A. C. Allen

1st Lieut Co. B 1st Batt Rifles

San Juan River

Central America

Nicaraguan Army

DIARY

of

Incidents & Events

That Transpired During

My Sourjourne [sic] In

Central America

Thursday Jan 1st 1857 Page 1

 I left my home in New Orleans La. at five o’clock in the evening of the 28th Dec, just four days ago; on the steam ship Texas, bound as a volunteer for the sunny land of Nicaragua with glorious anticipations; and aspurations [sic] that knew no bounds. As the last spire, of good old New Orleans, faded from my sight, I mentally resolved to have my bones in other lands or return honerably [sic] to my home and many friends I have in it. Not having a single friend, and but one acquaintance on board that vessel, you may know that my time passed dully enough at first. When after along fit of meditation I arrose [sic] from the deck, to seek quarters for the night, I can assure you as I pushed through a dense crowd of ugly looking strangers, that my thoughts were any thing [sic] but pleasant.

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 I expected the position of Lieut, consequently, I sought quarters in the Cabbin [sic]. After some trouble and delay, I managed to get a Cabbin ticket. When I arrived at my sleeping place, I found two rough looking customers had been already appointed there. The fact is; theire [sic] company in my estimation, didn’t seem as though it would improve any one’s morals; so I concluded to watch them narrowly, for my own information, as they seem pretty well posted up, (as the saying is). One of them proposed a game of Poker to me, as soon as I came in, I remarked that I did not play Poker; and he would have to excuse me. He insisted upon a small game, merely for amusement, I refused positively; and lounged down on my bunk; to wait for them to go to bed. After several ineffectual attempts to draw me into conversation they concluded

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To retire. After which I did the same; I learned this much from them. To take of nothing but my hat and coat, put them under my head, loose my pistol belt a little and go to bed so. The fog became so dense; that the vessel was compelled to drop anchor, and lay to all night. Consequently, we did not get far from New Orleans, the first evening. The next morning the 29th we again started on down the river. We arrived at the Balize in the evening, where we sent some despatches ashore; and as it was still quite foggy we again lay to all night. Morning of the 30th we crossed the bar, at 5 o’clock A.M.; and bid farewell to ~~American~~ US soil. And there were many on that vessel that bid their last and eternal farewell to the land of our nativity. This day was passed in disposing of the men and dividing them off into Companies. I was apointed [sic] by Major Robbert Ellis,[[1]](#footnote-1) the commanding

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Officer as 1st Lieut of Co. B commanded by Captn R. A. Harris.[[2]](#footnote-2) I felt proud of that company; that evening, when they were first assembled for roll call for without exaggeration, it was the largest Company abord [sic] the vessel; and a more athletic and determined set of fellows it would be hard to find. I made up my mind; to let my conduct be such, as to gain their good will, and esteem; as well as their respect; that is to the best of my ability. The next day 31st Dec, I passed in giving the men (our Co) some idea of drilling, the manuel [sic] of arms &c &c. They were considerable trouble at first, but I soon had the pleasure of seeing them go at it with spirit & pleasure; with the determination of learning, we did not do much practicing to day; as nearly all the men are beginning to

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get sea sick.

Thursday Jany 1st 1857

 I have been apointed [sic] to day, as officer of the Gaurd [sic], under Captn Bentley,[[3]](#footnote-3) officer of the day, to presume order &c &c on the vessel. As he is altogether ignorant as to his duty, I have assumed all authority; and he comes to me for orders, instead of me going to him. To day is the 1st time I have apeared [sic] in my official capacity and I have succeeded admirably; except a slight difficulty with Lieut Coleman of Co. C who took into his head to get drunk for the purpose of celebrating New Year. To day about noon we passed Cape San Antonio; the south western portion of the isle of Cuba. It had a beautiful apearance [sic] from the sea and made me wish for the time to come where that beautiful and productive isle would be

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owned by the Glorious Star & Stripes.

Friday 2nd

 I had quite a lively time of it last night, first by being ordered by Col Mancasas[[4]](#footnote-4) to arrest Captn Sleight & Lieut Volger[[5]](#footnote-5) for making a disturbance; which I was about to do, when he change his mind, and excused them on condition that they would conduct themselves properly. And about one o’clock I was patrolling the deck, hunting for the Sergeant of the Guard [sic], when I espied a fellow sitting in the bow of the vessel, and I hailed him. He gave me no answer and I hailed him several times to know if he was the sergeant of the guard [sic]. He replyed [sic] no in a manner that did not suit me at all; so I asked him the reason why he did not answer me at first. His reply was that he did not feel like it.

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I then asked him if he knew who he was talking to. He said that he did not and he did not care either. So I came to the conclusion that I would teach him who I was; and at the same time punish him for his disrespect to an officer of the Great Nicaraguan Army. As the sergeant of the Guard [sic] could not be found, I went and woke up my own Sergeant (Old Burrows) and ordered him to collar my friend in the bow, and put him under arrest. Mureupan Burrows took him by the collar and dragged him out. The fellow then made known to me that he was the watchman of the vessel. As it was beyond my authority to take him off his duty, I released him, but watchman or not, I was bent on punishing him. A part of the sailors belonging to the vessel had gathered around by this time and became very impudent to me; being of an impulsive nature, I drew my five shooter and walked

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In among the crowd and remarked that the first man who opened his mouth; I’d blow his brains out. You can bet your life there was a dead calm. Fortunately for them (and I suppose also for myself) they kept pretty quiet. Not being satisfied, I went down in the Cabbin [sic], woke up Col Mancasas, Major Robt Ellis, & Agt [Joseph N.] Scott and reported to them what had occurred and demanded that the sailor should be punished. They all came on deck and called the fellow out to talk to him. He replyed [sic] to them as impudently as he did to me (for he had all his sporty arround [sic] him). He said they had nothing to do with him and he did not care a damn. I made some remark and he called me a liar; I sprang upon him, as quick as lightning, I tried to shoot him, but my pistol not being cocked, caused a delay, for my party to take it away from me. I would have then killed

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him for the insult with my knife had not my officers restrained me by main fource [sic] and promised to punish him severely themselves; which I am affraid [sic] they have not power to do. That interesting incident ended my new year and first day’s duty in the Filibuster army. To day I have had the exquisite felicity of being pointed at by every sailor & Cabbin [sic] boy on the vessel and I occationally [sic] here [sic] them whispering with one another, “there he goes!; “That’s him; “He tried to shoot Pat,” I reckon he wants to practice before he gets out there &c &c. I do not notice them and they manage to give me a wide bearth [sic] wherever I go. To give the devil his due; He (Pat Esqr) was the pluckiest ireishman [sic] ever I saw. Though I think, as I have not been able to get close to him to day that he is hardly likely to come about me anymore. The Captain of the ship has promised to discharge him. I have slept late to day from the fatigue of yesterday.

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Saturday 3rd

 I have passed this day at card playing (for amusement) lounging about deck, smoking, drilling the company &c &c. Many of our men who left New Orleans, while drunk, are getting sober now, and are looking the picture of melancholy to perfection. They just now commence to think of the consequences of their hastiness. But it is now too late. There are many of them sea sick and they are laying, crowed [sic] together, all over the deck some spewing, groaning, grunting, cussin & snorting. Some looking sad and dispirited and others laughing at the rest. Taking all together they spout me in mind of a drove of cattle hearded [sic] together in a pen. The poor privates are confined to the stearage [sic] & forward deck, with its dirty smell & poor accomodations [sic]. We officers live in the cabbin [sic] and promenade under a canvass covering in the

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aft deck. I have not been sea sick as yet and I hope I will not. My position is so new to me that I am well entertained at every thing I see. I am just getting to like it first rate. In fact, I think it agrees with me.

