partners attacked the stage. King fingered Jim Crane, Bill Leonard, and Harry Head as being the shooters, but the fleeing road agents were never overtaken by the posse and their identities firmly established. To further confuse matters, on March 28 King escaped from the Tombstone jail and left the territory before he could be tried for his part in the crime. Many conflicting stories have been told about this attempted robbery of the Tombstone to Benson stage and the subsequent search for the perpetrators. Precisely what happened and who was involved is still debated by Tombstone historians.*[53]]

The Haslett Brothers: But to go on with the happenings at Hachita [*a settlement about forty miles northeast of the Grays' Animas Valley ranch*]. At Hachita [*known as Eureka prior to 1882*] lived two brothers by the name of Haslett [*Ike and Bill*], and they planned on getting this Wells Fargo reward, which was the tidy sum of $4,500 for the three robbers. [*The reward was actually $3,600—still a lot of money in 1881.*] They had heard of these men heading for Hachita and accordingly concealed themselves behind an old adobe wall which the road skirts just a mile or so from town. Somehow Jim Crane was not of the party that day, and, as planned, Leonard and Head were shot down as they rode past the adobe wall [*circa June 10, 1881*]. Then the Hasletts rode boldly into Hachita and told of their deed, treating everybody on the strength of their easy money that day.

Jim Crane soon heard of the killing, got a bunch of rustlers together, and, leaving them hiding close by, rode into Hachita alone. In the saloon there he found the Hasletts, who were then getting pretty drunk. Jim "played friendly" and the three were soon seated at a game of cards. Suddenly rising from his chair opposite the two brothers, Jim Crane shot them both before they could make a move, and thus avenged his comrades, Leonard and Head. The shots were a signal to the outside bunch of rustlers, who rode up to the saloon door, ready for any emergency. But no one dared to interfere, so Jim and his escort rode leisurely out of town.

[*There are other versions of these happenings which differ from Gray's account, including a rumor that Mike Gray had hired Leonard and Head to run the Haslett brothers out of the country so Gray could take over their ranch. According to this story, which was told in an anonymous letter dated June 12, 1881, published first in the* Tombstone Epitaph *and later in the Tucson* Star, *the effort to dislodge the Hasletts, not an attempt by the brothers to earn the Wells, Fargo reward, precipitated the shootings. In any case, it is agreed that the Hasletts killed Leonard and Head, and that some of the dead outlaws' friends killed the Hasletts a few days later.*[54]]

With the passing of the Hasletts came the end of the G. W. Jones of my letter. I never heard of any attempt of peace officers to follow this up, and the reward offered by Wells Fargo was never claimed. And this was the bunch of rustlers I found at the Double 'Dobes or "Flying Cloud," as the rustlers had more romantically named their mountain retreat! Who built the two adjoining adobe houses there was a mystery, but in those days the place was never occupied except as a rustler rendezvous, probably because it was high in the foothills of the Animas Mountains and you could see for miles over the valley, noting any approaching danger, such as a wandering sheriff or other officers . . . . The big bunch of rustlers with Jim Crane at the Double 'Dobes was the largest gathering of the tribe I ever heard of, although about a month later we had sixty come to dinner in one day at the ranch! I know I pitched in to help old Moody, our cook, and a fifty-pound sack of flour went into biscuits before the last man was fed. As a consequence, the following morning I had to pull out for Lordsburg to get a load of grub . . . .

The Skeleton Canyon Affair and Guadalupe Canyon Massacre: A short time later [*in early August 1881*] I had to make a trip to Tombstone.

rode horseback, and on my return I crossed the Stein Peak Mountains [*Peloncillo Mountains*] through Skeleton Canyon, where there was only a horseback trail. On riding into the canyon from the west I noticed some buzzards circling over a spot about half a mile off the trail. Riding there to investigate, I saw a dead mule, pack saddle equipment still in place on his back . . . . I knew at once that this must be a part of a Mexican smuggling train, as this was a route they often took; and as the mule had been shot, I guessed at once it was the work of the [*American*] rustlers. Continuing on my way and about a mile further up the canyon was a dead horse by the trail and this had a Mexican riding saddle on, easily distinguished as such with its big flat pommel. And that told the tale of a probable running fight between rustlers and smugglers, the rustlers evidently having won.

