

1857 (Bihar)

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बिहार राज्य अभिलेखागार



सत्यमेव जयते

संचिका संख्या
अभिलेखागार संख्या

१६

बिहार सरकार

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मंत्रिमंडल सचिवालय विभाग
(बिहार राज्य अभिलेखागार निर्देशालय)

विभाग

शाखा

कार्यवाही

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पृष्ठ

विषय:— LETTER DATED (ILLIGIBLE) FROM H. C. WAKES
MAGISTRATE OF SHAHARAD TO WILLIAM TAYLOR, COMMISSIONER
OF JATNA, GIVING THE NARRATIVE OF THE DEFENCE
AND RESCUE OF ENGLISHMEN AT ARRAH ON THE BREAK
OF THE GREAT REVOLT OF 1857

From

A. C. Wake Esq.

Magr. of Shahabad

To

W. Taylor Esq.

Comr in Chief of the Patna Division

Sir,

I have the honor to forward for the information of his honor the Lieut. Governor the following narrative of our extraordinary defence and providential escape. On the evening of Saturday July the 25th I received an express from Dinapore warning us that a disturbance was apprehended on that day but giving us no other information. On the morning July the 26th a Sowar whom I had posted at Koelwar phata on the Soane came in and reported that numbers of Sepoys had crossed and that more were crossing.

I found that Mr. Palin the Railway Eng^r. stationed at Koelwar had contented himself with sending over for the boats to the Arrah side the night before but when leaving had failed to destroy them as he had promised to do. The police I imagine bolted at the first alarm.

All efforts to ascertain the amount of the force of the rebels were unavailing and the police left the city on Sunday the 26th. Thinking it highly inadvisable to abandon the station when the rebels might be few and having 50 sickles on the spot & finding the rest of the Officers of the station of the same opinion and the few residents in the district who had come in to us willing to remain: we on the night of Sunday the 26th went into a small bungalow previously fortified as much as possible

by

by Mr. Boyle the District Engineer of the Railway Comp.
 Our force consisted of 1 Jemadar
 2 Havildars 2 Naiks 45 privates, a Bhutia and
 Cooks of Captain Rattays Sikh police battalion. Mr.
 Littledale Surge. Mr. Combe Offg. Collector. Mr. Wake
 Magistrate. Mr. Colvin Assistant. Mr. Halls Civil Ap.
 Surgeon. Mr. Fuld Sub Dep. Officer Appt. Mr. Anderson
 his Assistant. Mr. Boyle District Engineer to the Railway
 Company. Syed Asim-ud-din Muzim Dep. Collector
 Mr. D'Costa Mooniff. Mr. Joseph School Master. Mr.
 Cook Offg. Head Clerk of the Collectorate. Mr. Fair-
 bank to Mr. Boyle Insp. Dispensary Hoys Railway En-
 gineers and Mr. De Souza.

We had enough Otta & Grain for
 some days of short allowance and a good deal of
 water for ourselves but owing to the shortness of our notice
 nothing but the barest necessities could be brought in
 and the Sikhs had only a few days water; but as we
 expected the rebels to be followed up immediately we
 had not much anxiety on that score.

On Monday the 27th of July about 8
 A.M. The insurgent forces the whole of the 7th 8th and
 40th B.I. arrived in the station and having first re-
 leased the prisoners rushed to the Collectorate where
 they were at once joined by the Rapiers and looted
 the treasure amounting to Rs. 85,000. This did not
 take long and they then charged our Bungalow from
 every side but being met with a steady & well directed
 fire they changed their tactics and hiding behind the
 trees with which the compound is filled and occa-
 sionally firing the out-houses and Mr. Boyle's residence which was
 unfortunately within 60 yards of our fortification they
 kept up an incessant and galling fire on us during
 the whole day. They were joined by numbers of
 "Koor Singh"

(3)

"Kover Singh" men and the Sepoys repeatedly declared that they were acting under his express orders and after a short time he was seen on the parade and remained during the siege. Every endeavour was made by the rebels to induce the Sikhs to abandon us heavy bribes were offered to them and their own countrymen employed as mediators. They treated every offer with derision showing perfect obedience and discipline.

On the 28th 2 small cannons were brought to play upon our Bungalow one throwing 4 lbs shot and these were daily shifted to what the rebels thought to be our weakest spots, finally the largest was placed on the roof of Mr. Boyle's dwelling house, commanding the inside of our bungalow and the smaller behind it at a distance of 20 yards. Nothing but cowardice & want of unanimity and only the ignorance of our enemies ~~showed~~ prevented our fortification being brought down about our ears.

During the entire siege which lasted 7 days every possible stratagem was practiced against us. The Cannons were fired as frequently as they could prepare shot with which they were at first unprovided and incessant assaults were made upon the Bungalow: Not only did our Sikhs behave with perfect courage and patience; but their untiring labor met & prevented every threatened disaster. Water began to run short a well 18 feet by 4 was dug in less than 12 hours. The rebels raised barricades on the top of the opposite house, our own gun in the same proportion: a shot struck a weak place in our defence, the place was made twice as strong as before. We began to feel the want of animal food and short allowance of grain. A sally was made at night and 4 sheep brought in & finally when we

we ascertained beyond a doubt that the enemy were
underrunning us, a countermine was quickly dug.

On the 30th the troops sent to our relief from Dinapore
were attacked and beaten back close to the entrance
of the town: On the next day the rebels returned &
telling us that they had annihilated our relief officers
the sick & the women & children (of which there were
some with us) their lives & liberty if they would give up
the Government officers.

August the 1st we were all offered our lives & leave
to go to Calcutta if we would give up our arms.
On the 2nd the greater part of the Sepoys went out to meet
Major Eyre Field force & on their being soundly thrashed
the rest of them desecrated the station and that night we
went out & found their mine had reached our foundations
and a canvas tube filled with gunpowder was lying handy
to blow us up in which however I do not think they could
have succeeded as their powder was bad and another stroke
of the pick would have broken into our countermine we
also brought in the one gun which they had left on the top of
the opposite house: during the whole siege only one man a
Sikh was severely wounded, though 2 or 3 got scratched and
blows from splinters of bricks. Every boy in our garrison behaved
well but I should be neglecting a duty did I omit to mention
specially Mr. Boyle to whose engineering skill & untiring exertions
we in a great measure owe our preservation & Mr. Colvin who ren-
dered the most valuable assistance & who worked neither night
nor day & took on himself far more than his share of every
disagreeable duty. In conclusion I must earnestly beg that
his honor the Lieut. Gov^r will signally reward the whole of our
gallant little detachment of Sikhs whose service & fidelity
cannot be overated. The Jumadar should at once be made
a Subadar & many of the rest are fit for promotion & when
required I will submit a list with details.

I have the honor to be Sir
Your obedient servant

Herbert W. W. W.