

WASHINGTON, JULY 7, 1857

*To the Editors of the National Intelligencer.*

GENTLEMEN: Seeing in your morning's issue a letter written by one TITUS, so-called Colonel, which would be likely to mislead many persons who have not read my report to President WALKER of my operations while commanding the Nicaraguan forces on the San Juan river, I send you a copy of said report, in the hope that an honorable spirit of fair play will cause you to publish at least that portion of it which refers to TITUS. In justice to myself and the men I had the honor to command I claim an impartial hearing, more especially as this is the last time I shall refer to the matter in any way in the public prints. Yours, S. A. LOCKRIDGE.

*Extract from the Report above referred to*

Knowing that it was unnecessary to follow the retreating force of the enemy, I at once prepared to run up and cut off any communication from the river; and for this purpose, after securing our ammunition and stores, I took on board Col. Titus and 180 men, with two pieces of artillery, and started for Castillo Rapids, expecting to take the place by surprise and get all the river steamers in my possession; but when I arrived at Machuca Rapids, twelve miles below, I found the Morgan had just crossed and was going at her greatest speed; and I further learned that the fort was only occupied by twenty five men, under command of Capt. Couty, an Englishman. I ran up within one mile of the fort and landed the men who went on shore under command of Titus and Gen. R. C. Wheat. My health and the wound in my leg, received in Granada when we relieved Gen. Henningsen, prevented me from being able to command in person. My orders were to charge the place at once and save the steamers if possible, which could easily have been done if it had not been for the treachery and cowardice of Col. Titus. They succeeded in cutting loose the *J. N. Scott*, which was set on fire by the enemy, and she floated down out of the range of the enemy's guns, while the *Machuca* was so far gone she burnt to the water's edge, although our men did every thing in their power to save her. The fort was now thoroughly invested, and our men had all the buildings in their possession, except the main fort and the enemy had ceased firing. I then, as we had no provisions, ran down to Serapiqui, thinking to carry up Col. Anderson and all the force, except a small guard, and at once attack Fort San Carlos before the enemy knew of the fall of Serapiqui. Gen. Wheat, thinking all was safe, desired to go down after some artillery of larger size than I had previously taken up to use against Fort San Carlos, also came on board. I then sent orders to Col. Titus that I would return as quick as possible, and to occupy the fort at once, and send out a large force up the river to seize upon any steamer which might come down with provisions or otherwise from the lake, and I also informed him where she would land, &c. He having one hundred and sixty men with him on shore, I could not believe but that he could have held his position against ten times his number.

I then ran down to Serapiqui, and, before I was half the distance, the flues in the boilers of my steamer were leaking so badly I found I never would get back without repairing them, as she would not stem an ordinary current at the time I arrived at Serapiqui. After leaving orders with Col. Anderson to have every thing ready, I hastened to this place, and upon my arrival I was at once surrounded by five gunboats from her Majesty's ships, they having cannon in the bows of all, with small arms and cutlasses, and in the most menacing manner called for the officer in command. I came out of the state-room, unwell as I was, and inquired what they wanted. They informed me that they had orders from their superior officer in the harbor to stop the steamer, and prevent any repairs being made upon her until I would submit to an investigation as to what some deserters had said of me on the San Juan. I requested their demand to be made in writing, and said I was ready to submit any of my acts to the world. This they refused. I then wished to have the steamer repaired and at once demand the investigation, informing them how important it was for me to return to my command; but I was denied this, and for four hours waited to see what would be done in the matter. In the meantime I could do nothing towards preparing to return up the river. They then informed me that if I would allow them to call my men together and offer them protection, they would allow me to return with such as did not desire to go home. Finding they were determined on holding me until the demand was submitted to, I called the men together, about twenty in number, when Captain De Horsey, of the gunboat *Victor*, who was the officer sent to perform this disgraceful as well as unlawful duty, informed them that it was the wish of his senior officer that every man under my command would leave, and in the event of their doing so they should all be sent home free of cost.

He said it was impossible for me to succeed, that there was great danger of my being cut off from this port; that you were so cut to pieces that you could not sustain yourself for a month longer in Nicaragua; and that your position was misrepresented by me and others for effect. Upon this five men walked out, and were taken on board the *Victor*. I was then informed that I might proceed up the river, which I did as soon as the repairs on the steamer could be made. In attempting to cross the bars of the lower San Juan at night, which is hardly ever done in low water, I had one of the rudders carried away, which detained me another twelve hours, all of which might have been avoided if I had not been stopped by the English authorities, described as above. This detention also caused me to arrive at Castillo Rapids by a few hours later than I expected, and the consequence was that Col. Titus, not having obeyed my orders in taking the fort at once, gave them twenty-four's armistice, and actually allowed them to send out a courier to submit the matter to Gen. Mora at San Carlos—the very thing I would not have allowed under any circumstances if I had been there. The Costa Rican force was only twenty-one men.

Col. Titus had all the buildings except the main fort in possession, and not a single shot had been fired from either side until the reinforcements arrived from Fort San Carlos, only sixty-five strong. Without making any stand, Col. Titus ordered a retreat, and allowed the enemy to march into the fort, with a loss on our side of only two men killed and four or five wounded. The loss of the enemy was very trifling. When I arrived Titus and all his men were on the *J. N. Scott* in full retreat without any steam on her, and I have never in all my life seen such complete disorganization as existed among Titus's men; all saying he had acted cowardly, while many openly declared that he had sold the fight to Van derbilt before leaving New Orleans. As to this, I will simply refer you to my letter of that date, in which I then expressed to you all I now have to say about the disgraceful affair. I then feared that it would be the defeat of all my future prospects on the river, as it gave the enemy fresh courage and time to receive large reinforcements from Costa Rica and fortify Castillo Rapids before I could again attack them. Because of the difficulties of keeping the command longer together I sent Col. Titus to you simply to get rid of him, and at the same time preferred charges against him.