[*The August 3, 1881, Tombstone* Nugget *reported that, according to a man who had returned to town from New Mexico named Bob Clark, a Mexican pack train may have been robbed in Skull Canyon (not Skeleton Canyon). In late July Clark found some thirty pack mules running loose and suspected their owners were dead—but saw no bodies. The west end of Skull Canyon is about two miles east of the New Mexico-Arizona line. The canyon is seven miles north of (and roughly parallel to) Skeleton Canyon and twenty-five miles north of the Mexican border. Both defiles were used as east-west passageways through the Peloncillo Mountains. Of more importance, on August 5 both the* Nugget *and* Epitaph *reprinted a Tucson* Citizen *story stating that "last Monday" (August 1) American "cowboys" (rustlers) attacked itinerant Mexican traders near Fronteras, Sonora (located thirty miles south of the present-day border town of Douglas, Arizona, and fifty-five miles south of Skull Canyon). The Gringo outlaws reportedly killed four men and stole $4,000.*]

I hurried on to the ranch. My brother had heard nothing of this, and it made us quite uneasy, for we knew that if any Mexicans had escaped they would get back across the line and would return in force to revenge the outrage. And so it turned out, but little did we think that revenge would strike us and not the guilty rustlers, who were probably well out of the way by this time. I had planned on returning to Tombstone to resume my work at the post office there after a short layoff, which had been given me so that I might help to get our ranch started. But my brother begged me to remain at the ranch another week, as he wished to go to Tombstone and would return in that time. I consented and he rode off—to his death!

[*In notes appended to his memoir, Gray stated that he worked as a clerk in the Tombstone post office under Postmaster Fred Brooks for two years. However, Brooks didn't become postmaster until June 1882. John Clum was Tombstone's postmaster in 1881, and since Clum and John Gray's father, Mike Gray, were enemies, it is doubtful that John Gray worked in the post office at the time of the Skeleton Canyon (Skull Canyon?) affair.*[55]]

Often a trifling incident or change of plan leads to success or disaster. The day before brother Dick was to start, we heard that Lang's Ranch, about ten miles southeast of us, was starting a hundred head of beef cattle for the Tombstone market and would camp with them in Guadalupe Canyon the following night. [*Guadalupe Canyon is located near the point where*

New Mexico, Arizona, and Sonora converge.] So it occurred to us that it would be best for Dick to go that route and camp that night with Lang's outfit as they would have five or six men, which was a big enough force, it seemed, to scare off any bunch of Mexicans who might be out to avenge the smuggler train disaster. If this had not come up, Dick would have gone the more direct route I had followed through Skeleton. But fate ruled otherwise, and Dick rode into a trap without a chance in the world to escape alive. I saw him ride gaily off on a Friday, and on the following Sunday—August 12th [*14th*], 1881—I saw his dead body in Guadalupe Canyon with a bullet hole over his heart.

Our first news of the tragedy came to the ranch on Saturday evening. A man by the name of Harry Earnshaw staggered into our camp in an exhausted condition, and it was some little time before he could tell the story. He said he was with Lang's outfit, had come out from Tombstone with the object of buying some milk cows, but not finding what he wanted was returning with Lang's beef herd to Tombstone. They had driven the herd of one hundred steers into Guadalupe Canyon on Friday (the day before) and made camp in the first clear spot they found, which was near the rock-built monument which marks the four corners of Arizona, New Mexico, Sonora, and Chihuahua. It seems that during the night the herd stampeded and ran back up the canyon, and in rounding up the scattered herd some of the cowboys ran across my brother, Dick, who had evidently been belated and had made camp. On learning of the trouble with the herd, Dick had saddled up and helped them drive the beeves back to camp. It seemed that a chain of circumstances was leading him blindly on to his fate.

Just before daylight, Charley Snow, a cowboy who was on herd, rode into camp and Earnshaw heard him tell the cook, Old Man Clanton, who was starting breakfast, that he felt sure a bear had frightened the cattle and he was going to circle around in the brush in the hope of getting a shot at it. This move of Snow's evidently started the trouble. The Mexicans must have been concealed in the surrounding brush and Snow probably rode right into them, for almost at once a volley of shots rang out, coming from all sides. Earnshaw had no gun and like most any tenderfoot in that position would have done, he just got up and ran. He did not know even the direction he took; he just kept going with his boots in his hand. He did not see what happened to the others except Old Man Clanton, the cook, whom he saw fall face forward into the fire he had started for breakfast.

