

# REMINISCENCES OF AN ARIZONA PIONEER

BY HILARIO GALLEGO

\*Hilario Gallego came to the office of the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society, located in 1926 at the corner of Main and Congress, Tucson, asking assistance in getting a pension for Indian War Service. So interesting was he that we made an appointment with him and, through the courtesy of Charles Morgan Wood, were able to get a stenographer to take down his story. What he said was interpreted by his friend C. J. Powers and taken down in shorthand by Mrs. Effie L. Scott. In transcribing Mrs. Scott's notes we found it necessary to re-group some of Mr. Gallego's statements and, for the sake of smoothness, to add or omit certain words. We also, in most cases, expanded into sentences his short answers. But as a whole the story stands as he told it and would lose its quaintness by being further edited.—THE EDITORS.

I WAS born inside the walled city of Tucson, January 14, 1850. Our house was a little one and stood about where the new city hall now stands.<sup>1</sup> My father was Isidoro Gallego. He had some land straight to the west of here. He was a farmer and had a few cows. Two little Apache Indian boys worked for him. There was a kind of a peaceful tribe of Apaches that had a camp right out here a little way. Then there were the others, the wild Apaches, who were always on the war path; and they killed the little boys who worked for my father, and they stole a lot of his cattle, too. They tell me that before my time the Indians used to circle around the wall and kill cattle and the Mexicans would use these cannons. The Indians never got inside the wall.

There was always a sentinel on the pointed hill<sup>2</sup> looking for the

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\*Interviewed by MRS. GEORGE F. KITT and CHARLES MORGAN WOOD,  
Tucson, April 22, 1926.

<sup>1</sup> Meyer street, between Ott and Alameda. Map of Tucson, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Sentinel Peak (A Mountain) in the Tucson mountains.

dust of the Indians. They were using that hill for a lookout place after I can remember.

The wild Apaches called the peaceful Apaches, "Tontos" or "Fools." Any Apache who wanted to be peaceful would come and stay with these Indians near town; then the wild Apaches would follow them up and try to kill them. The wild Apaches at that time were all around in the mountains, especially around Aravaipa. Years ago there were lots of Indians here. They lived on mescal, penole, deer, wild sheep, goats, etc. There was lots of game in those days and over in the Santa Ritas we had a good many wild turkeys. The little Indians who worked for my father used to trap small game, such as squirrel, rabbits and quail.

The adobe wall about the city was about six feet high and two feet thick. There was an entrance facing west, somewhat back of the present city hall. It was just an open space and formed the entrance through which teams passed, and there was always a guard of soldiers stationed there. On the east side, back of where the old city hall stands<sup>3</sup> but toward the north from the center of the wall, was a small gate for the people called the "Gate of the Camp." It was a small opening and marked by a big heavy wooden door that had been chopped out with axes. At each of the entrances, that is the open gateway and the "Gate of the Camp" there was a cannon which was used when the Indians got too near the city. In the northeast corner of the wall there was a round tower with portholes. I do not remember any port holes in the main wall. Inside the east entrance but toward the north of it was an old ruined church. In the very early times there was a cemetery inside the wall near this church, but as far back as I can remember they were burying people outside the wall near what is now Alameda and Stone Avenue.

Just inside the west gate-way and to the south of it was a new church built by Don Cerilo Leon.

There was a connected chain of little one-room houses all around the inside of the wall that had been built for the soldiers and their families and a few other people. There were no Americans here then. The houses had openings or doorways and some of them had doors. A few had window openings. But most of them didn't even have holes for light; they were built just like a storehouse. Oh no, none of those windows had glass; we didn't know anything

<sup>3</sup> Northeast corner of Court and Ott. Map of Tucson, 1893.

about glass in those days. We didn't even have what you call looking-glasses.

Some of the doors were made of brush and sahuaro sticks tied together with twigs or, when the people could afford it, with rawhide. Sometimes the whole door was of rawhide and the windows were made of strings of rawhide.

As far back as I can remember, Teodoro Ramírez had a store inside of the wall and there was also a saloon kept by Juan Burrel inside. He sold mescal only. Some of the people lived outside of the wall, and there were a few stores on the outside. Cirilo León and Juan Elías and Ramón Pacheco each had stores. There were no stables or special places for hiring horses as we did not travel much.

When we needed provisions we made a lot of rag dolls and took them over to the Gila river where there were Pima and Maricopa Indian settlements and traded them off for tapery beans, corn, wheat and black-eyed peas. From around home we gathered mesquite beans and dried them and then ground them into penole. We ate the nopal (prickly pear) and sahuaro fruit. Then we had tortiomo—a fruit off of the tasejo, a cactus similar to the cholla. The fruit was tart and resembled a large berry or a small apple. These were picked when the fruit was in blossom, then dried, and were used with penole. They tasted like a pickle.

