

REMINISCENSES OF JUAN I. TÉLLEZ

(as told to Mrs. George F. Kitt)

My great grandfather came from El Paso to Arizona in very early days while it was still part of Mexico. My father was born in Tucson and so were all of his children including myself. We children, four boys and four girls, were all born on Main Street right where Elias' corral now stands (west side, between Messila and Broadway).

My grandfather owned 160 acres of land where the Indian school now stands. The Indians sometimes raided the place and drove off all the cows and left only the calves. He had a big reservoir there made of dirt. The water ran back half a mile and was enough to irrigate all the land. My father sold the place to Pedro Aguirre, he sold to a relation of Royal A. Johnson, and he to the Presbyterian Mission.

My mother was born in Santa Cruz just across the line in Mexico. Her name was Silveria Márquez and she owned a share in the original San Rafael Grant. I know we had many cows there when I was a boy and that my father helped to pay the taxes for a great many years but for some reason when it was sold to Cameron we did not get anything out of it.

My father died March 23, 1890. He was quite wealthy at one time. We owned my grandfather's ranch. Then after we sold it father homesteaded a ranch fifteen miles east of Tucson on the Pantano Wash. That was sometime in the eighties. We also owned one lot on Fourth Avenue, a half block on Main between Seventeenth and Eighteenth streets, another lot on Eighteenth Street between Main and Ninth Avenue, and the home on Main which at one time belonged to E. N. Fish, also fifty-two acres on St. Mary's Road across the river.

As a boy I went to the Tucson private schools and then for ten months I went to Industrial College in Lawrence, Kansas. My father sent me there because he was a great friend of Sam Hughes and he recommended it. Mr. Hughes took me there but I could not stand the climate; got malaria and had to come home. When I returned I went to school under John Spring.

Mr. Spring was a very bright man and a good teacher and I learned bookkeeping. I could make any kind of accounts then. If I had gone on with my profession and gone into a store I would have been better off than I am today. But I liked to ride broncos and I liked to be free so I spent lots of time on the ranch. I am a poor man now but I have never worked for anybody but myself. I still have six good horses and some wagons but they do not make me a living and I am living by my debts.

I can remember much Indian trouble, some that my father and grandfather told me and some that I had myself.

I was a small boy at the time of the Camp Grant massacre but I can remember some things about it and some things my father told me. He was one of the party. They met near Cabadilla ranch and went through the pass. There were many Indians and not quite so many Mexicans and Americans, pretty nearly as many Americans as Mexicans. Among the Americans were Jimmy Lee, Sam Hughes, Chas. Shibell, Jim Douglas (Mrs. Tilly Sutherland's father), Bill Oury, and lots of others.

On their way back they met an Arivaipa Apache driving off a fine buckskin race horse which belonged to a man in Tucson. The horse was being ridden by a big squaw and a little girl. They shot the squaw and one of the men was leading the girl off by the hand, for he was going to keep her, when Placido Soza up with his gun and shot her. They also had a yoke of oxen and this proved that it was the Arivaipa Indians who were doing the stealing and killing.

Indians were often seen around my grandfather's ranch—the one on this side of the river just east of Cat Mountain where the Indian school now stands. There were several ranches right there together; Mrs. Guadalupe Pacheco's,

Mrs. Wm. Oury's, Ramón Castro's and José Herera's, and they built their houses all within hailing distance of each other. My father's was on the northeast corner of his land. The houses were built with a four-foot wall extending above the flat dirt roof to be used as breastworks. There were holes in the wall and a ladder of poles with smaller branches tied on with cowhide for rounds was always placed against the wall. The corrals were close to the house and made of brush piled between upright posts. Around the corral on the outside was a ditch deep enough that the cattle would not jump it should the fence be torn down. All of this was to make it as hard as possible for the Indians to get the cattle which were locked in these corrals at night and herded in the daytime. The calves were generally kept in the corrals all the time.

