

Big Nose Kate

# Mary Katherine Haroney

Alias: Big Nose Kate



**MARY KATHERINE HARONEY**  
This is the oldest known photo of Big Nose Kate (left) and her sister.  
Location: unknown, private collection. Source: The Great American West  
Association website.

*Kate Seated And Her Sister*

## The Many Names Of Kate

Big Nose Kate  
Katie Elder  
Kate Melvin  
Kate Fisher  
Mrs. J.H. Holliday  
Kate Cummins

Mary Katherine Haroney was born on November 7, 1850 in Budapest Hungary. From an Aristocratic family Kate's father Michael made a living as a doctor.

In 1862 Mexico's Emperor Maxmillian appointed Kates father the position of personal surgeon. With the appointment the Haroney family packed up and left for Mexico. In 1865 Maxmillian's rule crumbled, the Haroney family fled Mexico and moved to Davenport Iowa. On March 26, 1865 Kate's mother died and the following May her father passed away also. (Causes of the death's are not known.) Kate and the rest of the children wind up in foster homes. In 1867 Kate is put in the care of Otto Smith. The stay with Smith is short, Kate runs away and by her account stowed away aboard a steam ship headed for St. Louis. The Captian of the ship (Fisher) finds Kate but does not put her off instead, He instead carries her on to St. Louis where Kate assumes Fisher's name and enroll's in a convent school.

Later Kate said that she married a dentist, Silas Melvin and the couple had a child. Both Husband and child passed away the same year.

### Kate Elder

1874 find's Kate, working in a sporting house for Nellie Bessie Earp the wife of James Earp. Kate say's that she did not meet Wyatt Earp until she was in Fort Griffin Texas, but Wyatt was in Wichita at the same time as Kate, and speculation is that she had a relationship with Wyatt at that time.

In 1875 Kate, still using the name Elder iss listed as being in Dodge City working as a dance hall girl.

1878 Kate moves on to Fort Griffin where she meets Doc. Holliday and according to her Wyatt Earp. Kate will spend the next few Years with Holliday traveling to Colorado, South Dakota and New

Kate Cummings



years with Holliday, traveling to Colorado, South Dakota and New Mexico. Their relationship is often rocky, with Kate still plying her trade as a prostitute from time to time and soon causes them to split for awhile.

In 1880 Kate is running a sporting house in Tombstone Arizona and doing quite well. Doc. has been in Prescott where he had a good run with the cards and soon follows Kate, whether this was to reconcile with Kate or not is not known, but they did get back together in Tombstone.

On March 15, 1881 the stage coach is robbed and Doc. is accused of being in on the robbery. Kate and Holliday have just had one of their many fights and the Cowboy's get Kate drunk then persuade her to testify to the fact that she knew Doc. was involved. Holliday is arrested on her testimony. The next day after she sober's up she recants her statement and Doc. is released. This would more or less end the relationship with Holliday.



Kate would go on to Globe, where she worked at a hotel, going back to see Doc. from time to time, but Doc. would never forget the fact that she betrayed him with her testimony. Kate stayed in Globe until around 1887 when it is said she made a trip to see Holliday in Glenwood Spring's before his death.

After Holliday's death Kate married George Cummings a blacksmith by trade in Colorado. The marriage lasted about a year and the couple split up. Kate found work in Cochise Arizona for awhile, before taking a job with John Howard as a house keeper in Dos Cabezas, Arizona, where she worked until his death in 1930.

Using the name Cummings, Kate applied to the Arizona Pioneer's Home and was finally accepted after six months wait. Kate had never become a citizen of the United States.

On November 2, 1940 a week before her birthday Kate passed away. She would have been 90 years old. Kate is buried at the Pioneers Cemetery in Prescott Arizona. Her head stone simply reads Mary K. Cummings.

[Back to Doc. Holliday page](#)



[The Gunslinger](#)



[The Gunfighter's](#)