[*Newman H. "Old Man" Clanton was the father of Joseph Isaac "Ike" Clanton, Phineas "Phin" Clanton, and William H. "Billy" Clanton. Ike and Billy would gain immortality through their presence at the "Gunfight at (near) the O.K. Corral."*[56]]

Our ranch was about fifteen miles from the place, and when Earnshaw staggered in about dusk he must have gone many miles out of his way, as he said he had never paused in his flight except to stop a minute to pull on his boots. How he happened to find us must have been pure luck, for he had never been there before. There were only two of us at the ranch, as the house had been finished and the builders had returned some time before to Tombstone. So our only recourse for help was to go to a new mining camp

on the east slope of the Animas Mountains called Gillespie, twenty miles away. I rode horseback over there that night, finding twenty-five miners at the camp. They, to the last man, nobly responded to my appeal for help. All had horses or mules to ride, and in scarcely no time all were mounted and on the way back with me. We stopped at the ranch to get a wagon and team, loaded on the needed supplies, and pulled out for Guadalupe Canyon.

This was the rainy season and the ground was miry in places, therefore it was just at sunrise when we got there. I will always remember what a quiet spot it seemed. It was a clear, bright morning that dawned on that little valley in the hills of Guadalupe, but we knew at once that Death was ruler there. The ghoulish-looking buzzards were in the tops of every tree with their wings outspread, probably to feel the warmth of the morning sun—and waiting for that sun to prepare their feast. Since then I never see a buzzard but that scene is recalled. Such a fiendish-looking bird, depressing, but [*it*] probably has the keenest eye of any—one that can discover Death's victim almost immediately—and the bird is the world's most vigilant undertaker! Out of a clear sky a black speck appears and soon other black specks, coming nearer and nearer, soon high overhead, beginning to circle slowly, all following the same course in their circling round and round. And you know that somewhere within that circle, on the earth below, lies the corpse, be it man or animal. It cannot escape this detective.

And in that grassy glade, now so still and peaceful-looking, lay four human bodies, probably just at the spots [*where*] they had been sleeping when the first fire of the attacking Mexicans had caught them. All were perfectly nude, having evidently been stripped of all clothing by the Mexicans. The only thing left of the camp outfit was the buckboard standing near the ashes of the campfire, and that was probably left because it would have been almost impossible to take it over the mountain trail which the Mexicans had to travel in order to reach their homes. The dead lying there were: Billy Lang, cattle rancher; Jim Crane the outlaw (Crane being on his way in to surrender to the sheriff, as we had talked him into doing); Old Man Clanton, the cook mentioned before; and my brother, Dick, just turned nineteen.

There were still two of Lang's outfit missing, and we spread out in search of them. We found the dead body of Charley Snow, the man who had told the cook he was going to look for the supposed bear. Evidently he had made a gallant fight, as his body was riddled. He lay about a half mile from the camp. The other cowboy, Billy Byers, we found alive some five miles away. He was shot through the front of the abdomen and the ball had gone clear through his body, but evidently not deep enough to penetrate any vital part, as he was walking along in a dazed condition, completely out of his head. His wound was in a frightful condition from the heat and the flies, but some of our miner friends knew what to do and they cleaned and dressed the wound.

Billy soon revived enough to tell us something of what had happened. He said the first shots woke him up from a sound sleep and he raised up in his bed to see what was up, just then realizing he had been shot, and fell back in a daze. He then remembered a dark man on horseback who was

almost over him and saw that this man was firing down at him with a pistol. How the man missed him Billy felt was a miracle, but evidently the sight of Billy's bloody clothes was convincing proof to the man that he was already dead. And, too, it was perhaps the blood-stained clothing which kept the Mexicans from stripping his body—this latter fact keeping them from discovering that life was still there.

With this wounded boy, all were present or accounted for. We had to bury Charley Snow where we found his body, as it was too far gone to be moved. The other four bodies and the wounded boy were placed in the wagon. That quiet gathering of the dead cast a feeling of sadness over the bunch of hardy miners. They were accustomed to seeing many tragedies suffered in the lives of pioneers, but this seemed such an unjustifiable sacrifice. It was undoubtedly the work of the escaped smugglers from the Skeleton Canyon fight, taking revenge on the first Americans they could find. And this, after all, was but one of the many tragedies that have occurred on the Mexican border.

