

Arizona State Parks and Trails
Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Parks
Josephine Earp Collection



Summary Information

Creator: Josephine Earp

Extent: 1.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

Abstract: The documents include correspondence primarily between Josephine Earp and John H. Flood, Jr, related to Flood's biography of Wyatt Earp; photographs of Wyatt, Josephine and locations related to the Earps; Flood's notes and a copy of his manuscript; and business records and correspondence related to the Happy Days Mining Group.

Language: The material is written in English.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information: These records were donated in September 2017 to Arizona State Parks and Trails by Eric and Nicole Weider.

Access Restrictions: These records are open to research, subject to Arizona State Parks and Trails' Archives Management Policy.

Copyright: Copyright remains with Arizona State Parks and Trails, an agency of the State of Arizona.

Cite as: {Item}, folder/sleeve, box, group, Josephine Earp Collection, Arizona State Parks and Trails.

Background Information

History: Arizona State Parks and Trails was created in 1957 with the goal to "select, acquire, preserve, establish, and maintain area of natural features, scenic beauty, historical and scientific interest, zoos and botanical gardens, for education, pleasure, recreation and the health of the people..." Tombstone Courthouse became the agency's second state park in 1959. The courthouse was built in 1882 in order to house the records for the newly formed Cochise County. The courthouse quickly became part of the successful effort to bring security and order to an area of loose organization and governance. After the county seat was relocated to Bisbee in 1929, Tombstone's courthouse largely sat vacant until it was opened to the public as a historic park. Today, Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park interprets the history of Tombstone, Cochise County, and surrounding area between 1877 and 1929.

Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp: Wyatt's common-law wife was born on 1860 in New York to a Prussian Jewish family. When Josephine was 7 years old, the family moved to San Francisco in search of a better life. However, the family continued to struggle financially and Josephine likely ran away to Prescott at age 14. The events of her life between 1874 and 1881 are obscure, though. Certainly, by the time of the Gunfight at the OK Corral, Josephine and Wyatt knew each other. By 1882, she was calling herself Josephine Earp. Wyatt and Josephine spent many years travelling from one mining boom town to another. Towards the end of Wyatt's life, in the 1920s, they spent part of the year in Los Angeles and part in Vidal, California where Wyatt worked a series of claims in the Whipple Mountains. During those same years, public interest in Wyatt's time in Tombstone rose. For the rest of her life, Josephine was determined to protect Wyatt's reputation and set the story straight. She died in December 1944 in Los Angeles.

John H. Flood, Jr.: A mining engineer and unpaid personal secretary and close friend of Wyatt Earp, Flood was born in Connecticut in 1878 and died in 1958 at the age of 80. Flood wrote the only authorized biography of Wyatt Earp. Whenever possible throughout 1925 and 1926, the two sat together weekly for interviews. However, no one would publish the 348-page manuscript because of its poor style. Flood also assisted Wyatt with managing his mining and oil properties. After Wyatt's death, Flood continued to assist Josephine by writing official correspondence and managing the Happy Days Mine claims.

Scope, Content, and Arrangement

Scope and Content: The Josephine Earp Collection includes correspondence, business records, photographs, interview notes, mimeographed copy of parts of manuscript, one will and testament, and one booklet. The strength of the collection is the correspondence between Josephine Earp and John H. Flood, Jr. and the notes Flood made as he interviewed Wyatt Earp for Earp's only authorized biography. The collection gives an overview of Josephine's desire to manage Wyatt's image and legacy, as well as her management concerns with the Happy Days Mining claims. The collection is subdivided into four groups.

- I. The *correspondence group* ranges from 1910 to 1940 and primarily includes letters between Josephine Earp and John H. Flood, Jr. The group includes a few letters from publishers and other interested parties. The letters are arranged by date.
- II. The *photographs group* includes images taken between the mid-1920s through the 1960s, though most of the prints were made in the 1950s and 1960s. The photographs and negatives include staged images of Wyatt Earp at his residence, snapshots of Josephine, mostly from a trip to Tombstone, Ariz. and Vidal, Calif. in the late 1930s, and snapshots of a cemetery and desert locations associated with the Earps. The images are arranged by date and topic.
- III. The *Flood notes and manuscript group* contains materials from the mid-late 1920s related to the John H. Flood, Jr.'s work on the Wyatt Earp biography. The documents include shorthand and longhand interview notes, handwritten drafts of sections of the biography and a mimeographed copy of page 1-34 of the resulting manuscript. The

manuscript contains handwritten edits. The group is arranged by type of document: interview notes by date, handwritten draft, typed copy of the manuscript.

- IV. The *Happy Days Mine group* contains a preliminary report, two certificates of assay, a hand drawn map of the claims and correspondence related to the property from John H. Flood, Jr. to Josephine Earp—all from 1929. The group is arranged by date.

Contents Listing

Group I: Correspondence			
Box 1			
Folder	Description	# of Records	# of Items
1	1910-1914	4	9
2	1922	4	13
3	1952 reprint of 1922 booklet	1	1
4	1923-1925	7	17
5	1926	9	19
BOX 2			
6	1927	5	11
7	1928-July 1929	6	19
8	September 1929-1930	6	11
9	1931	4	11
10	1932	5	11
Total		51	122

Group II: Photographs	
Box 1	
Sleeve	Description
1-26	Photographs (22) & negatives (4) Wyatt Earp, 1920s
27	Slide, adobe-style house, n.d.
28-34	Photographs of Josephine Earp on trip to Tombstone, Ariz. & Vidal, Calif. in 1930s
35	Photographs, Josephine Earp and four others, 1943
36-37	Photographs of Josephine Earp, 1920s-1930s
38	Wyatt Earp Monument, Monmouth, IL, n.d.

38-53	Photographs and negatives of Earp grave markers/cemetery, 1950s
54-66	Photographs and negatives of desert scene, possible Earp mining claim, 1960s

Group III: John H. Flood Notes & Manuscript			
Box 1			
Folder	Description	# of Records	# of Items
1	Shorthand notes and typed transcription from Wyatt Earp Interview, April 1925	1	8
2	Shorthand notes from Wyatt Earp interview, 1925-1926	4	9
3	Longhand interview notes with Wyatt Earp, September 1926	1	10
4	Longhand notes for Wyatt Earp biography	3	5
5	Longhand draft of section of Wyatt Earp biography	1	13
BOX 2			
6	Copy of typed manuscripts with handwritten edits- Pages 1-2J	1	12
7	Copy of typed manuscripts with handwritten edits- Pages 1-2J	1	12
8	Copy of typed manuscripts with handwritten edits- Pages 1-2J	1	12
9	Copy of typed manuscripts with handwritten edits- Pages 1-2J	1	10
Total		14	91

Group IV: Happy Days Mining Group			
Box 1			
Folder	Description	# of Records	# of Items
1	Typed Preliminary Report, 1929	1	1 (5 attached pages)

2	Handwritten draft of preliminary report and 2 certificates of assay	3	5
3	Correspondence, May 9-May 27, 1929	5	10
4	Correspondence, June 5-July 22, 1929	4	8
5	Correspondence, July 30-September 12, 1929; Josephine Earp's unsigned will, October 1937	5	11
Total		18	35