You see we had to learn to use things as they came. We had plenty of meat, game, cattle, etc. And we made our own candles out of the tallow (we had no electric lights in those days, they only came yesterday).

The first time we heard of coffee was when the Oury brothers came in and gave some of the green coffee to the women to cook, saying: "Cook us some coffee." They took it for granted that the women knew how to fix it. The women boiled it first but the kernels did not get soft; so they tried frying it and cooked it and cooked it. And they were still cooking it when Oury, the lawyer, came in and asked if the coffee was ready. One of the women looked at the frying grains and said: "Well, it's been cooking a long time but it seems awful tough yet."

For clothing most of the men wore nothing but "gee-strings" just like the Indians. Every six months or so the government would send to Hermosillo and bring back manta or unbleached cotton cloth from which men's trousers and women's skirts were made. The women wore long skirts and shawls or scarfs. Our shoes were mostly taguas, or rough shoes made of buck-skin, and guaraches,

which were flat pieces of leather tied to the foot with buck-skin strings which ran up between the big toe and the next. Many of the smaller children went naked, though a few wore "gee-strings."

The women washed what clothes they had out in a ditch that ran along near the west wall. Whenever they went out to do their washing the guards always went with them. For washboards they used big rocks. Inside the wall there was a well and folks had plenty of water to use.

We had no doctors nor medicine-men; the people just doctored themselves with herbs and roots.

We had church service once in four or five years—just when the priest would come this way. There was no padre in the church; people used to go to Hermosillo once in a while, and occasionally a priest would come to us. Then when they would come there would be services and marriages, and the children would be baptised. No one ever got married without the priest. If young people wanted to get married they just had to wait. The nearest church was at Magdalena. The San Xavier Mission was in charge of altar-boys or caretakers, but there were no services held in it nor in the church across the valley.

There were not many women and we did not have much entertainment. Once in a great while there would come a "romeromaras" or traveling circus. These were composed mostly of clowns and acrobats. There would also come "titiris" or "Punch and Judy" shows. They would parade around the streets with these little dolls and at the show would make them dance and do funny things. When they had evening shows they made light by setting chollas on fire. Sometimes we had dances; our music would be a harp, a violin, a banjo, and a drum, or sometimes just one or the other of these. We knew nothing about square dances. A dance something like a waltz was what we danced.

At the time of the Gadsden Purchase when Mexican soldiers were withdrawn, General Hilario García was in command. The Mexicans had confidence in the Americans and most of those who were not soldiers stayed. The Adjutant Inspector, Ignacio Pesquiera, who later became General Pesquiera—and later still governor of Sonora, came up with wagons and took the soldiers and their families and all who wanted to go back to Imuris, Sonora. This was the nearest large town. The soldiers who had been stationed at Tubac were taken to Santa Cruz, just across the line.

Part of the agreement between Mexico and the United States was that if any Indian who belonged in the Gadsden Purchase went

across the line and killed a Mexican the United States was to pay the Mexican Government \$5,000 (for a cow \$50). But they have never kept their promise.

In 1862 the California Column of the Union soldiers came into Tucson. They were under the leadership of Col. Fritz,<sup>4</sup> a German. The Colonel had some fine race horses; I remember one named Dandy, and he made me his jockey. After the war he took me East with him. I traveled with the horses for five years and went as far east as St. Louis. Then I came back to Santa Fe and later to Tucson.

From Tucson I went to a little town near the San Xavier Mission called Los Reales and did farming. Los Reales is a dead town. Mose Drachman says you can still see a few of the walls if you know where to look. It was while in Los Reales that I went on a campaign after Indians.

After leaving Tucson I went to Yuma and worked for James Barney as a teamster and also in his store. Was there about five years. Mr. Barney was our sponsor when I married my wife. She came from Ures, Sonora. Father Juan,<sup>5</sup> who later was in Tucson, married us. He asked Mr. Barney for a present in honor of our marriage, and Mr. Barney gave him a bell for the Catholic church in Yuma.

About twenty years ago I went to Phoenix, where I have farmed ever since up to a year ago when I went to Los Angeles.

I am a widower and have seven sons. I am in Tucson now trying to get my papers fixed up so that I can get my pension for helping to fight the Apaches.

