

Elizabethtown New Jersey

June the 28<sup>th</sup> – 57

Dear parents

At last I have landed on uncle Sams terra firma: after a series of adventures and dangers which I shall never forget and I am at present enjoying good health.

My last letter to you was dated about the 20<sup>th</sup> of Feb. at fort Slatter at the mouth of the San Carlos River Nicaragua since that time I have neither written nor had an opportunity to write. We remained at fort Slatter until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March and the last recruits arriving from New Orleans Col. Lockridge tried another assault on Castello but found it much too strong for his three hundred raw recruits and retreated. While the men were retreating Lockridge fearing that we might be pursued sent six men myself among the number to alarm the enemy by firing on them. We crept up close to the breastwork and killed two officers at the first fire and then kept up a fire for some time as they showed their heads above the breastwork. The enemy had two cannon which they fired at us but as we laid flat on the ground no harm was done. I wanted to get in a better place but in crossing an opening I saw a couple of Costa Ricans standing fair and took aim at them but just as I was going to pull trigger off went another cannon which they had bearing on the road and a spent shot struck me full on the knee knocking me down as easily as you could kick over a mushroom. I soon found that I was not much hurt and as I raised up I saw the greasers laughing and yelling at me thinking that they had killed me, this made me mad and I jumped up and fired my rifle at them but in too much hurry and only made them dodge down. I then limped out of the road. The shot went through my pants and tore through my skin and some of the flesh and then dropped down in my boot. I have got it yet. It did not disable me we went on down to Kelleys Rapids and there divided about 100 volunteered to go with Lockridge to Rivas by Panama and the rest for home. I joined the former of course the bound for home boys went aboard the iron steamer and the rest went on the J. N. Scott together with the sick and wounded. You have heard of this explosion of the Scott by which 40 or 50 were killed and scalded. I had a conspicuous place among the latter being scalded from my waist to my shoulders on my back the skin all came off and in some places the flesh to the depth of half an inch.

I never experienced such excruciating pain in all my life put together as I did for the first ten days the pain was somewhat alleviated by seeing men scalded much worse but most that were scalded worse than I was died of their injuries. We arrived at Greytown on the morning after the explosion, and the surgeons of the British fleet came over and gave us some badly needed assistance they could well afford to help us after helping to get us down. I had the good fortune to get acquainted with a young midshipman and he got me a place on the Cossack where I was well attended to. This was well for me as before that I had to lay on the ground under an old shed. About the tenth of April a small schooner (British) came into Greytown and as it was going to touch at Charleston the Captain agreed to land me there at the request of one of the British

officers who was very friendly to me. So about the 12 of April I left Greytown for the U. S. all alone as far as Americans were concerned. About three days after we were out a hard storm arose and drove us eastward up the Carribean Sea so far that we had to put into St. Gago de Santiago at the other end of Cuba. Our top masts were blown away and the stern gaff was gone and here our captain staid to make repairs in three days the repairs were made and the captain changed the course of the vessel direct to London. I did not want to go to London and as there were plenty of men there from the U. S. working on the railrode to the interior, I concluded to wait here for an American ship. I went to the overseer of the road and he gave me a place to sleep and as much to eat as I wanted. You have perhaps heard that there is a railroad being built here by an American contractor it has been going for some time but very slowly I was very weak while here as my back was but barely well but I had nothing to complain of until the authorities got ahold of me—the steward ass. of the workmen fell out with one of the cooks and made an attempt to kill him. But in the attempt he fell over a stool and turned a long knife point upwards and felled on it and killed himself I was fortunately not present but notwithstanding I was taken in to town with several boys as witness and calabosed. They tied leather straps around my ankles and then fastened a large chain to each and fastened them to large rings in the floor. I was then seated and handcuffed and my elbows were fastened around my back so that I could not move my arms. In this delightful situation I had to remain two days before I was examined and I then proved that I was else where when the man was killed and got off, two of the boys were not so lucky and were remanded back to the loathsome prison as witnesses. This is the way that all prisoners were treated here there are two men now serving out a sixty day term in jail for getting drunk and another one for the same length of time for being in town after nine O'clock. These men are on the road and came from New York November last, the poor fellow who is accused of killing the steward by the Spaniards who should have nothing to do with it; will probably be garroted. I staid from the 20<sup>th</sup> of April until the first of June before I could get off which I did at last on the schooner Tennessee for New York where I arrived on the 22 of this month and not till then did I learn the fate of Nicaragua.

St. Gago is a handsome place with many sugar farms around it and there are several men of La. who own farms here among who is Moreton of Ala. who I have seen and have told you of before. But I cannot stand the country.

Genl. Walker is now in New York. I am in a ticket office of the N. Y. and Easton Road. I will stay here sometime yet as I will have to make some money, for another start which I will make soon I am by no means discouraged as I have stood what many of them could not.

E. S. Baker