Sunday 4th

 We are expecting to get to Greytown to day consequently, every one is all anxiety & expectation. For we Filabusters [sic] are expecting a lively time as soon as we land. I may as well state that our party, number two, hundred & fifty, rank & file. About six o’clock this morning, we passed two small islands, on the coast of Nicaragua. They are quite small covered with green undergrowth, uninhabited I believe, and are called Great Corn & Little Corn. 5 o’clock P.M. Greytown is in sight; together with several British Men of War. The news has just come aboard: that all the Boats on the Lake & River, together,

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with Forts San Carlos, Castillo & Serapiqui have been by the treachery of that infernal traitor, [Sylvanus M.] Spencer an Agt of Vanderbilt & Co., have been taken by the enemy. Thereby cutting off all communication, with Genl Wm Walker, up in the interior of Nicaragua. And further more; that there is at this time one of the steamers with a party of the enemy abord [sic], now lying in the harbor of Greytown. 5 ¼ o’clock—it has been decided by the commanding officers to make an attempt with the small boats of the Texas to board & take that steamer from the enemy. Of all the excitement about one little job, this beat all I ever saw, not a gun had been distributed to the men up to this time. On the way the men went to breaking open gun boxes and amunition [sic] chests, without the least sort of order, was a caution. Every one was giving orders, and every thing was in a most beautiful confusion.

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Finally, amidst the noise & confusion we heard the order, for get ready, and form in the cabbin [sic] preperetory [sic] to making an attack on the Steamer, Companies B & E. As company B was the one I was attached to and being ordered by Captn [Robert] Harris, to see to arming & getting the men ready, I had my hands full. As there was no one to command order to the excited fools, who were, grabbling up and loading guns every where, I assumed the responsibility of distributing arms & ammunition myself. We were soon ready, “that is,” every one of my Company had guns some, a pocket full of amunition [sic] others a hat full. Cartridge boxes buckled on them in every manner and form, that can be imagined. Some fellows had their boxes buckled arround [sic] their necks, others around their legs, some arround [sic] their waists, and some again were carrying them in their hands. In this manner my Company, with me at their head, soldier coat

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on (and I may as well say, I was the only man on the ship that did have one on) and drawn sword, & filed into the Cabbin [sic] in single file, midst the hallowing of men, the screaming & screeching of women, & forty officers giving orders at the same time. The other Company came in and formed opposite me, and there we stood, looking at one another, every one asking questions of one another; which no one could answer some of the soldiers looking with curiosity and inquisitive glances at their guns (for many of them had never seen a gun) others asking information, about which end of the cartridge was put in the gun first &c &c. It is imposible [sic] for my feeble gun to give anything like and adequate description of the glorious confusion that reigned on that eventful ocation [sic]. We stood there some fifteen or twenty minutes awaiting orders. They came at last.

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It was to dismiss the men. For the bird had flown. Yes, while we were getting ready, the enemy had been busy getting up steam, which they suceeded [sic] in doing and bidding us a hasty adeau [sic], even before we got within musket shot of them. They are gone on up the river, where it will be our business to follow them and whip them off the river, with whips made of their own hides. 7 o’clock P.M. I am ordered to take six of my men, in one of the ships boats, under the guidiance [sic] of a little bow-legged, bulitt [sic] headed, sandy haired, red eyed, individual who has just come aboard, and who they call Comodore De Brisit [Julius De Brissot], and follow our Greazer [sic] friends on up the river, watch their movements and if they land, and it is in any way possible, to attack and take the steamer with a reinforcement that is to come on after me.

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Monday 5th

 After having received orders last evening to go up the river, I was soon seated in the stearn [sic] of a light yawl boat the imortal [sic] Comodore at the rudder and six stout hearted lusty fellows at the oars. The current of the San Juan being pretty fast, we did not go up in a hurry, but up we we [sic] went, slow & sure determined to imortalize [sic] ourselves if we only got half a chance. The night was gloriously dark and a beautiful shower falling (every drop felt like a lump of ice) we were hailed every fifty yards or so till we cleared the harbor by British Men of War’s men. I found my friend the Comodore an invaluable assistant, both in answering the hails and managing the rudders. For I new [sic] nothing of the river and this was my first experience in warfare.

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After clearing the harbor, we prepared our rifles, and proceeded on up with more caution; taking advantage of every bend & turn in the river. After going up several miles, we espied our Enemy, landed and busily taking on wood at a wood pile. We approached to within a short distance of them and concealed ourselves along shore preporetory [sic] to attacking them when our reinforcement should arrive. We waited & waited and we waited so long that our enemy again took leif [sic] of us. It would have been wourse [sic] than folly for us with eight men to have attempted anything against sixty or seventy of them, under the circumstances, and as our reinforcement did not come, we were necesiated [sic] to return without accomplishing anything. I learned after my return (which was about 5 o’clock this morning] that a Company under several officers in boats, had started to reinforce

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me, but owing to the management of the officers, the men became confused, and having no sort of unity or regularity among them, they were unable to steer the current. Consequently, after many unsucessful [sic] attempts, and a good deal of swearing and blowing among the officers, they gave it up and we lost a steamer. To day has been passed in landing the men and munitions on Punta Arenas. A long sandy point, running for several miles between the Carribbean [sic] sea and the harbor of Greytown on which lives old [Joseph N.] Scott, the agt of Harris & Morgan’s line of steamers. As the old scoundrel professed a neutrality and had the British guns to protect him, He would not let us land near his place, so we were compelled to go up about a mile near the woods and make preperations [sic] for camping in an old marsh. It has been raining all day and

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I am told it rains continuously for six months in the year. Night—having eat nothing all day and being as hungry as wolves we have just had the refuse [sic] of the Steamer Texas’s table (thrown promiscuously into an old barrel) dealt out in scanty proportions for our supper. An old ham bone fell to my share with a cracker. To night, is my first night in this expedition of sleeping on the ground. And as it is raining and I am ringing wet, I expect to have an exquisite time of it. I understand we will be compelled to remain on this beautiful and romantic spot, until we can gather, manufacture, steal, or capture a steam boat. And as they are a scare commodity in this neighborhood, I guess it will be a sweet little time before we get off. This place looks gloomy, every body looks gloomy and I feel very unromantic.

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Tuesday 6th

 The forenoon of this day has been passed in trying to make camp houses. We have had a lively time of it; each company vieing [sic] with the other, as to which would have the best. Our materials are nothing but what grows spontaneously all around us. And having all kinds of architecs [sic] among us, each Company is building according to their own seperate [sic] plans. Our manner has been to drive two rows of upright forks in the ground one row a little lower than the other to make a kind of slant to turn the rain; after which we lay long poles in the forks and recross [sic] them with other poles layed [sic] close together and tie with bark when our roof is ready for being covered with the only materials we have which is bushes, weeds, grass, &c &c. That will do very well to shelter

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 us from the sun, but a fool can see that it will only serve to catch the rain and pour it in beautiful & cooling streams on the poor devils inside. There is a line of trunks & valises, carpetbags &c stretch across the upper end of it to divide the officers part from the mens [sic]. I have just had a little clearing made in front of my quarters for drilling the Company on. I say that I am seeing to all this because my Captain leaves every thing to me. Noon—

 Having assembled my company (there is no discipline here) for the 1st time to drill we were interrupted by all the dam [sic] fools of the party; who thought it their business to crowd around and laugh at what they did not understand. I soon taught them that our desire was to learn and not to make laughing stocks of ourselves. After drilling about an hour and a half with the pleasure of

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seeing the men improving fast and taking a real interest in their new duties we dismissed. Hereafter, I intend to drill the men twice a day, morning and evening, whenever my duties will allow me. This evening I took one of the boys and strolled out to see if I could not kidnap one of old Scott’s goats, that I have seen grazing around. But old Scott, seems to have been anticipating something of the kind, for he has had them all penned up. So I have been unsucessful [sic] in my first foraging expedition. Night—

 It is raining and the water is pouring through the roof of our house; in delightful & refreshing streams. And as the best thing we can do, we are laying [sic] with all the old wet coats & blankets rolled arround [sic] us we can find, drawed up, shivering, listening to one another, cuss & grunt, grinning and bearing it.

