



Prescott History In A Minute

“Did You Know?” Series



Buckey O’Neill



Rough Rider Monument

- William Owen O’Neill was born in St. Louis, Missouri on Feb. 2, 1860. Buckey, nicknamed because of his ability to “buck the tiger” (go against the odds) in the game of faro, came to Prescott in 1881 as a court reporter.
- O’Neill was a probate judge, and the Sheriff; a reporter, editor, and owner of the Hoof and Horn, a stockman’s paper; contributor of short stories to the San Francisco Chronicle; a mining promoter; and a candidate for Delegate to Congress in 1894.
- He was mayor of Prescott in 1898 when war was declared with Cuba (Spanish American War) and was rumored to be the first man to sign up to go to war when the call came. He set up a table in the square where the Rough Rider statue now sits and signed men up in droves.
- He became the captain of A troop of the United States Volunteer Cavalry and went off to war in Cuba where sadly he would loose his life at the foot of Kettle Hill on July 1, 1898. O’Neill was the only regimental officer killed from among the Arizona volunteers, so his remains were returned to the United States and laid to rest with the nation’s honored dead at Arlington Cemetary.
- Although most residents and visitors refer to the monument located in front of the Yavapai County Courthouse as Buckey O’Neill, it is actually a representation of ALL the Rough Riders that served in the war.
- The heroic piece was sculpted in Silver Mine, Connecticut by Solon Borglum, cast in New York, then shipped to Prescott where it was placed on a large granite boulder and positioned in front of the Courthouse.