

REMINISCENCES

By JOE T. MCKINNEY

(Concluded)

In the fall of 1887, I think it was, the train was robbed at Navajo Springs or rather it was robbed at a water tank about three miles west of Navajo Springs. The news came to Winslow and I put my saddle and outfit on an engine and boarded it, and was run up to Navajo Springs. I got two men to go with me. We went to the ranch of O. B. Little and got up his saddle horses and mounted ourselves. At daybreak we took the trail of the robbers. It lead across a desert country toward Pleasant Valley. There were three of them. They crossed the Little Colorado on a direct line from Navajo Springs to Snowflake. We could see their trail plainly. We lost no time looking for the trail. We rode in a trot all day. We reached Snowflake. I got a change of horses as my horse was getting tired. I also got two more men to go with me. That made me five strong. We went on west following the trail until we struck the foothills mountains. A shower had fallen and we were having trouble with the trail. It was getting late and one of the boys said there was a seep spring and a dugout over the ridge not far distant. So we concluded to go there and stop for the night. As we approached the dugout we saw a very small fire and we rode up and found a man there. We got down and camped with him.

I don't think we had anything at all with us to eat, but our man that we found there gave us of what he had. I asked him if he had seen any men or any trail of men in his travel the day before. He said he had seen some fresh horse tracks up there north of where we were camped. Of course that was the trail of the men we had been following. I asked him where he lived. He replied that he had a horse ranch about ten miles south of there and was looking for some of his horses that had strayed away. I was thinking very strongly that he might be one of the men we were following, but we were following three men in-

stead of one. I resolved to search him the next morning any way.

We all slept comfortably and I hobbled my horse that I had gotten at Snowflake that day. We went to get our horses and all were close at hand, except mine. I followed him about three miles and mounted him and came back as quickly as possible. Our man had got a bite to eat and had gone. That man proved to be one of the men we were following. His name was "Kid" Swingle. I felt that I had let a bird escape but was not sure enough of it to follow him. We went back to where we left the trail of the men but could never get it any more. While we were trying to get the trail started again, Jim Houck came along. He said he was just from St. Johns and had warrants for all the outlaws in Pleasant Valley, that in all probability my train robbers had gone there anyway, and that I might get them by going there. He said that Mulvenon, the Sheriff of Yavapai, would be there with a posse and that a general round-up would take place in the valley.

I and my posse which consisted of John Scarlett, Lon Hawes, of Navajo Springs, and Joe Herschey and Osmer D. Flake of Snowflake and myself, went direct to Heggler's ranch, and then up above the ranch in a cosy little nook we found Mulvenon's camp. He was glad to see me. It was in the afternoon. We talked over plans and I told him that some one had seen me and my men that day and went toward Pleasant Valley in a hurry as far as I could see him, that I thought they would be on their guard and looking for a posse. He replied: "five or six men don't bother those fellows; I was in there a short time ago with that number of men with me and they came right into my camp and made their big talks of what they would do and what they wouldn't do, and I saw that I had the worst of it and I denied having any warrants for them."

After talking things over we agreed to move into the Valley that night and his outfit would hide their horses back west of what was then Perkins' store. He and his men would secrete themselves in and about the store building. I was to take my outfit, starting about 4 o'clock the

next morning, and cross over the foothills on the south side of the valley, coming into the valley three or four miles below, and ride up through the valley in broad daylight, avoiding any difficulty or if possible keep them guessing who I was. I was to ride up to the store, tie our horses and walk about there so that they could see that a posse was there. He said they would get their army together and come down and interview me and make me explain my business. That was what we hoped they would do but I waited there quite awhile when we concluded they were not coming and Mulvenon put one of his men on my horse and six men rode away just as we had come.

It was not long until we saw two horsemen approaching from the East. They came up to within about four hundred yards of the store when they spirited their horses off to their right and they came all the way around the store and approached it from the southeast corner. We were lying down in the half built walls of the new store building. It was being built of stone and the highest part of it was about five feet, with places left in it for doors and windows. When they were within about ten or fifteen steps Mulvenon slipped out from behind the half-built building and came around the southwest corner, saying: "Put up your hands, boys, I want you." The spurring and kicking of their steeds began. John Graham pulled his pistol but a charge of shot from Mulvenon's shotgun in his horse's neck brought his horse to the ground. He then turned on Charley Blevins and the next barrel of his shotgun took effect in Blevins' back. Blevins was drawing his Winchester and had it partly out of the scabbard and doubtless it dropped out before the horse went far. Jim Houck started for Blevins and as I was afraid he would shoot him if he was not already killed, I ran right at his elbow and when we reached Blevins I pulled Houck around and said, "Don't shoot him, Jim." He replied, "I wasn't going to unless he made a play." We turned him over on his back and the pallor of death could be seen on his face. We carried him to the shade of the big trees that were in front of the house. Nothing but the buck shot from Mul-

venon's gun had hit Blevins. Graham was hit with a rifle ball. It hit his left arm a little above the elbow and went straight through his body. He lived a while. I got him some water and gave him a drink. He said nothing that I heard. Mulvenon said to him, "Johnny, why didn't you put up your hands when I told you to; didn't you know me?" Graham shook his head. Mulvenon then said, "He knows he is a damn liar, he knew me." That was cruel, I didn't like that.

