

Keva “Kiv” Phillips

Keva “Kiv” Phillips was born about 1853 in New York. He was the sixth of nine children of Philip Phillips and Rosanna Goldberg. His family were Polish Jews who immigrated to America about 1847. The family was living in New York City in 1860.¹ On the 1870 census, Kiv was a peddler, living with his family in New York City.² By 1880, he had moved west and was serving as a justice of the peace in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. He was the one who married John Huston Rice, the Silver Reef banker, and Susan Spencer, an actress, in Silver Reef in 1880.³

In 1881, he moved to Tombstone, where he was a valued member of the Jewish community. He worked as a store clerk and as deputy of the clerk of the District Court. He was a member of the Tombstone rescue hook and ladder company.⁴ He submitted a bill to the board of supervisors of Cochise County for \$30 in 1882.⁵ In April that year, Sheriff Behan appointed Kiv as a deputy sheriff in Tombstone.⁶ He was temporarily employed by Sheriff Behan for four months and then taken on full-time for his efficiency.⁷

In May 1882, Kiv was tasked by a court jury to put a summons in the hand of J R Adams, who had not paid for some work through the sheriff’s office. Kiv was accosted by Adams, who threatened to cut out his heart with a knife. Kiv asked him to wait and went to get his pistol. Adams had gone into a restaurant, and Phillips asked him to come out. Adams refused, and the trouble was avoided.⁸

Early in the morning of 5 July 1882, a Mexican named Filomento Orante entered the Capital saloon and called for a drink. He was in town to search for the man who killed his friend, and was already intoxicated. He drew a revolver, which he flourished in a threatening manner. The barkeeper asked him to put the weapon away, then dispatched a messenger for an officer. The messenger met Deputy Phillips who immediately proceeded to the scene.⁹

The barkeeper explained the situation and told him that Orante had stepped outside. As Kiv approached Orante, the Mexican stepped backward and stumbled as he drew his revolver and fired. The bullet struck Kiv in the right shoulder, passing through his wind-pipe in lodging in his vitals. Dying, Kiv drew his own revolver and shot Orante in the right thigh. Kiv then retreated into the saloon and out its back door, falling dead at the threshold.¹⁰

¹ United States Census, 1860.

² United States Census, 1870.

³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 6 April 1880, p. 3.

⁴ Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955; Too Tough to Die, by Lynn R. Bailey; *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 8 July 1882, p. 3.

⁵ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 3 February 1882, p. 4.

⁶ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 10 April 1882, p. 2.

⁷ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 10 July 1882, p. 3.

⁸ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 1 May 1882, p. 5.

⁹ *Tombstone Epitaph*, 8 July 1882, p. 3; *Weekly Republican*, 7 July 1882, p. 1; *Los Angeles Times*, 6 July 1882, p. 2; *Arizona Daily Star*, 6 July 1882, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

At this point, Officer Harry Solon appeared and had the Mexican conveyed to jail, where the doctor dressed his probably fatal wound. The doctor suggested that he might recover better somewhere other than jail, but threats of lynching kept him there, protected by extra guards.¹¹ Orante died in jail on 9 August 1882.¹² His brother and others arrived in town seeking vengeance, but a thorough search by law enforcement was made and no one was found.¹³

The autopsy found the bullet had passed through Kiv's aorta, causing him to bleed out.¹⁴ He was the first member of the Cochise County Arizona Sheriff's Department to be killed in the line of duty.¹⁵ His remains were taken to the undertaker, who did such a poor job of embalming the body that it was feared the express company would not ship it because of the stench. A procession consisting of the wagon, a brass band playing funeral dirges, the firemen with the hook and ladder truck, and citizens on foot escorted the body to the train. The bell on the hook and ladder truck tolled as they marched through the city to the outskirts of town. His brother Isaac met the body and travel with it by train to San Francisco.¹⁶

Kiv had been 26 years old at his death. He had a "gentlemanly deportment and paid careful attention to business. He had the most exemplary habits and good principles; utterly devoid of fear in the discharge of his duty, and quiet and unassuming in his manner. He was a true friend, an upright citizen and an honest and capable official."¹⁷ Kiv was re-interred at the "Hills of Eternity Memorial Park" in 1895.¹⁸

¹¹ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 8 July 1882, p. 3; *Arizona Daily Star*, 6 July 1882, p. 1.

¹² *Arizona Daily Star*, 12 August 1882, p. 4; *Arizona Sentinel*, 19 August 1882, p. 1.

¹³ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 16 September 1882, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 10 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁵ Cochise County Sheriff's Department line of duty deaths; *Cochise.az.gov*; *Keeping-the-peace.com/the-first-responder-2/*

¹⁶ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 8 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁷ *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 10 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Too Tough to Die*, by Lynn R. Bailey.



Kiv Phillips (image from *Findagrave.com*)

Evidence of
Coroner's Inquest
on the body
of
Kiv Phillips.

7 Depositions.

Filed July 26, 1882
H. H. Seaman Ck
By Louis A. Souc
depy

#125

Coroner's record for the body of Kiv Phillips
(image from *Ancestry.com*)