

Chronology of Significant Events

1540 Coronado began exploration of the Tombstone, Arizona, vicinity but found no evidence of the rich silver deposits he passed.

1736 Silver was discovered at “Ali-shonak,” a “place of the small springs,” which possibly was corrupted into the word Arizona.

1846 The Mormon Battalion entered Tucson en route to California during a road-building expedition.

1850 New Mexico Territory, which included much of present-day Arizona, was created.

1857 Stagecoach service across Arizona began.

1859 The ill-fated Brunkow mine was established southwest of Tombstone near the San Pedro River.

1861 The short-lived Confederate Territory of Arizona was created by proclamation (February 14).

1864 Gila City, a mining town established in 1861 near Tombstone, passed into history, leaving only “three chimneys and a coyote.”

1868 “Old Man” Clanton arrived in Arizona, establishing his family on the Gila River.

1871 U.S. Marshal Edward Phelps was killed by bandits (April).

1877 Ed Schieffelin began scouting for minerals in the Tombstone area.

Camp Huachuca was founded west of the San Pedro River.

The McLaurys arrived in Arizona.

1879 Rustlers began offering stolen Mexican cattle to Arizona ranchers (July).

Tombstone was incorporated in November, and three Earp brothers, James, Wyatt, and Virgil, arrived with their wives early the next month.

1880 Buckskin Frank Leslie mortally wounded Mike Killeen in a gunfight over Killeen’s wife in Tombstone (June 22).

William Graham (Curly Bill Brocius) accidentally killed Tombstone marshal Fred White in an altercation on October 28. He was later acquitted.

1881 A stagecoach originating in Contention, Arizona, carrying at least eighteen thousand dollars in bullion was robbed about eleven miles from Tombstone by Jim Crane, Harry “the Kid” Head, Bill Leonard, and Luther King. Bud Philpot and passenger Peter Roerig were killed during the robbery (March 15). Crane was killed later that year by Mexican soldiers.

Virgil, Morgan, and Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday engaged and killed brothers Frank and Tom McLaury and Billy Clanton in a gunfight on Fremont Street in Tombstone near the rear entrance to the O.K. Corral (October 26). A coroner's jury conducted an inquest (October 29-30). Judge Wells Spicer began a preliminary examination on November 1 to determine whether the Earp faction members would be bound over for trial on charges of first-degree murder. A month later, Spicer issued a decision determining that the defendants Wyatt Earp, Virgil Earp, Morgan Earp, and Doc Holliday "were fully justified in committing these homicides."

Virgil Earp was ambushed and shotgunned from behind, leaving his left arm useless (December 28).

1882 Morgan Earp was ambushed and killed in Tombstone on March 18, 1882.

Frank Stilwell was killed on March 20 in the Tucson train yard, two days after Morgan Earp was killed. Wyatt Earp claimed he killed suspected Clanton factionist Florentino Cruz near Tombstone on March 22 and Curly Bill Brocius at Iron Springs on March 24.

Buckskin Frank Leslie killed Billy "the Kid" Claiborne at the Oriental Saloon in Tombstone (November 14).

1887 Jim Roberts and other sheep-grazing Tewksbury factionists held off Tom Tucker and other Graham gunfighters, killing two (August 10).

Andy Blevins (Andy Cooper) killed John Tewksbury and Bill Jacobs in a Pleasant Valley, Arizona, gunfight over grazing rights and then fed the bodies to some hogs (September 2).

Pleasant Valley feudist Andy Blevins (Andy Cooper) was killed at his mother's home near Holbrook, Arizona, by Commodore Perry Owens, who also killed Blevins' brother-in-law Mose Roberts and young Sam Houston Blevins, leaving only John Blevins alive (September 4).

Jim Roberts and Jim Tewksbury held off Graham adherents, mortally wounding Harry Middleton (September 16).

1895 Will and Bob Christian shot their way out of the Oklahoma City jail, killing two men, before escaping to Arizona Territory (April 27).

1896 The Christian brothers robbed the International Bank of Nogales, Arizona, then shot their way out of town (August 6).

Will Christian and Bob Hays were ambushed by eight law officers and Hays was killed in the ensuing gunfight.

1897 Will Christian was mortally wounded in a gunfight with law officers and died later that day (April 28).

1899 Thomas "Black Jack" Ketchum mortally wounded two miners after a card game dispute at Camp Verde, Arizona (July 2).

Ketchum, Elzy Lay, and G.W. Franks engaged a posse in an all-day gunfight, killing three law officers in Turkey Canyon, New Mexico (July 12).

Black Jack Ketchum was mortally wounded attempting to single-handedly rob a Colorado and Southern train near Folsom, Arizona (August 16).

1901 Bill Smith and a brother engaged two Arizona Rangers in a gunfight on the Black River in Arizona after a Union Pacific train robbery in Utah. Both Rangers were killed (October). Later that year, Bill Smith gunned down two Douglas policemen in a gunfight.

1902 Ranger Dayton Graham found and killed Bill Smith.

1928 Aged Pleasant Valley feudist Jim Roberts killed a bank robber with his old six-shooter at Clarksville, Arizona.

1930 Law officer Jim East, who was present at the death of Billy the Kid, died at Douglas, Arizona (June 30). Lincoln County War observer Gus Gildea died at Douglas (August 10).

1956 Burt Mossman, last of the prominent Arizona Rangers, died at Roswell, New Mexico (September 5).