We took our dead back to the ranch, and, in coffins constructed of lumber for which we tore up flooring, with the aid of our miner friends we buried the four bodies in a little square plot on the top of a nearby knoll, rendering an equal and honorable reverence to all. Jim Crane, the outlaw, had gone before a Higher Court, and we were no more his judges.

This little Campo Santo [*cemetery*] on the lonely hilltop marked the end of our hopes of [*for the*] Animas Valley ranch prospect. My father and I felt that conditions were too hard at that time to fight against. We knew the valley would be a place exposed to Mexican raids and felt that it would be impossible to protect ourselves against them. So we had the place surveyed, filed preemption claims on the land, and abandoned it for a time to the antelope, the coyote, and to those weird spirits supposed to be the cause for the name "Animas" [*souls of the dead*] given to that valley by the Mexicans. Lang's cattle had been driven away and sold to close up his estate, and for the following year I made a trip out from Tombstone every month to sleep one night at the ranch in order to comply with the preemption law. Even the rustlers kept out of the valley for fear of meeting the Mexicans . . . .

[*Tombstone resident George Parsons mentioned the death of Dick Gray in the August 17, 1881, entry in his diary: "Dick Gray—the lame one—was killed by some Mexicans, along with several others, among them the notorious Crane, and revenge seems the order of the day, a gang having started out to make trouble. This killing business by the Mexicans, in my mind, was perfectly justifiable as it was in retaliation for killing of several of them and their robbery by cowboys recently [near Fronteras, Sonora, on August 1], this same Crane being one of the number. I am glad they killed him, as for the others—if not guilty of cattle stealing—they had no business to be found in such bad company."*[57] *Some authors have speculated that the Earps and a large posse under their command did the killing at Guadalupe Canyon.*[58] *But the survivors of the assault identified their attackers as Mexicans, and the victims' relatives, including John and Mike Gray, firmly believed this to be the case. The evidence that the assailants were all from south of the border was and is conclusive.*[59]]

In December of 1882 we ventured again into cattle raising. In going back and forth into the Animas Valley from Tombstone, we often crossed the Chiricahua Mountains by way of Camp Rucker, then a United States Army post. On one of our trips we learned the order had come from Washington to abandon the fort, and that meant all the improvements would then be open to location of the first comer. So we were ready to take possession as soon as the troops left. This place was well equipped with several well-built adobe houses, a large barn, and by purchasing from Norton & Stewart their sutler store building for one hundred and fifty dollars, our title was complete for the whole place . . . .

[*John H. Norton and Madison W. Stewart were merchants with many interests in southeastern Arizona. The Grays bought the firm's Camp Rucker store on December 1, 1882.*[60] *George Parsons visited the Grays' ranch in the summer of 1883, and he wrote the following in his diary: "**Monday, August 27:** Camp Rucker, Judge Gray's place, is a beautiful spot in the Chiricahua Mountains, delightfully situated. An old government post, fine adobe houses, plenty of water. A very desirable spot. **Tuesday, August 28:** Gray's household consists of himself and most estimable wife, a lively character; daughter Mrs. Hall engaged to Cavil [R. H. Cavill]. Adopted daughter, Miss Emma Fish, and John Gray at present in San Francisco."*[61] *It seems that the Grays did not formally adopt Emma Fish, but she lived with them as a member of the family for many years.*[62] *Curiously, the 1884 great register for Cochise County gives Camp Price as the location of John Gray's residence. Price was a small, temporary post (established and decommissioned in 1882) about three miles from Camp Rucker.*[63] *Evidently the Grays acquired the place as part of the Camp Rucker complex.*]

Russian Bill: On one of our trips into the Animas we saw a horseman at a distance and with field glasses recognized him to be a rustler known as Russian Bill. To see what he would do, we put our horses to a fast gallop to overtake him and when in hailing distance called out, "Mexicans are coming, Bill!" Bill didn't stop for further news but hastily cut lose a sack tied behind his saddle, put spurs to his horse, and soon disappeared from our view in a cloud of dust. We rode on and picked up his sack, which held quite a chunk of fresh beef. Bill had evidently found a stray animal lost from the Lang herd on moving [*the cattle*] out of the valley, and it served us for supper!