Our men with our horses heard the shooting and were soon there with our mounts. We went then to John Graham's house first and we put a line of men probably more than one hundred yards long, in front of the house. Presently a woman came toward us from the house with a babe in her arms and a little one holding to her dress. When she reached us she dropped down on the grass and Mulvenon advanced to where she was. She said, "I will tell you all that are in the house. My husband, Joe Ellinwood, is in there, and he is wounded and not able to get about. Miguel is in there also. They are all that are in there."

Mulvenon told her to return to the home, that he wanted neither of the men. As we were approaching the ranch two men made their get away. They were Louie Parker and Bonner. They were never seen in this country after that. I have heard that one of them is somewhere in the eastern part of New Mexico going under another name, and has a good outfit, ranch and cattle.

After we had made our rounds to the different ranches we returned to the Perkins Store. John Graham had died during our absence. We then went to the Tewksbury ranch where we found all the Tewksbury party. Mulvenon had told me that the Tewksburys would be there ready to surrender. We found there, Ed and Jim Tewksbury, Jim Roberts, George Newton and Jake Lauffer. That was all that I can remember now. An incident happened there that I well remember. Jim Roberts was shoeing a horse and Jim Tewksbury was holding the horse by the bridle reins. Jim was a jolly fellow and kept up some

merriment constantly. While he was hammering away on the nails, shoeing the pony, he said:

"I guess Tom Graham will come home and take charge of the country when they take us away." Jim Tewksbury turned all kinds of colors. One could see all kinds of desperation as he stood with his eyes looking on the ground. He replied: "No damned man can kill a brother of mine and stand guard over him for the hogs to eat him and live within a mile and a half of me." I saw more desperation in his face than I ever saw in Ed Tewksbury, and more than I think was ever in him. Tom Graham had not then been arrested. I knew nothing of the cause of their trouble, but the feeling between the Tewksburys and the Grahams became very desperate. I was told that they had been great friends, and that Tom Graham and Ed Tewksbury had held up the store at Woodruff. At least they were suspicioned of holding it up.

After the work was finished in the Valley and Mulvenon had his prisoners in hand, I started homeward. I was to wire the Sheriff's office in Prescott, on my arrival in Holbrook, of what had occurred in the Valley and that Mulvenon and party would soon arrive in Prescott. I looked at all the ranches and cabins that were near my route for men wanted. I found none.

This ended the war proper, but as one of the participants said: "There will be a quiet assassination going on here for some time to come."

The next tragedy was the shooting of Jake Lauffer from ambush by some unknown party. He was wounded in the arm but recovered. That aroused the people of that vicinity to arms again, and was the cause of Scott, Stott and Wilson being hanged, up near Heber. Lauffer was with the Tewksburys during the war and Stott was a friend to the Grahams, but was not in the fighting with them. He was simply known to favor the Graham's side. I never knew Wilson. Jimmy Scott was working on the ALC ranch in New Mexico when I came there, and I became well acquainted with him. At the time he was hanged he was working for Henry Huning at Showlow. The

reason he happened to be in the valley was that he loaned Louie Neglin his pet saddle horse to ride home and he was slow bringing him back, and he went after him and was caught there by the mob.

The cause for which he was hanged was for calling Jim Houck's hand one night in Holbrook, when he was shooting off his head recklessly. Houck backed down and refused to go, but forever afterward had an awful grudge against Jimmy Scott. Jimmy Scott was a small man about 26 years old, light complexion, he had a brown eye and a blue one. I never knew him to be out of employment. He was very agreeable, but was far from being cowardly. There was no backing down to him. Jim Houck was the cause of his demise. I thought a great deal of Jimmy Scott and felt his death very keenly.

The shooting of Lauffer caused the hanging of those men. The men who lost their lives on account of the Pleasant Valley war were the Shepherd, Old man Blevins, John Paine and Hamp Blevins, Billy Graham, John Tewksbury and Bill Jacobs, Middleton, John Graham and Charley Blevins, Al Rose, Stott, Scott, and Wilson, and Tom Graham. Middleton, by the way, is not so well known. He was from Texas, and had worked for the Defiance Cattle Co., with headquarters at Navajo Springs.

John Rhodes and I were talking over that affair and he told me as follows: "I moved down to the Salt River valley and went to work taking care of some cattle and I wanted to live in peace. I left off my pistol and didn't carry any gun at all. Everything went along all right for a while and people got to telling me that Tom Graham had sent for a man to kill me. I refused to be disturbed by such reports and went along about my work. Finally they told me the man had come to do the work. I went along about my affairs until one day I saw Tom Graham pointing me out to old Duchet (Pronounced Du Shay)." He looked at me and smiled, saying, "Don't you think that was long enough?" He immediately wrote Ed Tewksbury to "come at once—very important." Ed came and he told Ed of what had happened and what had to be done *at once*.

He told Ed he could kill him or he (John Rhodes) would kill him. The fact is, Ed Tewksbury killed Tom Graham, but John Rhodes was right there with him when it was done.

An attempt was made to indict Mulvenon for the killing of John Graham and Charley Blevins. I was subpoenaed to go before the Grand Jury at Prescott. I met there all of the Tewksbury party and I guess all of the Grahams that were in the country at that time. Tom Graham was there. Parker and Bonner had never shown up in the country since Mulvenon's raid in Pleasant Valley. Tom Graham showed himself to be very indignant.

While in Prescott I saw the Tewksburys and their party at a photograph gallery having their pictures taken. Had I thought at the time that pioneer history would have been in demand, I could easily have gotten all their pictures. They prevailed on me to have a photo of myself made and I did so, and it is included with this article.