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With not a dry gun in camp uncertain at what moment the enemy may pounce on up; and commence a general slaughter. And positively sustain that all our luggage, trunks &c are getting gloriously soaked. One thing is sertain [sic]; I won’t have very pleasant dreams to night.

Wednesday 7th

 I passed the morning in writing some letters & drilling the Company. From our present quarters, Greytown is in sight about three miles off, across the Bay, or Harbor. I have just received permission from Major [Robert] Ellis to go in Company with Captn Bentley & Lieut Taylor[[6]](#footnote-6) on a visit to Greytown this evening. We left our camp in a little old Bungo (cannoeu) [sic] about two o’clock this evening and after a somewhat fatiguing full of an hour, we landed at one of the several little wharves at the gloriously beautiful and romantic

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village of Greytown. We were greeted on landing, by a motley crowd of California passengers, (who were waiting for a vessel), a few wooley [sic] headed, spraddled toed Jamaica negroes, of both genders, and a fiew [sic] copper colored men & women, of low stature, straight black hair, eyes like a coal of fire, broad palmetto hats on; all smoking cigaritas [sic]. I had sorter riggedmyself up, for I wanted to make an impression on my new fellow citizens. Having on a Brass Coat with blue buttons, standing collar, cape a la militair, pants in my boots, my best friends (my five shooter & Arkansas tooth pick[[7]](#footnote-7)) in my belt, you may just imagine, I felt like Julius Ceazar [sic] after having crossed the Rubicon. After having made the bungo fast, we sauntered leasurely [sic] off to take a survey of the village and its inhabitants. Goingalong some distance, we espied a palmetto-covered shanty; bearing the distinguished appelation of the Saint Nicholas

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right over the door. Supposing it to be a distant branch of the Saint Nicholas of New York and being friendly disposed towards the latter, we came to the conclusion to walk in and see what we could do for them in the way of patronage. Arriving inside, we discovered several dark skinned individuals, with very curley [sic] hair, barefooted and pants rolled up, engaged in a seemingly very entertaining game, at a kind of table, which looked to one like billiards. All puffing their cigars, as if they were smoking for a bet. Several more were lounging around, and another individual standing behind a kind of bar who rolled his eyes at us, in a manner which said very plainly that our custom was not wanted. Not being remarkable, for our timidity, we approached this gentleman and requested him in our mildest terms to favor us with a Brandy Cocktail. While he was engaged in the delightful occupation of mixing our drinks, it was imposible [sic]

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for us not to indulge our Yankee propensities, for prying arround [sic] and asking questions. After we drank and having paid 25 cents a glass, for it, we concluded to prosecute our walk rather disgusted at the unsociability of our St. Nicholas friends, who did not seem to be at all communicative. I was rather struck at the variety of trades embraced by the next shanty we entered. It seemed that this gentleman could accomodate [sic] us to anything from a dose of Calomel, a yard of Callico, a frying pan, to a pint of whiskey. We declined purchasing anything, except some cigars, which we went about puffing with very satisfactory feelings. It did not take us a great while to go all over Greytown so we passed the evening, first in one salloon [sic], and then another, looking at the sights. Towards dark and after sundry cocktails, our friend Taylor became very merry, and at the same time, inclined to exercise his combative propensity

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and Captain Bentley (who was religiously & I think somewhat timidly inclined) became very much alarmed, for for [sic] we would get into a difficulty. And I kind of incouraging [sic] Taylor, and tickled to death at his actions and Bentley’s confusion. Taylor walked about, flourished his revolver, and screamed out in Indian yells, that he could whip any man in Greytown. Presently he saw a Jamaica man come riding along on a little goatish looking horse, and Taylor, broke after him (to the horror of Captn Bentley) with a regular Comanche yell, saying I am going to have a ride. The fellow put spurs to his goat and strode off full gallop, Taylor, yelling after him, and I after Taylor, to bring him back. After a good deal of fun we at last got ready to start back to camp. In walking through the place at night, we learnt that the female portions of the town pass their evenings in sitting out in front of their respective doors smoking cigars & ciggarettas [sic]. And the

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men adjourn to the St. Nicolas or some similar place to drink whiskey. I saw many works of the [USS] Cyane’s bombardment, several years ago, in many old palmetto covered shanties of the town. Greytown has about two or three dozen old houses or shanties, only one or two of them, having a single roof, and one of them belongs to Col [Henry L.] Kinney, it stands away off by itself. It has two or three hundred inhabitants or every color from white to black. And I can only compare it to Mrs. Ross’ negro quarter in Barrataria, a short distance from New Orleans. Taylor amused himself during our return trying to turn over the boat. Poor Bentley was in an awful state of mind and swore that if he got back to camp safe he would never go out again as long as he lived. Well we arrived safe at last about 9 o’clock P.M. where I learn that I am detailed as officer of Gaurd [sic] to night.

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Thursday 8th

 This day has been passed first drilling company, reading &c &c, and in the evening I again visited Greytown in company with two gentlemen by the names of Sample, from Ga, and Alexander,[[8]](#footnote-8) from NO. My two friends came out for the purpose of traveling through Central America, for amusement, and to speculate, but as the river is closed and they being unable to carry out their intentions, propose joining my Company as volunteers. We went over to Greytown for the purpose of purchasing some necessaries. We took dinner over there in one of the hotels, passed time quite pleasantly, and in returning to camp we boarded the steamer Texas (that is to leave in the morning) where I wrote a letter to my friend J. C. Castley[[9]](#footnote-9) in New Orleans. After which I returned to camp. It is raining again and we are just as uncomfortable as men can be. Many of the men are commencing to get sick of chills & fevers; something must be done

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for procuring better quarters or we will all die, here, in no time. Our rations (a day) at this time is about two ounces of fat bacon & two crackers, for each man. We will soon starve at this rate. I am thinking strangely of boiling one of my boots tomorrow for dinner.

Friday 9th

 Morning—Old Scott, has at last been prevailed on by Col Sam Lockridge and others (Col L has assumed supreme command of us, as senior officer on the river, by Genl Walker’s orders) to allow us to move our quarters down under an old wood shed, which is a perfect pallace [sic] to us in our present circumstances. We had to ask permission of the British, even before we could occupy the wood shed. Might seems to be right with them. But never mind; I

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hope yet to see the day when I can meet them on equal grounds. They look upon us only as Pirates and outlaws.

 Noon—we are at last safely quartered in the wood shed each company, having a small portion of it, worked out for themselves. A long row of wood puled [sic] up on two sides, to act as barricade with a leaky roof over us, made of palm leaves. But, nevertheless, we feel first rate. The men have dubbed our old quarters “Camp Mizery” [sic]. Our first death occurred to day. A young German died this evening in hard convulsions, from eating some sort of poisonous fruit. We have deposited his body under a little old palm tree, on the sandy Punta Arenas. Sample & myself with permission to pass the Picquet Guard [sic], went about a half a mile up the Point, and had a fine dinner at an old duchman’s [sic] who lives there and cultivates plantains &c. Our dinner

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(to us) was superb, consisting of boiled rice, boiled bananas, ginger bread & London porter. But his charges were awful. We return to camp, I drill the company, and it is night. When Captain Bentley (of Greytown fame) is now amusing himself, squeaking, on an old cracked Flageolet, to the horror of the whole camp.

Saturday 19th

 After drilling the men this morning; I took Sample and dodged the sentinel, and again went and eat dinner at our dutchman’s. In returning, the sentinel caught us. We were just about getting into a sweet little difficulty, when Major [Robert] Ellis came to the rescue. He made them pass me and he gave me a fatherly lecture about leaving camp without permission.

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Stealing pistols, knives, &c seems to be quite the rage in camp now. You can scarcely turn around without hearing some unfortunate devil swearing, blowing, and vowing eternal vengeance, against the man who stole his pistol. Some fellow took a fancy to mine the other night, and as I had almost as soon lost my neck; you can bet high there was no little nois [sic] made about it. After promising to blow the top of the head off of any man I caught with it, I assembled my whole Company, gave them a description and number of it, told them to inspect every pistol they saw, and then offered a reward to the whole camp, for whoever would find it. I quit there, thinking the man who had it, was in rather a delicate position. So this morning when I woke up I felt something hard under the edge of my blanket, and turning it over, “Lo and Behold” there was my identical pistol.