We never saw Russian Bill again. He claimed to have come to the United States as an attaché of the Russian legation at Washington, but if he had ever been anybody of importance he had long since degenerated into a trifling way of living. Even the other rustlers avoided him as being mean and cowardly, so Russian Bill had become a lone wanderer. He did not last long. Only a short time after that he rode into the little mining camp of Shakespeare, a few miles from Lordsburg, and, tying his horse in front, went into the general store there, asking the clerk to lay out his entire stock of silk handkerchiefs. Bill picked out several of the louder colors, and seeing that the smooth-faced-boy clerk was alone in the store, he pulled his big Colt pistol and told the clerk to "Charge it to Russian Bill."

But the tenderfoot clerk, probably knowing the ways of the rustler tribe, had a small pistol handy under the counter; and reaching underneath, he pulled this pistol out, quickly raised it to Bill's face, and pulled the trigger. Poor Russian Bill dropped to the floor like a log. Some miners, hearing the shot, rushed in from the outside to find Bill only creased in the neck, and they tied his hands and feet before he recovered consciousness. Calling together the few men in camp, they held court over Russian Bill. And the morning revealed all that was left of Bill hanging by the neck to the limb of a nearby tree . . . .

[*Russian Bill (William Tettenborn) has been the subject of many stories that are a little bit fact but mostly fiction, and Gray's is one of them. In a 1968 article tireless researcher Philip Rasch outlined the sketchy details of Russian Bill's life: Bill's mother was Scottish and his father German. They were living in Russia when Bill was born. How Bill got to the U.S. isn't clear, but in the 1870s he turned up in southwestern New Mexico where he teamed up with a shady character named Sandy King. In September 1881 an incident involving an outlaw, a store clerk, and some handkerchiefs took place much as Gray described it, but the encounter happened in Lordsburg and the outlaw was Sandy King, not Bill, and no lynching occurred at that time. Early in November 1881, Deputy Sheriff Tom Tucker arrested Sandy King and Russian Bill on petty charges and placed them in the Shakespeare jail. The two were loud and obnoxious and made threats against the townspeople. At 2 a.m. on November 9, irate citizens overpowered the jail guard, took the prisoners to the hotel, and hung them from a rafter in the hotel's saloon.*]

The Rustlers: It is hardly possible that the total number of rustlers ever exceeded one hundred in southern Arizona and New Mexico, and could hardly be termed much of a menace to the peace of the country. The rustlers were not wholly a bad set. They were mostly young men and boys hardly out of their teens who fell into this life in search for adventure. In the early days they would be frequent callers at our [*Animas Valley*] ranch, mainly, I suppose, to get a square meal, and I never knew them to steal from us except on one occasion.

About a dozen rustlers once rode up about midday. I asked them to dismount, saying we would have dinner for them. I was helping our cook to throw a meal together and could not very well keep an eye on them. But the old cook happened to glance their way and reported to me that one fellow was taking the cartridges from my belt, which I had left on my saddle lying on the ground. At once I walked out, unarmed as I was, and to Billy Leonard, who was called the captain, I reported the cook's story, adding that I could not stand for that—that they were welcome to all the food we had, but I must have the cartridges back. Leonard asked me who the man was, and I pointed him out. Leonard at once ordered the return of every cartridge and told his men he would not stand for any such raids on our camp. I give them credit for never at any time repeating this attempt. Probably if I had picked up a gun and demanded the return of the cartridges, I would have provoked a gunfight and neither old Moody, the cook, or myself would have been left alive to tell the tale. [*Billy Leonard was killed*

around June 10, 1881, so the preceding incident must have occurred before that time.]

"That's the fellow who feeds all the rustlers" was a remark I overheard on one trip to Lordsburg for supplies. It was a suggestion, if nothing else, that we might be profiting by such a process. But there were no two ways about it—either we had to be hospitable to all travelers alike or they would soon give a ranch the bad name of turning the hungry wayfarer away from its door—and that would be the beginning of the end. In a settled and law-abiding community you might get by with a so-called lofty stand of virtue and declare your house was your castle, turning a deaf ear to any undesirable, and ask him to move on. But on our southern frontier in those pioneer times, if you hoped to survive you had to be a good neighbor to all. Otherwise your only salvation would be to make a getaway and be quick about it!

