

Prescott History In A Minute

“Did You Know?” Series



Prescott Frontier Days / World's Oldest Rodeo ®



- The first formalized “rodeo” was held in Prescott, Arizona Territory, during the 4th of July celebration in 1888, and has been a yearly event ever since. That first rodeo was called a “cowboy tournament”, and was held in an area off Iron Springs Rd, near where Watter’s Nursery stands today.
 - From 1888 to 1924, the annual event was called by a number of other names, such as Fiesta, Cowboy Contests, Stampedes, etc. The word rodeo was first used in Prescott in 1924.
 - The Prescott event was determined to be the “World’s Oldest Rodeo” based on the following criteria:
 - 1.) A committee was required to plan and stage the event
 - 2.) Cowboys were invited to compete
 - 3.) An admission was charged
 - 4.) Prizes and trophies were given to the winners
 - 5.) The contests had to be documented
- Prescott’s 1888 event met all five requirements, so the U.S. Patent Office issued and Service Mark No. 1,353,477 was issued on August 6, 1985 to register the event as the “World’s Oldest Rodeo” ®.
- Juan Leivas won the “Best Cowboy” Award at Prescott’s first rodeo in 1888. This trophy can be seen at Sharlot Hall Museum.
 - Tom Mix participated in the rodeo from 1909 – 1913, when he won 1st prize for steer riding and bulldogging.
 - J.C. Trujillo, the current General Manager of Prescott Frontier Days, won the title of World Champion Bareback Rider in 1981 and was inducted into the PRCA Hall of Fame in 1991.