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Sunday 11th

 This day has been passed by me drilling the company, playing cards, lounging around &c &c. It has been raining all day. We are getting use to it now. Consequently, we don’t mind it. Cooking out in the rain is the easiest thing in the world to us. We have procured a little old sheet iron hull of a boat, that had been thrown away; and we have dragged it down to old Scott’s workshop and he and his men are at work patching it up trying to put an engine in it, and an old wheel on the stern. We are waiting for him to finish it so, that we can, proceed on up the country. It is impossible to go by land on account of the lagoons that completely surround us, and the almost impenetrability of the mountainous woods & ravines beyond the lagoons. And it is not reasonable to suppose that out Greazer enemies

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will come down here and give us a boat, or give us any chance to take one.

Night—

 Captn Harris, Sample, & Alexander are all trying to persuade me of the impropriety of sleeping with my boots on (we all sleep together) They say I kick awful and that they will not let me sleep with them if I don’t consent to take of my boots. We compromise it by me sleeping on the outside, next to Alexander, and he insists on having a stick of wood between us. It has rained every night since we arrived here.

The British officers amuse themselves by pulling about, in small boats close to our camp, and occationally [sic] came right in among us, without noticing our sentinels, at all, walk about, through our camp watching everything that is going on, fixes about and look at us as if we were a set of wild animals, and clear out without speaking to any body, half the time.

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Monday 12th

 I am officer of the Guard [sic] to day under Captn [W. W.] Berrington.[[10]](#footnote-10) I had a slight difficulty this morning with a great giant of a fellow; by the name of Hannegan, who seemed very desirous of impressing me with the certainty of his power, of chawing [sic] me right up in a minute. I managed him beautifully thought without having recourse to violent means. The fellow was drunk consequently I merely arrested him and kept him in the gaurd [sic] house all day. Captn Berrington had a slight difficulty with one of the sentinels (a fellow belonging to my Company by the name of Morgan) who for being reprimanded, for something by the Captn, threw down his gun, and broke for the beach as hard as he could ran into the water up to his waist and hollowed lustily, for the British to protect him. We soon

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took him out, tied him, and put him under arrest for punishment. Nothing else worthy of note has transpired to day. Night—

 We had an alarm about midnight, caused by the Picquet [sic] guard in charge of Sergeant Randolph (Co B) having fired two shots. The firing was done, at two of our own men, who were trying to sneak pass the sentinels, to go out to buy liquor. Neither of them were hurt, but miserably frightened. They will be punished for disobedience of orders. As this was our first alarm, there was considerable excitement & confusion in getting the men under arms.

Tuesday 13th

 I have passed nearly all of this day in sleeping, as I was very tired from yesterday’s duty. Drilled company in the evening. There are several more of the officers commencing to drill their Companies now.

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Wednesday 14th

 I have passed this day; drilling and inspecting the Company; strolling arround [sic] camp &c &c. Col Lockridge has managed to get the little cannon from the steamer Texas, and an other [sic] little thing from somewhere else. They are six pounders, I believe, and some of our men are busy manufacturing some wooden wheels, &c to mount them on. Others are engaged in firing up all kinds of amunition [sic], for them. Consisting of old bottles filled with pieces of iron, balls slugs, nails &c &c, and tin pots filled with the same, all rought [sic] iron, balls, made with hammers. We, have already had, so many men, detached from each Company to form an artilery [sic] Company under Lieut Gale. Our men, are now made to keep their arms in good order. We inspect them once a day. From present apearances [sic]; our enemy, is likely to

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have a lively time of it, when we meet them. We frequently hear from Genl Walker but, there are so many reports, and no one knows where they come from, and always in Genl Walker’s favor; that I am enclined [sic] to think they are manufactured, to order. My company are improving rapidly. A great many, are becoming greatly discouraged and disatisfied [sic] at this manner of living, and are sneaking off to Greytown, at every chance, to wait for another Steamer to try and get back home. The imaginative pictures this made of live [sic], very different, from the stern reality. I myself am, considerably disappointed, but as I am here now, I intend to stick to it, and do the best I can. I have one consolation, that is, I feel like, I can stand it as long as any one else, and I bear my part cheerfully; now, that I have started. The honor, is not the kind.

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Thursday 15th

 Last night at about 12 o’clock, reports came in, that, it was strongly supposed, that a large body of the enemy were, then moving down on us. There was considerable confusion in getting the men under arms, as the alarm, was very sudden & unexpected. Companies B & F were marched out from camp about a mile to meet them, were [sic] we stopped several hours, in the hardest kind of a rain (dark as pitch) and marched back to camp (after having become satisfied that it was a false alarm) as wet as drowned rats, and nearly frozen. Every officer in camp, with only Lieuts & one or two Captns, as exceptions, who were in Camp at the time of the alarm, were drunk.

 I have passed this morning Company, at 12 o’clock we had a Batallion [sic] drill, inspection of arms. At which time, the Rules & Regulations of the Nicaraguan

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Army were read, to the men. This evening our artillery force, dragged their two little pieces, out on the Caribbean beach, for the purpose of experimenting with their new amunition [sic]. An emty [sic] barrel, was set up, at a distant of about, two hundred yards and one of our loaded bottles, discharged at it, several times, without any material effect. We then discarded bottles, as useless, for our purpose. Our next trial was with the tin pots (loaded) we succeeded somewhat better and came to the conclusion that they would do, with a little improvement to them, by wrapping them with rope. Our next experiment was to try our home made rought [sic] iron cannon balls. They went it beautiful, and with a beautiful sining [sic] noise too, knocking the barrel into, splinters, ripping up the ground like a plough, bouncing in and out until it would become spent. They suited us to a T. While we were engaged trying our pieces, a British officer was walking on the beach about a mile

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above us and hid from us by a little chunk of bushes, when he saw, our cannon ball come ripping along the beach, through the sand & shells in every direction. He stopped and looked one moment, (like an old sow when you set the dogs on her) and then turned his face to the woods, and ran as if the devil was after him. Night.

I went with a reconoitering [sic] party under Lieut Homan[[11]](#footnote-11) & Captn Thomson some miles up the river, they had returned twice, that night being unable to steer the current of the San Juan. I had asked Col Lockridge to allow me to go, and I would take a riffle [sic] & pull an oar, but he would not let me, until they returned, the second time, he then let me go. We went up as far as we wanted to, the last trip, and returned near morning. No adventure the work, like to have killed me.

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Friday 16th

 I passed this morning drilling the Company. We are acknowledged the best drilled Company on the river. There have been considerable alterations made by disposing of some of the officers, in the Ranks, the charges against them being incompetency to command. And dividing their men with the rest of the companies. 1st Lieut Coalman [sic] of Co E has been apointed [sic] 2nd Lieut of our Co. He acted right badly at first and the men dislike him very much, but we are getting on first rate now. Lieut [A. R.] Coleman is trying to redeem himself.

This evening, I again received permission, and in company with Samples, went up and had dinner with our friend the Dutchman. After we had eaten our fill of fried plantains, boiled rice &c &c, we amused ourselves by develing our lanlord [sic]. He did not seem at all pleased with our familiarity, but suffered it, because he was affraid [sic] he would loose [sic] custom.

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Saturday 17th

 At 12 o’clock A.M. to day, we were visited by some British officers bringing an order to us, from their admiral stating that we must assemble every man we had for the purpose of having an article of their own, read to them. Being the weaker party, we were necesiated [sic] to submit. After all the men were assembled, the British officers then went up and down the ranks reading an article to them, the purpose of which, was as follows.