Your livestock, and, in fact, all your possessions were at the mercy of any enemy, and your one and probably your only sure protection was your reputation for fair dealing with your fellow man and your willingness to play the good-neighbor role. In short, in no land is a good reputation so bullet proof as it was on the frontier in our pioneer days. Rarely, if ever, did the good-neighbor role lead to disaster. Among the rustlers were undoubtedly some pretty tough characters—men who knew crime as a business and being sought in other states had drifted to the Southwest frontier as their last refuge. But such men most always had a strain of honor in their hearts which placed them several notches ahead of our present-day criminals. For one thing, they would not kill an unarmed person, as so often occurs in our so-called civilized world of today; nor would they rob the hand that fed them. In short, the rustler was much of a gentleman, even when playing the role of a Robin Hood. And, because of these facts, we found it always a wise policy never to carry firearms when at the home ranch and to always request visitors to leave their pistols or rifles with their saddles.

Gradually the rustlers disappeared. Some met untimely ends, but most of them left for other parts or went to work and behaved themselves. Some few hunted trouble, and, finding it, met their death "with their boots on," as they deserved . . . . Curly Bill, the most noted of the rustlers, disappeared just before the Earps quit Tombstone, and his end is still a mystery. A prominent early-day cattleman [*Henry C. Hooker*] had offered a reward of one thousand dollars for Curly Bill, dead, and it was supposed someone, either of the Earp's party or some other enemy, earned this reward . . . .

[*The often-told story about Henry Hooker covertly offering a $1,000 reward for Curly Bill Brocius' head is unconfirmed. And other aspects of Curly's disappearance are still debated: Wyatt Earp biographer Casey Tefertiller believes Wyatt's claim that on March 24, 1882, he killed Curly Bill during a melee involving several combatants at Mescal Spring (about twenty miles west of Tombstone). Tefertiller explains that Curly's body was never examined by county officials and his death verified because the outlaw's friends buried him in secret, hoping to deny Wyatt the rumored reward. Earp biographer Steve Gatto believes Wyatt was mistaken about*

killing the rustler, citing evidence suggesting that Curly quietly left Arizona before March 1882.[64]]

The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral: The Earp brothers—notorious gunmen—came, and it was no time it seemed until Wyatt was deputy sheriff, Virgil was town marshal, and Morgan was shotgun messenger of the Wells Fargo Express! The only Earp brother without a fighting job was Jim Earp, who always seemed a quiet fellow, keeping out of the limelight.

[*Wyatt Earp was a deputy Pima County sheriff from July to November 1880 and a deputy U.S. marshal from late December 1881 to early April 1882.*[65] *Virgil Earp wore a deputy U.S. marshal's badge when he arrived in Tombstone in December 1879 and kept it until he left Arizona in March 1882. The Tombstone Common Council appointed him chief of police (city marshal) in June 1881 and he served until his suspension immediately after the October 26, 1881, shootout near the O.K. Corral.*[66] *Morgan Earp replaced Wyatt as a Wells, Fargo security guard when Wyatt became a deputy sheriff.*[67]]

Another member of the "Earp clan," probably the most capable and noted for his coolness under fire as well as his skill as a dead shot, and who always seemed to be on hand when trouble brewed with the Earps, was Doc Holliday. A slim, frail-looking man, gambler by profession, who was, like Wyatt Earp, a graduate of Dodge City's (Kansas) turbulent school of frontier scraps. And so, it might be said, the scene was set for trouble.

I was in Tombstone on [*October 26, 1881*] the afternoon that the Earps in their official capacity as peace officers engineered the killing of Billy Clanton and the McLowery [*McLaury*] brothers, Tom and Frank. Our home was on Fremont at Sixth, and the battle—or rather murder—took place on Fremont Street between Fourth and Fifth. My father had told us early in the day that trouble was brewing between the Earps and McLowerys, advising us to keep off the street, as a shooting scrape was often as dangerous to an innocent spectator as to the actors involved.

When I heard the first sound of rapid firing I knew the fight was on and from our front door I saw the one-sided battle. The three Earps—Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan—and Doc Holliday had stepped suddenly out on to Fremont Street from the rear entrance of the O.K. stable lot and immediately commenced firing on the three cowboys who were preparing to leave town. In fact, Frank McLowery was sitting on his horse and at first fire fell mortally wounded. But game to the last, he returned the fire, wounding Virgil Earp in the arm, leaving that member useless for any further gunplays in the life of Virgil Earp. The other two cowboys lay dead in the street. Tom McLowery had his hands up when a load of buckshot cut him down. It was all over almost as soon as begun. A play enacted by the Earps to wipe out those cowboys under the pretense of enforcing the law—and carried out under the manner of shooting first and reading the warrant to the dead men afterward. But in this case I doubt if there was ever a warrant issued.

