

EDITORS OF THE SPIRIT GAZETTE

Gentle men.—By request of many of my friends to give some information of my journey to Central America, I take this way of informing them, and desire that you will be kind enough to allow me the use of the columns of your valuable paper. I will give a very brief sketch of the country and its inhabitants as far as my personal observation went.

We sailed from New Orleans on the 25th of February, on the steamer "Webster," and arrived at Greytown on the night of the 5th of March, passing Cuba without anchoring there. We had about 400 passengers on board—170 of them were bound to California; 10 making the trip to travel over the country of Costa Rica and the rest to join Walker's army. The price of fare including board, was \$25 in the cabin and \$30 in the steerage, those for California paid \$100 each and the Walker men had free passage.

Greytown has about one hundred houses, small and scattered; they are rather huts and covered mostly with straw, with the exception of a few frame buildings. Trade is dull and the place did not appear to me of any importance at present, but may become so in the future.

We met there Col. Kinney, who treated us very kindly. He offered 600 acres of land to each of us if we would settle on it, but as the country did not seem to be healthy, and not desiring to clear such thick bottoms, we all refused to accept the donation.

My intention was to look for an opportunity to settle in a town on the coast, but owing to the sickly country and the scarcity of money, I thought proper to come back again. However, I took the opportunity of making a trip up the San Juan River as far as Granada, where I had the pleasure to make the acquaintance of Gen. Walker. He received me very courteously, and requested me to join his army, but this I refused.

Walker has about 2000 men at Granada, and 1000 at Virgin Bay. Granada is a town of about 1500 inhabitants, with very small buildings but shows signs of town or large structures.

Oranges and other fine fruits are plenty. I bought forty fine oranges for a dime.

I, with some others, made a trip on mules to Granada to the interior of Costa Rica about 80 miles, on trails some times miserable. Most of the lands are timbered, even the mountains are covered with heavy timber—large primas were not seen. There were several small farms at the foot of hills very nicely situated, but not more than from five to ten acres in cultivation raising coffee, banana, pine apples, oranges, &c. The country is very rich but damp and sickly—not well adapted to foreigners, although the natives looked much healthier, especially the women, who were rather fat than lean. Among the natives, I found both sexes wearing upon their temples black plaisters which they think to be a remedy for headache. I, myself, was attacked on my return by the so-called Panama fever although I am as healthy as you are generally. The timber is so dense that it is quite impossible to enter it. Trees are very tall and of fine species—plenty of mahogany.

I did not see any cattle on my whole route, except one cow at Hipp's place, which was bought at Panama, for \$15. Hipp has lived about eight years on the bank of the San Juan River but has not more than one acre in cultivation. We were recommended to him as a very convenient fellow, he charged us but \$2 a day, each.

I remained about four weeks in Central America, but could not find what I had expected—Musquitoes are plenty and are a bad and unimprovement upon ours. They are of the finest blooded stock, and are called "chiggers." These tormentors make a man nearly crazy, they lay their eggs under the toes of the foot, and if you desire to avoid suffering from sore feet, you must take off the eggs immediately with a pen knife. Monkeys, parrots, and different kinds of beasts make night hideous with their yells and deprive you of sleep, if you could sleep at all on account of musquitoes, chiggers and damp air.

Beef is worth twenty cents a pound at Greytown, I utter and eggs we did not see except turkeys and guinea fow, on which you will be rewarded.

For a hog, two mules a day, \$2. The natives are used to all these sweet fruits so frequently they have much super.

We killed a monkey very good, on the San Juan River, of sixty pounds weight. We found the meat edible.

For those who are fond of you on the mountains on them are plenty, (natives) and fat ones too.

After a sojourn of about four weeks, I left Greytown with eight of my companions for New Orleans—two of the ten who came out with me having joined Walker in consequence of having no money to carry them home. Our return voyage to New Orleans did not last more than five days. M. ZILLER.

A SINGULAR AND FATAL ACCIDENT—I will close this article by giving an account of a most singular, as well as fatal accident, which occurred recently on the Line. The victim whose name was Gannon, was killed asleep, it being at a late hour of the night, when the accident happened. His rifle was hanging by leather straps over one of the roof poles of the cabin or camp, fastened with buckles, the gun forming a right angle with the man's body—the muzzle pointing in the direction of his head, though elevated considerably higher. Immediately under the gun, on the dirt floor sat a soap pot. The above is a correct description as I can give of the condition of things before the accident happened. His shoulder or pillow lay wrapped in slumber, not suspecting any danger near, when through some strange and unaccountable providence, the straps that supported the muzzle end of the gun, parted—the gun fell—the muzzle striking the floor (or ground) first—striking the soap pot—the breech being the heavier end, balanced over—elevated the muzzle—and thus brought the barrel in proper range for the man's head. At the instant the gun went off, the ball passing through the back part of his head and lodging in the pillow beyond it. Poor fellow! he never knew what hurt him.

His wife had lain down on a pallet before the fire with a sick child, and had fallen asleep there. She was awakened by the report of the gun and upon examination found her husband a lifeless corpse. She then leaving her little children alone in that desolate abode, walked about six miles (it being that distance to the nearest house) alone, and back before daylight. The circumstances attending the fatal and only occurrence were so strange and unprecedented, that suspicions of foul play naturally arose in the minds of some, even the bereaved wife, wholly exempt from those suspicions, but most of the people think her innocent. Yours, &c.

WESLEY SMITH

Wellsville, April 1st, 1856.

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