 If there are any of Great Britain’s subjects among you step out; or subjects of any nations, who wish to leave the Nicaraguan cause, step out; and we will not only give you protection, but we will furnish you means of returning home. And hereafter, any of you; who become tired of the cause come

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to us, and we will protect and furnish you means of returning to your homes.

 About thirteen cowardly despicable, scoundrels (whose courage had all oozed out went [sic] they saw the reality of war) consisting of Ireish [sic], Dutch & one Frenchman, steped [sic] out, and claimed their protection. Some of them naturalized citizens of the United States, who had been getting their bread in our land for years back. These fellows stepped out as English subjects. But thank Heaven they did not get one American. Of course we had fellows, who were cowardly and as soon as they became tired or affraid [sic] to stay longer, they deserted, or joined the British at every oportunity [sic]. Genl Wheat[[12]](#footnote-12) was up on top of an old Barge (laying in the river) talking to the british [sic], on a stump smack, like a father. He railed against the injustice of the act, and the audacity

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of the British in interfering with us. He reminded them of how they would doff their hats to us, if we stood on equal grounds, but as we were a small & poorly equipped party, he knew, that as we were not recognized by the U.S.; it would be impossible, for the British to resist the temptation of displaying their valor, and at the same time, revenge themselves and us for many old grudges they had against the stars & stripes. He also reminded them of Bunker Hill, New Orleans; and many other times that are past; and he spoke of the future in a manner that made their cheeks redden; although, they tried to appear stoicly [sic] indifferent. He said he expected yet to live to revenge himself for their audacity by meeting them on equal grounds.

 While the Genl was railing at them from the top of the barge, some of our boys were

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amusing themselves by making speaches [sic] each one, on his own hook, every one tending to very fatherly advice, to the Britons. And others were amusing themselves, by snorting at, kicking & thumping arround [sic] those cowardly scamps, that had deserted us. The British officers had to go with them to their respective quarters to get their duds, to keep our men from chawing [sic] them completely up. As they started into my quarters to get the luggage of several who had left my company, I cautioned my men to watch them all for they would steal the first thing they got their hands on. One of them had the impudence to tell me he would not steal; and one of the officers said he would not permit such insolence and put his hand on his sword. But before he could begin to draw it; I had my revolver cocked in his face, and told him to help himself. Col Lockridge, Major Ellis & several succeeded in disarming me, and made an apology to them

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for my conduct. They said I was nothing but a boy and rather impulsive, and asked him to excuse me. I would not have done it to have saved England from sinking. He had the fource [sic] and passion to have hung me up at the yard or not if he had chosen but he graciously excused me. I asked him no difference.

 I passed this morning in drilling company.

Sunday 18th

 Last night I was taken suddenly very sick with cramp collic from something I eat [sic] yesterday I suppose. I really thought I was going to die, but a mustard plaster procured by Sergeant Drayton;[[13]](#footnote-13) relieved me after some time. I then missed the kind attentions of the loved ones at home more than ever since I left. Thanks to heaven I am well enough to day to drill Co.

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Monday 19th

 I am detailed as officer of the Gaurd [sic] to day. The day was passed pleasantly enough every thing being quiet, but to night is as dark as pitch; raining very hard, and the breakers, running knee deep, foaming and roaring over the beach where some of our sentinels are, and I am necesiated [sic] to trudge along stumbling and falling; feeling about in the dark, an my cheerless & lonely round of visits all night. The wind blowing so hard, that every time a wave recides [sic], leaving the sandy beach dry for an instant; the wet sand is blown in such clouds, that it feels like small shot when ~~they~~ it strikes you in the face. It is absolutely horible [sic] to stand or fall about in the dark, and have your eyes, nose, mouth & hair covered with sand and it running down your back. It is far preferable to me to be struck up for a company of mini muskets, to practice at.

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And another great danger is of not being able to hear (for the noise) the sentinel’s hails; and not answering, “he would be likely to shoot at a fellow.” Or I am likely to run suddenly up on some fool and frighten him so, that he would shoot me without hailing. But it is to be hoped that all will yet be well.

Tuesday 20th

 Well my disagreeable night is over and I have washed and sorter [sic] got some of the sand out of my hair & eyes, so I will turn in and try to get some rest. Captn [Robert] Harris has just left camp. He says for a deer hunt; but I know there is no deer on Punta Arenas. But we will see what he kills.

 Evening—I have rested finely, and I feel first rate. I now feel capable of doing justice to some venison, that is before me, and which Captn Harris

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says he killed. But he took particular care, to skin & cut it up in small pieces, before bringing it to camp. And as he only brought it carefully concealed in a bag; and taste and every thing considered; I am inclined to think it is one of old Scott’s pigs. But at any rate, I have eat [sic] my share of it, and can truly say, it was splendid.

 Samples presented me with a blue flannel shirt to day, and one of the artillery men, by the name of Clark, and who was detached from my Company, is engaged in sewing pockets in it for me at this time.

 Our little steamer is nearly ready for us. We expect to start up the river in a few days.

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Wednesday 21st

 I drilled Company this morning, at 3 o’clock this evening we had another Battallion [sic] drill, our parrade [sic] ground is the Beach, where every step a person takes, you sink in sand up to your ankles. So you can imagine what a pleasant time we have, exercising for two hours.

 This evening we again tried our artillery, and suceeded [sic] finely. To hear the beautiful humming sound of our home made balls, and the whistle of our canister, makes our men feel kind o hostile; it sorter gets my injun [Indian] blood up.

 This evening I started on a reconnoitering expedition returned about midnight, no adventure.

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Thursday 22nd

 We had quite an amusing scean [sic] in camp this morning by one of our men, trying to desert. The circumstances are these. Col Lockridge has a small bungo, which he purchased a few days ago, for the purpose of traveling over to Greytown, or on business any where. As it is the only one we have when ever he comes to camp in it, he forbids any one from even getting into it. This morning as his boat was made fast to a little wharfe [sic] we have, and a party of our men standing about on the wharfe, a fellow’s hat blew overboard in the harbor. A Yankee looking individual sprang into Col Lockridge’s boat, in sight of the whole camp, and started off to get the hat, as the wind was blowing pretty hard the hat continued to drift slowly outward. Our friend in the bungo struck out for the hat, and seemed to be making desperate efforts to recover it, but all the time he was dodging round & round the hat, and it drifting

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out. No one suspected for an instant, but what his object was safely to recover the hat, but he quickly undeceived us all, for after drifting out about one hundred yards, he turned the bow of his craft towards an English Man of War that was laying about a mile & a half out in the harbor, and he struck out like the old nick.[[14]](#footnote-14) Every one was so confounded at the impudence of the thing, that it was several minutes before a word was spoken. Col L who had seen the fellow all the time, then commenced, and the way he did curse & fume about his boat was a caution. There was an old skift [sic] laying close by nearly half full of water & six oars in it. I soon had it, loose and hallowed for six stout fellows to jump in, I had them in a moment & Col Lockridge too. I turned her bow towards him and ordered the men to jerk her up. We were in a little

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less than no time after him like a lot of Blood hounds, giving an indian war hoop occationally [sic], to scare him to death, if we did not catch him. Every now and then he would look behind for an instant, and turn and redouble his efforts. But in spite of it all, we gained on him, and caught him by his coat and pulled him off the ladder, that the English threw out to him. After jerking him down in our boat, he remarked very insecently [sic], that he had done the best he could under the circumstances. One of the men remarked to him yes, “You have done some tall pulling and no mistake” says he, “I guess you could not have acted any better than I did for I could not turn the boat arround [sic] to save my life. I was only coming over here to wait for some of you to come after me.” The very impudence of his excuse made Col Lockridge laugh. He pretended to be very innocent and became offended at them for saying he was going to desert.

