

I Married Wyatt Earp

Ask The Authors:

Q: Where are Wyatt Earp and all the other men?

A: In our research we became aware that in all the many books, movies and TV shows which have been done about the events surrounding the “Shootout at the OK Corral,” the women were either ignored, marginalized, or distorted (John Ford’s classic film *My Darling Clementine* invented female characters who never existed at all.) By eliminating the men entirely, we could ensure that the focus is on the women only. Our challenge was to create a story where the Tombstone events were subordinate to the conflict between two gutsy, admirable survivors.

Q: How much is fact and how much is fiction?

A: That question’s not easily answered, because so much of the accounts of the “real” events are contradictory. The starting point for our show was Glenn Boyer’s book of Josie Earp’s memoirs, which itself has been the center of controversy as to its historical accuracy. Boyer based it on two different manuscripts purporting to be dictated by Josie, but many scholars doubt the authenticity of those documents. Josie Earp herself was known to tailor the truth to suit her needs, and devoted much of her later life in Los Angeles to creating the myth of “lawman” Wyatt Earp that has been handed down today. What’s missing from all of Josie’s accounts, written decades after the Tombstone days, is any mention of Wyatt’s wife Mattie. She certainly had her own reasons for doing so. When we discovered that Josie attempted to sue Allie to block the publication of her memoirs in 1943, we knew that we had found the dramatic conflict to set our story in motion.

Q: Are all the characters real?

A: Any dramatization of history has to condense, compress and construct events and characters to conform to the restrictions and demands of the medium. With Josie Marcus and all of the Earp women, we have tried to remain true to the “real” people, as much as they are knowable through historical documents. Pauline Rackham is based on the real-life actress and impresario Pauline *Markham*, but audiences told us that her last name sounded too much like “Marcus” so we decided to change it to avoid confusion. We invented the characters of Cora, Maude and Penelope to represent the rest of Pauline’s acting troupe. The characters of the older Josie and Allie were not in early versions of the show. The “older Josie” character was introduced first, sitting in the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel, reminiscing about her past. With the addition of the “older Allie”, the story became more dramatic in both the past (the 1880’s) and “the present” (1943).

Q: What about “that photo”?

A: Again, historians disagree about whether or not this is the actual photo of Josie Marcus. For our purposes as dramatists, we accepted it as the real thing and built much of the drama around it. One only need look at the recent flap surrounding “scandalous” photos of Miley Cyrus and Vanessa Hudgens (of *High School Musical*) to see how little has changed in over 100 years.