I remember once when I was about eight years old, that must have been in 1870, I was out on my grandfather's ranch when one of the men came running in to say that the Indians had gotten the cows. He and the herders from the adjoining ranches were tending the herd on the west bank of the river near what is now the Mission swimming pool when the Indians swooped down on them and drove the cattle off toward the west. My father and the other ranchers gathered as many men together as they could and went after them. Men in those days did not know what fear was. They went after the Indians in much the same spirit as football players go into the game today. They overtook the Indians in Robles Pass under Cat Mountain, beat them off and brought back the cattle. None of the men were hurt and it is impossible to say whether or not any of the Indians were hurt, as they scatter like quail in the brush and always if possible they take their dead and wounded with them. I remember that one time in particular because I was there. They even stole cattle from my father's place on Main Street between Seventeenth and Eighteenth streets.

One time, a long time after the Camp Grant massacre in 1871, the citizens of Tucson got word that some Indians who had been raiding in Mexico were bringing a large band of horses and cattle up through Sasabe and would come

through Puerto del Amol (Amole Pass) in the Tucson Mountains, cross to the north point of the Santa Catalinas, and make their way to the reservation by way of Canyon del Oro. I do not know whether they were Arivaipa or San Carlos Apaches. A large party of Mexicans, I do not know how many, but my father was one of them, went out to the Puerto del Amol and waited for the Indians. When they appeared both sides began to shoot. The Mexicans got most of the horses and cattle, but whether they got any Indians or not they never knew.

I never was in but one Indian fight and I guess I would not have been in that if I had had any idea that we would ever catch up with the Indians. It was in the spring of 1886. The Indians were very bad all over the country and had been raiding in Mexico. Word was brought in early one morning that Indians had raided my father's ranch fifteen miles east of Tucson, in the Pantano Wash, and carried off the seven-year-old son of Juan Gastelo, the man in charge, and stoned the mother but did not kill her. M. G. Samaniego and R. N. Leatherwood got together fifteen or twenty men including myself and we rushed to the ranch. We rode fast and reached there about noon. We started out on the trail immediately and after going some distance found a beef that the Indians had killed, with the blood still warm. Halfway between the Téllez ranch and Martínez, ten miles from the ranch, at about 4 o'clock we ran across the Indians and surprised them eating supper. Most of them were down in a low place but some were up on higher ground with two bunches of horses each with a bell mare. Four of us, Jesus Padres, Pedro Aguirre, a soldier, and myself started after the Indians with the horses. We saw the boy on a big buckskin horse up on a knoll to our right and called to him. He was all alone and without any shirt on. The Indians had taken it. He did not seem to be at all frightened but came over to us. We fired several shots at the Indians and they left the horses and dropped down behind the rocks as if killed. We wanted to go up and get the horses but Mr. Samaniego said no, that the Indians might be fooling us. Meanwhile the other men

had driven the rest of the Indians out of the low place onto the hills and they had disappeared among the rocks. We do not know whether we killed any or not as they scattered and hid in the brush.

By that time it was quite late so we went on to the Martínez ranch and camped. In the night a lot of other men joined us. Next morning we got up very early, a long time before daylight, and went on toward Ceditello Pass as we knew that was where the Indians would go through to the San Pedro. We surprised them again at Morosco's ranch. They had left their horses on a hill to the south and were just crawling down on foot to raid the ranch. When we began to fire at them they ran back to their horses. Some stayed in the rocks on the top of the hill and shot at us while the others got away. We must have kept up the shooting for half an hour and then the Indians ran. They seemed very careful of their ammunition. I do not think they had much. Some of the men followed them into the San Pedro and as far as Tres Alamos so as to warn and help protect the ranchers but most of us went back to Tucson.

We found out later that they were a band of Apaches who had been raiding in Mexico and were run out by Lieut. Lawton. The soldiers had tracked them as far as the Rincóns.

After that Mr. Samaniego and Mr. Leatherwood formed a company of volunteers, both Mexicans and Americans, whom the government provisioned and sent out to fight. . . .

When the Confederates left Tucson in 1862 they took all the ammunition, provisions, money, etc. they could get hold of, with them. But the things were heavy and they had to move fast so they stopped at Camp Saqua, about 12 miles out on the New Mexico road and buried everything so the federals could not get it. Many people think they buried much treasure there because often on rainy nights they can see flames rising from the spot.