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We carried him back to camp midst the shouting of the men who, as soon as they heard his excuse just screamed. He said that he would like to see any of them do any better; and tried to prove philosophically, that it was impossible for him to turn the boat arround [sic]. We all had quite a jolly laugh at his trip, failure, & reasoning and Wilmot laughed as loud as any of the rest. We turned him loose without punishment, as his is Death, and it will act badly on the minds of the men, and cause many more desertions. And as the British would hardly permit us to carry out that sentence here, as he belongs to my Company, I have ordered the rest of the boys to shun him and treat him as if he was disgraced, until by his actions he proved that he was sorry, and had redeemed himself. Then I told him, that he should be reinstated in the good opinion of the Company.

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Evening

 We have just launched our little steamer named her the Rescue and I was one of the few who took the first little trip for the purpose of trying her. She runs pretty well, and I think we may suceed [sic] in yet doing wonders with her. We have received orders, to prepare everything, to embark tomorrow morning. I am apointed [sic] officer of the Guard again to night; I do not think it is exactly fair to put me on again, for it has only been two nights since I was on before and if anything to night seems as if will be as disapruble [sic] as my last was. But I must obey orders, particularly, when they deliver them with flattering remarks &c &c. It is expected as this will be our last night on the point, many of the men will endeavor to have; and every thing considered, our sentinels are doubled.

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Friday 23rd

 Last night was one of the most unpleasant I have ever passed. My duty as officer of the gaurd [sic] placed me in a position to apreciate [sic] fully all the glory of fillabustering [sic], in the fullest scence [sic] of the term. But thank heaven it is over at last; I am not as a drowned rat, my whole physical man, aches from my exercise last evening and my clothes, eyes, hair; I might say my whole body is a complete mess (all that is visible of me) of wet sand; which blew in perfect showers, all over bleak Punta Arenas, all last night. I gave, a partial description, a few pages back of one of those stormy night, we sometimes experience here; so I will only say, that the last greatly exceeded the first. And I do continuously say, “Heaven deliver me from weather such. For I had rather run the

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Gauntlet though a thousand Costa Ricans than, be again placed, for as long a time, in the same position, that I was last night. I think, it will take me a week at least, to get the sand out of my eyes, hair and ears.

 This morning at 7 o’clock we left Punta Arenas; towing and old Launch, or Barge, and several Bungos of a large size. Our whole fource [sic] numbering about two hundred men including about fifty from N.Y. who came out a few days ago, under Gen’l Wheat. We are now (7 ½ o’clock) just oposite [sic] Camp Mizery [sic]; and going along slowly. 11 o’clock A.M. We have arrived at the mouth of a small river, running, into the San Juan; and about six or eight miles above Greytown; called the San Juanita [Juanillo]. Col Lockridge (who has supreme command) and the other officers, have decided to leave the Barge & Bungoes anchored here, and take, a small fource [sic] of men of the Rescue, and go up and reconnoiter the San Juanita before proceeding

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any further up the San Juan. I am left on the Barge. I have just received permission to take a small canoe and one man and go ashore. To pass time, and to do a little scouting, on my own hook.

 Night.

 I returned, from my scout to day, in a very short time, as I did not see much fun in walking about through the Chaparal, and my curiosity was soon satisfied with that part of Nicaragua. The steamer has just returned and report every thing all right on the Goose as far as the San Juanita is navagable [sic]. We have concluded to remain here, all night, and proceed on up in the morning. It is extremely unpleasant to us to pass the night this way; as there is hardly room for us to stand up, not to speak~~ing~~ of laying down; and it is raining, and the water is pooring [sic] through the

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old rotten roofs of our crafts, in a thousand different streams. And we are rather hungry; but, I suppose as we have started we must grin and bear it, and fight hard, for the good things we are promised, when we get up in the country. We left our sick men behind on Punta Arenas.

Saturday 24th

 Some how or another we managed to get through, last night, and here were are at 7 o’clock, again proceeding on up the river. We are getting along quite slowly, as, the current of the river is very swift, and the little Rescue, is grunting & wheazing [sic], under a thundering load. We again threw out the anchor, about two miles, from where we started from this morning. For the purpose of letting the Rescue, and party, reconoitre [sic] the river, same distance above us. I am ordered by Col Lockridge to take one man and a Bungo and return to the mouth of the San Juanita

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and remain there all day, and stop, or give communication, of any Boats, or men, that may pass that way.

 10 o’clock A.M.

 Wilkins[[15]](#footnote-15) of Natchez & (of Captn Kingwells[[16]](#footnote-16) Co) and myself, are now at the mouth of the river, in a good commanding position, where we can see the approach of anything from eather [sic] of the rivers, and not be seen ourselves. It has been raining all the morning, and bids fair to continue all day. We have each a pretty good over coat, which turns rain pretty well; and with them we manage to keep our rifles, & pistols, & the upper parts of our bodies dry. We have to bail our boat out every half hour or so, from the rain. There are several enormous alegators [sic], laying arround [sic] us, and I am sorely tempted to try the quality of my Mississippi Rifle on one of them

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But it would not do to make the slightest noise, for we might loose eather [sic] a prisoner or so, or our lives by it, consequently, my friends (the alegators) [sic] are perfectly secure from my half ounce ball.

 Night.

 Well it is about time, to start for the Launch. We have had the pleasure of, taking two Bungoes, with five prisoners two Dutchmen & three Jamaca [sic] negroes. They pretend to be going to Greytown for the purpose of selling fruit, but they may be spies, so I’ll take them with me, to be overhauled by Col Sam Lockridge & others. We arrived safe at the launch, in good time, and eat [sic] a slice of raw fat Bacon & our cracker for our suppers, after having eat [sic] but two crackers all day. The steamer has not returned.

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Sunday 25th

 Some short time after we returned last night, we were considerably alarmed by a great roaring noise; akin of hamering [sic], snaping [sic], as if trees were being cut down; falling, &c &c. And as our steamer had not returned we felt quite uneasy. This noise proceeded from the right shore, and seemed to be right at us almost. For awhile, we thought it, was, a large body of the enemy, moving down on us. Many of our men said they had heard talking, from the shore. We were anchored in the middle of the river, (which, at this place is about a quarter of a mile wide) without the power of moving so we just prepared for the worst; and waited and listened in breathless silence at the (them) awful noise; for the issue. It was one of the darkest nights I have ever known; and I think, from the nervousness & ocational [sic] whispering among the men; that many thought it was the last night we would

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ever pass. The current was running like a mill sluice. About the hour of 10 o’clock, as near as I can guess; I heard a dull, plunge in the water, near the bow of the Launch, and a moment afterwards; the cry of man overboard. At the time, I was laying on a small cannoe [sic], that, was hauled up in the stern of the launch. I jumped up, shoved my boat into the water, snatched a paddle from a man and started off in the dark, to save him is possible. I heard him come up, some distance below, make a fine splurges and an attempt to scream and then came a dreadful silence. As I could not see an inch before my nose, I could only pull as near the place where I had heard him as I could guess, and listen, for him to rise again. All this time, I was going down stream, at an awful rate; I heard him again, and this time, he only made a kind of splunge [sic] and I heard no more. I hallowed, “where are you” all the time, but no answer came. I continued to pull to the

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place where I had last heard him and was drifting on down, about to give him up, when something came up, right under the boat. I reached under, and shure [sic] enough, there he was. I grabbed his head above water. As my boat was extremely small, and the least jostle necessary to turn it over, I had to be very careful about lifting him in. So I raised his head, and held him off, a little to give him a talking to before proceeding any further. But the moment he felt the boat, he grabbed right hold of it, and dipped her, half full of water. He seemed to be perfectly senseless as well as speechless. I managed by ballancing [sic] him, to finally get him in, and stretched out in the bottom of the boat. I then commenced to think about getting back to the launch, which, as near as I can judge, was about a mile above us. I took my seat, and pulled

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for the shore, I then found out, what the great noise was. The river, has taken, a very sudden rise, and was running roaring & carrying old dead trees & limbs, snapping, and passing at an awful rate, through the woods. I pulled until I had nearly killed myself, and I found it absolutely impossible for one to make any headway. I then caught hold of the broken trees (which overhang this bank for miles along and are so thick; it is almost imposible [sic] to get to the shore through them) and tried to pull up by them, but they cut my hands, so, that I was compelled to let go. As I was only going backwards all the time, here, I concluded to try the other side of the river, I drifted considerable in crossing, but I made the other shore, at last, and caught hold of some grass to told on and rest awhile. I found this side was nothing but a kind of marshy prairie, with grass growing all along the river.

