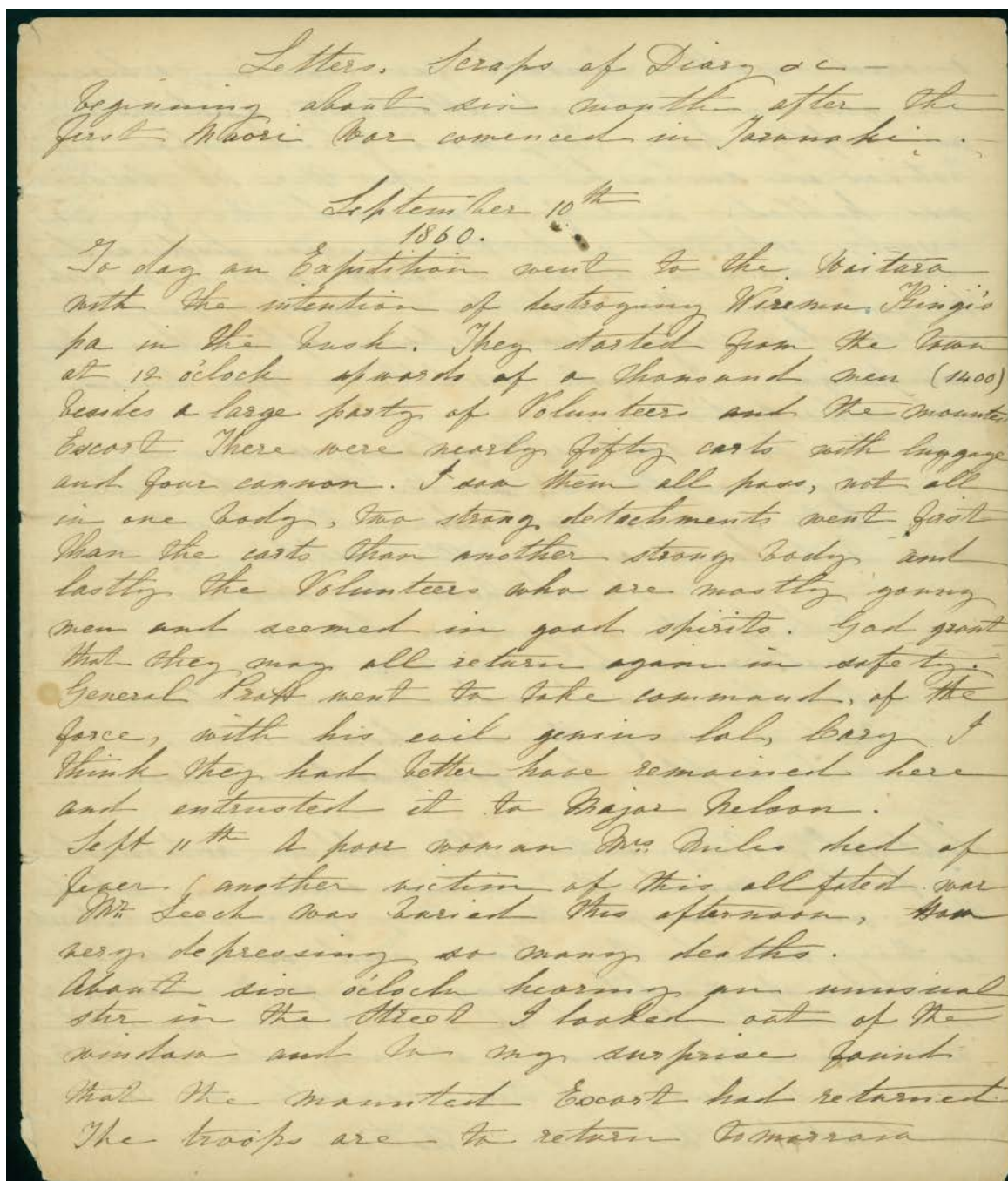


From the archive: Emily Harris Letters and Diary Excerpts 1860-63
Gallery



Fascicle 1, p.[1]. 'Letters, Scraps of Diary &c beginning about six months after the first Maori War commenced in Taranaki.' Puke Ariki. ARC2002-190. Box 2, folder 5.

covered with laurels for having achieved
the glorious feat of attacking and destroying
an empty pa. They were fired upon by
Natives in ambush one of the 146th soldiers
was killed and five wounded. The fire was
warmly returned and the Natives dispersed.
So Tamaram General Pratt returns in order
to celebrate this important victory and to
allow his men some repose after their long
campaign. I must scribble a few lines
in anticipation.