The following is the story of my life as it pertains to my period of service with the Citizen Volunteers or Tucson Rangers who enlisted under General Miles to fight Geronimo at the time of his last raid:

In the spring of 1886, about the last of May, M. G. Sameniago sent me word asking me if I did not want to go to fight the Indians. I do not know who started the campaign but Bob Leatherwood was our Captain. Juan Elías acted as our guide. Other members of the

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<sup>4</sup> Capt. Emil Fritz, First California Volunteer Cavalry. Captain Fritz may have been in charge of a detachment of the California Column but Gen. James H. Carleton was in command of the Column. *Record of the California Men in the War of the Rebellion* by Orton.

<sup>5</sup> Father Juan Choucot. He is buried in Holy Hope Cemetery, Tucson. Father Victor Stoner.

company whom I remember were Pedro Van Alstine, Ignacio Vadillo, Leonardo Castro, Rafael Ochoa, and a half-breed. Vadillo had a ranch not far from my ranch at Los Reales near San Xavier. Van Alstine ran a lot of cattle on this side of the Rincon mountains. Castro still lives in Tucson. Rafael Ochoa was made Corporal. But when we got to Fairbank he got drunk and sold a blanket belonging to the government, so they took his position away and made me Corporal in his place. There were twenty-five Americans and twenty-five Mexicans in our company.

We were taken out to Fort Lowell in herdics or busses. At Fort Lowell the government furnished us with pack-animals, horses, clothing, arms, and other equipment. I wore a government uniform and kept it until I wore it out.

We came back to Tucson and at midnight were put on board a train, equipment and all, and shipped to Benson. Here we detrained and were joined by other soldiers. After breakfast we started for the Mustang mountains. We did not overtake the Indians as they had gone through to Calabasas. At Agua Fría they had an engagement with the troops; and at El Bosque, opposite Agua Fría and about a mile distant, they killed Mrs. Al Peck and her small child and carried away her niece. They then went up into the Pajarito mountains.

From the Mustangs we went down the Sonoita and up to Oro Blanco, where Mr. Shanahan had been killed and John Bartlett wounded. I was sent with four soldiers under my command to guard the ranch while they took Bartlett to Oro Blanco. Other duties I had while they were gone were to hunt for Indian tracks and to watch out for the mail. Eight or ten colored troops carried the mail from Calabasas to the ranch. Then I took it on to Oro Blanco.

Later Mr. Leatherwood took twenty-five men, of whom I was one, and we followed the Indians down into Mexico. We stopped at the Arizona ranch on the Mexican side and, while some of the troops killed a beef, Mr. Leatherwood sent me after the Indians. We were gone about three hours when we got word that the Indians had taken another direction. So we went back to the ranch.

Then we came to Calabasas and the government paid us one month's wages, which was \$30. We were paid off by a military officer who came to pay all of the soldiers. Out of each company five men were chosen to carry the money. I was one of the men chosen from the Volunteers. There were five from the regular sol-

diers and five from the Volunteers. The money was in \$5 and \$20 gold pieces.

From Calabasas we went to Oro Blanco and I was again placed over four men to guard the Bartlett ranch. John Bartlett, a boy of twelve, was at the ranch at that time and is now living in Tucson and remembers us well.

When Geronimo surrendered we came back to Tucson, reaching here sometime in August, I think. We delivered our equipment at Fort Lowell, got two months' pay from the government and were disbanded. The man who paid us was a regular government officer. Yes, I know it was a government officer. We all passed by a window of a house somewhere near San Augustine church. I think the house belonged to Charaleau and I think it was a dwelling house. I have never been in the house before—nor since. As we passed by this window we were paid. I do not remember who paid us nor his title and I know nothing about the muster-roll nor the pay-roll.



## FROM THE OLD NEWSPAPER FILES

### CALABASAS IN THE GADSDEN PURCHASE

From *San Francisco Weekly Chronicle*—August 11, 1855.

We translate the following description of Calabasas and the valley in the Gadsden Purchase from the *German Democrat*.

The valley is about thirty-six miles long, and like all the valleys in that vicinity, is rich in soil and timber. It contains a number of ruins of deserted ranches. Herds of sheep, horses, mules, and horned cattle are to be seen grazing in the open timber, and amidst the dense brush wood.

The chief building at Calabasas is a citadel with walls about twenty feet high, unbroken except by a solitary doorway, provided with very heavy doors. A bell is placed near it for the purpose of giving the alarm when hostile Indians are seen approaching. The place is now occupied by a couple of Germans, with some Mexicans and tame Apaches in the neighborhood. These settlers have to be continually on the lookout for the wild Apaches who frequently attempt to drive off the stock. If the valley were protected by the presence of a detachment of American soldiers the land near Calabasas would soon be well tilled. Besides there are rich copper and silver mines in the vicinity which ought to be wrought and will be at no distant time.