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I was as near, being worn out, as I have ever been, in my life, and I concluded if posible [sic], to wake up my man and make him help me, if he was not stone dead. He had already begun to show signs of returning animation, and as near as I could calculate, had thrown up several gallons of water. I asked him if he felt able to work, or assist me in the least in returning; He returned a kind of grumble for an answer; and not being in the best humor in the wourld [sic]; I gave him a pretty lively slap on his rear with my paddle, and told him to get up, and try, and help me; he got up, threw up more water, and seemed to be perfectly scenceless [sic]; for he did not understand (or would not) a single thing I told him. So as this was no time for trifeling [sic] I gave him another dose of my paddle to see if I could not

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bring him to his sences [sic]. I finally got him so, that, he understood, how to catch hold of the grass, and pull along while I worked at the paddle (I had but one paddle in the boat). On this way, stopping to rest, ocationally [sic], we finally reached the launch, I as near dead as he was, for I had worked myself nearly to death. When I saw him this morning; he was regaleing [sic] himself with a cracker; I asked him how he felt, “and remarked that I thought he had swallowed enough water to last him a month.” He replied, “Oh yes Lieut, if you no come so soon; I never eats no more cracker. (He was a Dutchman) That was the only acknowledgement he made me. They complements of the men and officers, well repaid me for the act, not, speaking of my own contience [sic].

 The steamer returned this morning, after having left nearly all the boys at a ranch about eight miles, this side. The Fort Serapiqui, which is in posession [sic] of

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of [sic] the enemy. 10 o’clock, the ballance [sic] of us, with the Launch, are now proceeding on up the river, being towed by the steamer.

 5 o’clock P.M.

We have just arrived at the Ranch, which, is situated, right on the river, in a good, and commanding position. We took the residents, one man, and woman prisoners, only to keep them from giving away information, in regard to us, or our movements to the Costa Ricans, at the above Fort. In coming up the river to day, I have been sent out several times, to fetch in a bungo loaded with fruits, whose owners deserted them, at sight of the Fillabusters [sic]. I have just been told by Col Lockridge that I must, consider, myself detached from my Company, to take command of all scouting & foraging parties. Lieut Howell acting in my place, temporarily.

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I am very much pleased at the exchange, if I can only get some of my own boys with me. Agt Scott, fell overboard this morning coming up the river, and passed clear through between the launch, and the steamer, and a young man, by the name of Robinson, who was sitting in a Bungo, away behind, caught him, as he rose, and saved his life.

 I just saw Col Frank Anderson, shot, through the shoulder, acdidentally [sic], by a private named Devine who was mounting gaurd [sic] at the time. Devine was bucked & gaged [sic] to await punishment, but, as the wound is not very serious, and it being an accident, Col Anderson, has pardoned him. Young Wilkins, was bucked this evening, with his seargeant [sic] for refusing to go on duty. He being the first one bucked in this expedition. Now, that, we are away from the British, and the men have no chance to desert; things will be pretty strict.

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Monday, 26th

 Our new quarters has been named Fort Anderson, in honor of Col Frank Anderson. Our men, have completely stripped the plantain patch, and killed and eat [sic] nearly all the chickens, belonging to the natives who we found here. But as quite a number of Greazers retreated from this Ranch, to the woods, on our apearance [sic], it is not much to be wondered at, if everything is confiscated by the Fillabusters [sic]. Captn Sleight, with his german Company, is now digging trenches, and throwing up breastworks arround [sic] our new fort. And the ballance [sic] of our companies, are occupied erecting temporary huts to sleep in, and to partially shelter them from the rain. The weather is very disagreable [sic], raining all the time, and the men, are working in mud nearly knee deep. The river here is about a half mile wide and our old Launch

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is anchored opposite the Fort, nearly to the other side of the river, for the purpose of stopping every craft that attempts to pass, to cut off communication of the enemy above us with Greytown &c &c. I am in command & have one four pounder with the artillerymen, to manage it, sixteen rifles, several Bungoes, and men, to pull them. We also have the sick abord [sic] with two phisitians [sic]. I have sentinels pacing the deck all the time. Our Launch leaks a little, but, still, at present, we are, a little better off than those on shore. I have one part, of the Launch, portioned of [sic] for the sick, and every thing is now arranged to my satisfaction. I am sorry, that, it is absolutely necessary, to have, the sick abord [sic] with us, for I hate very much, to see so much suffering, and I am sure it discouraged, the rest of the men. Our meals are cooked on shore, and I send two men in a Bungo, for them every time. My old Company B continues to prepare my meals.

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and my man of all work, (Mr Hudson, of Nashville, Tennesee) [sic] goes after them for me. My dinner, to day was rather sumtuous, [sic] in comparison, to my general fare. It consisted of fried banannas [sic], boiled bacon, rice, soup, & crackers. High living for a Fillabuster [sic]. Captn Harris is affraid [sic] I will get the gout.

Tuesday 29th

 Our little steamer left us early this morning to return to Greytown to bring up provision &c &c. We expect her back, to night, as the distance is only thirty miles. This day has been passed in getting every thing regulated, &c &c. Some of the men, got permission and went a hunting. They killed some squirrels & some fowls which, they call wild turkeys & gueanes [sic]. It has put me in an awful humor to go to, and the first chance I get, I am off,

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on a hunt to. Many of our men have been greatly disappointed, in their anticipation, in coming out here, and are becoming more & more discouraged every day. And the consequence, is that, desertions, occur, very frequently with us. They all try to get, to Greytown, for there, they are protected & sent off by the British.

Wednesday 28th

 The Rescue returned, from Greytown late last night. The boys, who went on her, say that they saw many of our deserters, there, waiting to be sent home by the English. Our steamer, with Companies B & F and one piece of artilery [sic], went up, to reconoiter [sic] Fort Serapique to day. They approached the Fort within several, hundred yards before they were discovered, on account of a bend in the river. A great many of the enemy were, washing clothes, in the river, some bathing & swimming

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around, but as soon as they caught a glimpse of our steamer the alarm spread like, wild fire and the way they got out of that water and got over and through those Barracades [sic], was a caution. They forgot about ~~about~~ every thing but saving their Bacon, it seemed; For it was several minutes before the steamer was fired on. Genl Wheat & Col Lockridge gave them several loads of canister & round shot, killing & wounding a few of them, and dropped down the river without a scratch. The shots from the Fort fell all around but, none struck our little steamer. She then returned, to Fort Anderson.

 To day while I was ashore, eating dinner with some of the officers, a large raft of drift wood ran against the Launch and broke her anchor, and was carrying it, men and all

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down the river, at, an awful rate. The men set up, a hallowing for help from shore, like, a set of darn fools, instead, of trying to help themselves. I was eating dinner at the time, and had to leave, right in the middle of it. I jumped into, my Bungo, and soon overtook them. The moment, I stepped abord [sic], Dr [F. E.] Charlton came to meet me saying Lieut, I am glad you are come, then turning to the crowd, said, “I don’t care a dam if she drifts to h—ll [hell], now.” I soon had all the cooking pots, tin pans, iron rods, and every heavy article I could lay my hands on made fast, together, fastened, on to the anchor chain, and thrown overboard. She dragged, a little, further, and stopped altogether, about a mile and a half, below the Fort. The officers at the Fort, were all gathered, on the bank, watching and laughing, at the way the men hallowed, some of them finally got into a Bungo to come

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and help us but the amount of it, was that, the current carried them below us and they could not get back until we threw out a line to them. So we indulged in a laugh at their expense. So, there, we all stayed, together until the steamer, came and towed us back, and reanchored [sic] us in our old quarters. Yesterday, evening I sent two men ashore, for a load of mud, to make a fire place, on our Launch. As they were returning; they capsized and no doubt, would have been drowned, but, they were rescued, by Captn Charley (of the steamer) and myself, who pulled another bungo out fortunately, in time to save them. Old Dr. Charlton bothers me, nearly to death, for he wants to go ashore, about forty times a day, and never will go unless I will sit in the bungo; if I do nothing, but

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sit there and look at him. He says he feels perfectly safe if I am with him.

