

Eagle's connection to Wyatt Earp and the O.K. Corral (almost)

Going on my 5th year as Museum Curator for the Eagle Historical Museum, I have heard of some amazing tales in my time; all told by well-meaning folks. But over the years, I have heard rumors and have had people straight out tell me that Wyatt Earp had a saloon here in Eagle. I had never heard that before, but in history, nothing is out of the realm of possibility, so I did some research. Here is what I found.

Wyatt Earp and his brother, Jim did indeed open a tent saloon in a city that had the word "eagle" in its name; Eagle City was a mining camp that sprung up in 1881 along the Coeur D'Alene river, in Idaho's panhandle.

The well-known gunfighter had come to Idaho just three years after the famous shootout at the O.K. Corral. Earp arrived in Eagle City in January of 1884, but left a short 8 months later in September, headed for Colorado. During that time, he did indeed set up a tent saloon and served liquor to the gold miners. A more permanent town developed at a better location just up the river from Eagle City, a small town called Murray.

Wyatt Earp's short stay in Idaho left no legacy, except that Eagle City was once the home of a Wild West legend. With that small tent city long gone, it's easy to imagine that our community could have actually been home to Wyatt and his saloon, but unfortunately, we are about 407 miles too far south to claim that honor.

Alana Dunn, Curator

Eagle Historical Museum