



N.Y. / REGION

Answers to Questions About New York

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F.Y.I.

By MICHAEL POLLAK

Q. A friend of mine told me that Wyatt Earp's wife was a Jewish girl from New York. True?

A. True. Josephine Sarah Marcus's parents, Hyman Marcus, a baker, and Sophia Lewis, emigrated in 1854 from Posen, then a province of Prussia, and settled in Manhattan, probably in the Five Points area, according to Ann Kirschner in a recent book, "Lady at the O.K. Corral" (HarperCollins). Josephine Marcus was born in about 1860, and the family moved to San Francisco in the late 1860s.

Bitten by the acting bug, Ms. Marcus joined a short-lived troupe that passed through Tombstone, Ariz., before disbanding. In December 1880, she returned to Tombstone, then a silver boomtown, as the common-law wife of the sheriff, Johnny Behan. In 1881, she grew tired of Behan's womanizing and was attracted by the blond, 6-foot-2 Wyatt Earp. Some time after the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Oct. 26, 1881, she was seen as Wyatt's woman, and by 1883 she was signing correspondence as "Mrs. Earp."

Despite the lack of a marriage certificate, Josephine Earp stayed by Wyatt's side until his death in 1929. As Ms. Kirschner describes it, she endured tent camps in Idaho and Nevada and a freezing shack in Nome,

Alaska, while her husband sought to strike it rich and, more often, earn a living as a saloon and gambling hall operator and a boxing referee. With her relatives, he attended at least one Passover Seder, in San Francisco.

Mrs. Earp helped ensure her husband's memory by working with the writer Stuart N. Lake on a sanitized biography, "Frontier Marshal." Lincoln Ellsworth, an explorer of the Antarctic, named his ship the Wyatt Earp.

Wyatt Earp was no actor, and Josephine Earp no writer, and they never grew rich from Hollywood's fascination with his Tombstone career. They had no children. They are buried together, along with her family members, in Hills of Eternity Memorial Park, a Jewish cemetery outside San Francisco.

Q. For some time, a driver has been parking a Chevy Volt at the curb on West 95th Street and recharging it from an adjacent building, using an extension cord lying across the sidewalk, sometimes in the dark. I nearly tripped over it once. Isn't there a law against using an electrical cord like that?

A. It's tricky. The Police Department referred F.Y.I. to the Sanitation Department, whose rules governing the public sidewalks prohibit blocking them with obstructions — A.T.M.s are one example — but say nothing about insulated electrical wires that are lying on the sidewalk.

Vito A. Turso, a spokesman for the city's Sanitation Department, said, "It's a bit of a unique situation, but it seems to our Legal Affairs unit that because the cord is potentially a trip hazard and could obstruct people from the use of the sidewalk, that this would technically be a sidewalk obstruction."

Charging electric and hybrid-electric vehicles can be a problem in New York. One suggestion has been to turn old public phone booths into charging stations.

A spokesman for Consolidated Edison, Robert McGee, said the United States Department of Energy was the best source for finding a charging station; the website of the department's Alternative Fuels Data Center has

a station locator, and a link to a locator app for iPhones, and will provide information on all alternative fuel sources, including electric, biodiesel, ethanol, hydrogen, natural gas and propane. While other websites have locators, many are geared to specific charger brands, he said.

Correction: April 20, 2014

An earlier version of this column described incorrectly the time period Wyatt Earp and Josephine Marcus' relationship became publicly known; it was after the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral in 1881, not before. The article also misstated the object on which Lincoln Ellsworth, an explorer, bestowed the name "Wyatt Earp." It was his ship, not his aircraft.

Email: fyi@nytimes.com

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