[*John Gray's description of the gunfight is inconsistent with other accounts in several respects. Most authorities agree on these points: The encounter took place at a vacant lot on the south side of Fremont Street, a*

few doors west of the rear entrance to the O.K. Corral. The Earp party approached the "cowboys" by walking west on Fremont Street—they did not come out of the corral. There were more than three cowboys in the group. Billy Claiborne and Ike Clanton were on hand at the beginning of the confrontation but fled the scene when guns were drawn and escaped injury. None of the cowboys was sitting on a horse when shot. Virgil Earp was wounded in the leg, but not seriously. His left arm was permanently crippled the following December when he was ambushed on a Tombstone street by shotgun-wielding assassins. Morgan Earp was badly wounded in the battle, taking a bullet through the upper body. A round nicked Doc Holliday; Wyatt Earp was not hurt. The actual fight was over in less than a minute.[68] Importantly, the shootout took place between Third and Fourth streets (nearer Third than Fourth), not between Fourth and Fifth as Gray reported. Thus the Gray house was nearly three city blocks from the fight scene, and it would have been impossible for anyone to see what happened during the brief shootout from the Grays' front door.[69] John Gray was not among the many witnesses called to testify during the hearings that followed the deadly affair.]

Now Tombstone was definitely on the map as the bad town of the West, and as the crowd gathered after the smoke of battle had cleared away—the dead bodies of the cowboys still lying in the street where they fell—in came the six-horse stage with its load of passengers. One wonders what their thoughts were; it was reported that several of them left town on the next out-going coach.

Just a short time before this killing took place I had been at the McLowery boys' camp in Sulphur Spring Valley [*east of Tombstone*]. I had ridden there hungry and tired, making the long trip from the Animas Valley, New Mexico, on horseback. Both Tom and Frank were home and they treated me to the best they had—a good meal and a fresh horse for my remaining twenty-five-mile ride to Tombstone. They had asked me to stay all night but it was urgent that I ride home that night. So when I saw these young men lying wounded to death there on Fremont Street I felt a terrible mistake had been made. These boys were plain, good-hearted, industrious fellows. They may have harbored passing rustlers at their ranch, but what rancher did not? And it would have been little of a man who would have turned away any traveler in that land of long trails and hard going.

I think few, if any, ever tried to justify the cold-blooded killing of those three boys on that Tombstone street that day. In a few moments they would have been on their way home had not the Earps and Holliday suddenly appeared from the rear of the O.K. stable lot, calling out "Hands up" and firing almost simultaneously. Many of the better citizens deplored this notoriety given to Tombstone and too late realized the blunder made in giving the Earps the upper hand of authority. They were in power, and many were giving serious thought to the question of how to put them out. The Earps ruled as they saw fit for quite a while and things happened in the name of the law which were very injurious to the welfare and good name of Tombstone. All this ended only with the exit of the Earps when they finally knew their game was up . . . . But it was the old, old story of most mining

and frontier towns—the so-called gunman seeks and gets control. We have yet to learn how to keep the corrupt element from ruling even our largest towns and cities . . . .

[*At the time of the gunfight, the only Earp to hold an important law enforcement position was Virgil—he was both a deputy U.S. marshal and Tombstone's chief of police. Wyatt Earp, Morgan Earp, and Doc Holliday were Virgil's "special" deputies. After the shootout Virgil and his men were charged with murder but were eventually exonerated of wrongdoing.*[70]]

The Earps Receive a Hard Blow: There came a day when the reign of the Earps received its hardest blow and that was the passing of Morgan Earp. It was rumored that this was an act of revenge for the death of John Ringo, who had many friends among the rustlers.