Evening—

 I have just had a complete cleaning up of the Launch, and everything is in tip top order. I have it washed down, every day. I have had the satisfaction of having Col Lockridge to approve of every thing I have done. I am getting on famously. I am frequently visited by the officers on shore, and I am frequently over, there, to dinner with some of them.

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 Thursday 29th

Our steamer has made another trip to Greytown for provision which is kept in an old warehouse owned by old Scott. She brings back plenty of news (by way of Aspenwall) of the various successes of Genl Walker &c &c. I am still under the impression that the news is manufactured, for effect. I took breakfast with Captn Harris at his quarters on shore. It consisted of ripe Banannas [sic] & Plantains fried, Hikikis (a species of wild potatoe) boiled, fried ham, coffee &c &c, of which I eat with no little relish. We do not know what moment we shall be attacked by, or attack the enemy. We had another alarm last night, which turned out to be a false one. I have passed the day, partly on shore, and partly on the Launch, looking around and taking it easy.

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Friday 30th

 This morning I was ordered by Col Lockridge to take a Bungo, Captn Thompson for a guide none came for me now, and one man, and proceed along the river in the direction of Fort Serapiqui, and reconnoitre [sic], as far as practicable. I proceeded up, to within about three or four hundred yards of the Fort, were fired on by the Picquett from shore, when Captn Thompson deemed it advisable to return their balls did us no further damage than sprinkle us with a little water as they passed. I stopped at a ranch on the river, as we returned and were hospitably entertained by a dark senora, with dried venison, Banannas [sic] & Pinolu (a kind of drink manufactured from burned corn) (It is cooling and quite pleasant to the taste). While several dark browed, savage looking fellows threw unwelcome glances at us. From the top of a pile of wood, where one was stretched, and several hamocks [sic]

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swung around the place. They are very uncommunicative and only answer in monosyllables when adressed [sic]. They take good care however, to not be impertinent. I have found my cannon experience to be a great advantage to me.

 Saturday 31st

 I went on a hunting expedition this morning and as Col Lockridge is the only officer, who has any authority over me, and he being out of camp, I went on my authority without asking permission of any one. I had separated from my party and had killed two monkeys and several squirrels and was very busy, shooting as fast as I could load (the squirrels were as thick as peas in a pot) when here came two fellows, just as hard as they could rip through the woods to tell me, to go instantly to camp, that Col L. wanted me.

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The fact was he had come while I was out and from what the men said I judged he was in a pretty tall passion on account of me being gone. I retraced my steps to the camp with my very pleasant feelings; not knowing what punishment was in store for me. By the time I arrived at Camp Col L. had gone into his quarters to await my arrival. He had ordered that I should be notified to report to him as soon as I came. The compassionate manner in which the men looked at me, when I came in, in no-wise tended to allay my uneasyness [sic]. I had no excuse to offer, and I made up my mind to face the music, and try and smooth things over. I walked into his quarters with a bunch of squirrels in my hand, and remarked in a kind of jockularly [sic] way, “Col? I have a fine bunch of squirrels for your dinner,” He looked at

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me very sternly, for some time without speaking; until I thought it time to say something else. So, says I, “Yes, sir, They are very fat, look at them Col,” and I held them up before him. He didn’t appear to notice them; But I saw the sterness [sic] sorter leaving his face; and I felt encouraged. Says he, “Who gave you permission to leave Camp Sir? Nobody sir” you were not here, and there being no one else here for me to ask, I thought I would go a short distance in the woods and kill some squirrels for your dinner,” (I was after them squirrels for A. C. Allen Esqr, and expected to get back, before the Col) ~~cam~~ “Ain’t they in splendid order Col?” He just smiled perceptibly; and remarked “I’ll excuse you this time; but the next time such a breach of orders occur, there will be an example made.” “How will you have these squirrels cooked, Col?” “Dam, [sic] those squirrels

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sir, go to your quarters.” (with a broad grin, lighting-up his stern features) and hold yourself in readiness for orders.”

 It is needless to say, “Those squirrels were broiled and despatched to the Col’s Quarters at dinner time, with the complements of Lieut Allen.

 There have been considerable alteration to day, in some of the Companies, by disposing of many of their officers. One Captn has been reduced to a Lieutcy and five Lieuts have been reduced to the ranks. The charges are incompetancy [sic] to command. Leaving only three or four Captains & as many Lieuts, who still retain their original positions. It seems very hard that men, who have taken such pains to raise Companies should be treated in this way now, when the[y] have no power to help themselves. But still in military law, it is first, in some

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of these cases. All the Lieuts, reported to me, on board the Launch for duty; to save their feelings I suppose, by giving them light duties to commence with.

Yesterday was the first day that has been, that it did not rain, scince [sic] we have been in the country. Nicaragua is truly a great country, in some things.

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February 1st 1857

Sunday

Last night about 10 o’clock one of my sentinels hailed a bungo, supposed to contain a number of our Greazer foes; who seemed to be endeavoring to pass us towards Greytown. Not receiving an answer, He fired, and they not coming to for that, I ordered out my Bungo, jumped in, with three men & rifles & gave chase. I followed them several miles, but, it being very dark, and they having the start of me, they managed to escape.

 I have been ordered to day about noon, by a note from Head Quarters to deliver up my Command on the Launch to Lieut Gale of the artillery; stating that my services are required more on shore than they are on the Launch. I proposed three cheers for Lieut Gale after a few words to the boys, and after leaving received the same

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mark of respect, I left, with many invitations to return, and partak [sic] of their limited Hospitality whenever I could make it convenient.

 Evening

 I have just returned from a reconnoitering & foraging expedition, from the neighborhood of Fort Serapiqui. I took a very good prize, a long Bungo laden with arms, amunition [sic], Boots, shoes, clothes, cigars, cooking utensils, &c &c &c. I took also three bottles of French brandy, several boxes of sardines & 90 cents in very queer coins. All of the latter I managed to stow away in my men’s pockets, for private use well knowing that if I didn’t (somebody else, whose right, was not as good as mine) would. We took the bungo without fighting as, our enemy (double our number) saw, we were bound to have

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it anyhow, concluded that the best way for them to do was to run her ashore, and leave it and save their own Bacon.

 When we returned to Camp towing our prize (I felt like George Washington after Cornwallis surrendered to him) the whole Camp officers and all, all gathered on the bluff and saluted us with three cheers. 1st prize just down to my credit.

1. Robert H. Ellis. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robert A. Harris, born in Florida, during the Civil War was a captain in Company A, First Louisiana Battalion, CSA. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. E. S. Bentley, Mississippi farmer. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Col. Frank P. Mancousos, born in Florida of Hispanic origin. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A German who died in the explosion of the steamer J. N. Scott. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Marshall Taylor, after being wounded in Nicaragua, returned to his native Lafayette, Indiana, ill with malaria, where he died in 1879. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A double-edged steel-bladed dagger. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Thomas Alexander, was killed in the explosion of the steamer J. N. Scott. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. John C. Castley, born in Virginia in 1835. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. W. W. Barrington was injured in the explosion of the steamer J. N. Scott. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Wake Holman, from Owen Co., Ky. A veteran of the Mexican War and the 1850 Lopez expedition. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Chatham Roberdeau Wheat. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A. Drayton, from Charleston, S.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The devil. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. William Henry Wilkins (Aug. 23, 1840-May 3, 1882), interred in Natchez City Cemetery. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. John W. Kingswell, from Kentucky. Had served in Nicaragua in 1856 and returned on the Texas in Jan. 1857. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)