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EDWIN HARRIS

c. 1810 - 1895

New Plymouth under Siege, 1860

Oil on canvas 37 x 79

80,000 - 120,000

Provenance:

Private Collection, Taranaki

Lighters ferry to shore Major-General Sir Thomas Simpson Pratt, Lieutenant Colonel Carey and a further fifty troops of the 40th Regiment from the steam sloop *HMCSS Victoria* to the beleaguered town of New Plymouth. Other vessels depicted include the paddle-steamer *Tasmanian Maid*, the *Airedale* and the *George Henderson* which was later that year wrecked off the New Plymouth coast with no loss of life.

New Plymouth was reduced to a state of siege at the beginning of the first Taranaki War. Martial law was proclaimed. The settlers were driven into town, their homesteads burnt by Maori making it necessary to constrict the occupied area and entrench the town.

Lieutenant Colonel Carey together with fifty men of the 40th Regiment, arrived off New Plymouth aboard the war steamer *HMS Victoria* on the evening of 3 August 1860. Their mission was to reinforce the garrison which numbered about 1200 men.

The historical events recorded in this rare oil painting, also relate to a watercolour titled *New Plymouth Under Siege - 40th Regiment, Marshland Hill, Taranaki, New Plymouth* which was sold by International Art Centre in 2008. A watercolour depiction of the same scene as the present lot, is held in the collections of Alexander Turnbull Library. Whilst both works are by Harris, this offered work is a significantly larger and more dramatic version.

Edwin Harris is noted for his early views of New Plymouth and Nelson. He had some artistic training in England prior to his 1841 arrival in New Zealand with his wife and family aboard the *William Bryan*, the first of the Plymouth Company vessels to arrive in Taranaki. Harris worked briefly as a Surveyor for the Company and farmed a property in the vicinity of the town. Following the outbreak of the first Taranaki War in 1860, the Harris family were evacuated to Nelson where they eventually settled. His daughter Emily Cumming Harris was an award winning botanical artist.



EDWIN HARRIS *New Plymouth Under Siege - 40th Regiment, Marshland Hill, Taranaki, New Plymouth* - Circa 1860

Sold by International Art Centre, October 2008 - TSB Bank Collection

The oil painting being offered is painted from the sea looking towards New Plymouth with Mt Egmont clearly visible. In the watercolour '*New Plymouth Under Siege - 40th Regiment, Marsland Hill*', the ships depicted in the present scene can be seen in the far distance.

Works by Edwin Harris are extremely rare to the market. It is understood that this is the only oil painting by the artist to appear for sale.