[*Morgan Earp, having recovered from the wound he received in the October 26, 1881, gun battle, was shot and killed in Campbell & Hatch's Billiard Parlor on March 18, 1882, four months before John Ringo died. But this was not the Earps' first "hard blow." About 11:30 p.m. on December 28, 1881, men hidden in an unoccupied building opened fire with shotguns on Deputy U.S. Marshal Virgil Earp as he walked in the intersection of Tombstone's Allen and Fifth streets. Virgil survived but was gravely injured. His assailants, presumably friends of the men killed October 26, disappeared into the dark. The next day doctors removed a large section of bone from Virgil's upper left arm, leaving the lawman crippled for life. Wyatt immediately telegraphed U.S. Marshal Crawley Dake (who was visiting Phoenix—his office was in Prescott, the territorial capital) and informed him of his brother's incapacity and requested to be appointed deputy. Dake complied with Wyatt's request.*[71]]

The scene was a billiard room of an Allen Street saloon. The rear door had the lower panels of glass frosted and the upper panels of clear glass. Morgan Earp was playing billiards, and [*at about 11 p.m.*] as he moved around the table with his back to this door (only a few feet away) a shot rang out and Morgan fell mortally wounded. It was some minutes before the discovery was made that the shot had been fired from outside this rear door, the bullet passing through the frosted panel which hid from sight the killer, who had evidently watched his victim through the upper part of the door's glass. Thus the killer had ample time to get away. For some reason the Earps accused Frank Stilwell, with whom they had evidently had trouble. And Stilwell was close to John Ringo and Curly Bill.

[*A coroner's jury investigated Morgan's murder and reported that the likely perpetrators were Frank Stilwell, Pete Spence, "Indian Charlie," and possibly two other men, poorly identified.*[72]]

The following morning Stilwell was located in Tucson. The night clerk at the Palace Hotel had booked Stilwell for at room a five a.m. and vouched for his presence at this hour. It was contended that it was impossible for a man to go from Tombstone to Tucson—a distance of seventy-five miles—between the hours of eleven p.m. and five a.m. of the following day by any known method of transportation then extant. The sheriff would not hold Stilwell in the face of this alibi. A long time afterward it came out that an old roan saddle horse could have told a different story, had he the power of

speech.

But the sequel followed quickly. Wyatt, Virg Earp, and Doc Holliday started with Morgan's remains to Colton, California, [*where the parents of the Earp brothers lived*] for burial, and it was at Tucson, while the passenger train stopped for the supper hour [*on March 20, 1882*], that they evidently heard of Stilwell's movements. Stilwell must have gone to the neighborhood of the Tucson depot to watch the Earps. Anyway, in the railroad yards there, between some side-tracked freight cars, Stilwell's body was found shot in several places. Nothing more seems to have been done about this, as a short time later the Earps and Holliday returned from their California trip to Tombstone.

[*On March 19 Morgan Earp's body, escorted by James Earp, began a melancholy journey by wagon and rail to Colton, California. The next day Virgil Earp (who was still weak from the December 28, 1881, assassination attempt) and his wife, Allie, took the stage to Contention City (ten miles west of Tombstone) and boarded a train there, with Colton as their ultimate destination. Anticipating trouble, Wyatt Earp, Warren Earp, Doc Holliday, and two other men, all armed to the teeth, accompanied Virgil and Allie as far as Tucson, then, after disposing of Stilwell, they returned to Tombstone.*[73]]

At last the sheriff, Johnny Behan, seemed to realize it was time to act. At least it is intimated to the Earps that some action was contemplated, so they quietly and hurriedly mounted their horses and rode away, never to return again to Tombstone. There was no effort made to apprehend them or to call for an accounting. Tombstone simply drew a long breath of relief, and never afterwards did it call on a gunman to take the helm.

[*Sheriff Behan, responding to arrest warrants from Tucson related to the killing of Frank Stilwell, organized a posse and pursued the Earp party. Nor did Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and the rest of their crew go quietly. On March 22, 1882, they shot and killed Florentino Cruz (thought to be Indian Charlie) at Pete Spence's firewood camp in the Dragoon Mountains, and Wyatt may have killed Curly Bill a couple of days later. Of the three primary suspects in Morgan Earp's murder, only Pete Spence escaped with his life. Now fugitives, Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and their companions rode east into New Mexico. They continued on to Colorado, arriving in late April 1882. There they found safe haven—Arizona officials attempted to bring them back to answer a host of criminal charges but were unsuccessful.*[74]]

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59. Documents reproduced in Traywick 1996a, pp. 67-78, and Johnson 1996, pp. 158-163, convince this editor that the Guadalupe Canyon massacre was perpetrated by Mexicans, not Americans.
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INDEX