Come cast all gloomy cares away
We've fought but smile this festive day
Let garlands gay adorn the street
And loud acclaim the soldiers' feat
Quick beat the drums,
Behold the conquering hero comes
Another such a victory won
Another such achievement done
And we may to our homes return
With empty pa for Gastine's barn.

Sept. 12th, Very wet. The soldiers returned
in pretty much the same order in which
they went except that they gave a loud hurrah
as they entered the town and some sang
snatches of warlike songs, a great deal they
have to be proud of, it is even asserted
that some ran away at any rate they left
the dead body of their comrade to be
mutilated by the Natives

I left. Mr. Brewer took charge of my three
important baskets much to my relief
and carried them down to the Nelson.
Mr. Brewer came on with J. MacKellar.

The first thing we did was to choose our cabin.
There were two ladies taking with two six beds
in each. Mr. Desbreaux, Freddy, myself with two
other passengers & the stewardess occupied one cabin
it was a very small room shacked up with
boxes & carpet bags. You may fancy how awkward
it was when in the morning I & me were obliged
to get up one after the other. The first thing
we did was to put the children to bed and
then we went up on deck for the advice of the
cabin was intolerable. I never could make out
what it was oil or paint. When I went down
to the cabin again the vessel was full on
her way. The dreadful noise and motion of
the vessel soon made me feel very angry, disgusted
and ill. I went to bed to prevent myself from
being sick in bed it was not much better
the vessel seemed to be in immense churn
& I & bump of water continually thumped
about in it while the waves splashed like
gallons of hottermilk.

But to get up the next morning was no easy
matter it was an effort to dress myself &
then to press Freddy and help Mr. Desbreaux who
although not sick, was worse than useless
with her lame arm & leg. Freddy & I at last
managed to crawl upon deck and then

than proved no sign we had better than each
for shots had been heard. we still went on
when one of our advance party came riding
back to know if we went to go on. We
halted at a pretty spot where some millers gave
to consider but in a few minutes determined
to go on. We arrived at Glenavon in safety
and went all through the two houses. Some with
painful feelings, a few months ago one of the
houses had been just completed and both had
been beautifully furnished. I could not help
lingering with regret over a splendid sugarcane
tree and dirty lying in the garden path. We
had all assembled in a deserted drawing room when
Major Stang produced some packets of delicately cut
sandwiches, he and some young officers had spent
an hour or two after breakfast in cutting them.
We then went into the garden but very soon they
all wandered away except Mr Richardson left Miller
and I we were determined to make the best of
our time and he did not like to leave us, he
was amused at the awkwardness with which my hand
went in and out without injury while he was for
ever getting scratched. When our baskets were full
the rest of the party had returned ^{young} rambling with
lots of flowers. Oh! I thought they will soon be going
and I have not a single flower. I must have a
few. so off I went straight for the dell, Capt
Miller followed. I had often marked Mr De Vaux
not to go into the dell, for fifty cartons might
be in ambush there, but saw all thought of
danger had flown. I went on very quickly

because I wanted to go all over it. picking
a flower here and there making a few remarks
and lamenting the weeds that had grown so
tough, we came to one small open space, in the
middle of which grew a few Hawthorn on Gall
Hippocry, I had often seen the tree but not
the flower, my exclamations of surprise and
delight and efforts to reach the blossom
made my companion smile, he got some
of the flowers for me, we stayed a few
minutes it was a lovely spot, beautiful
ferns and native shrubs growing all round
you should have brought a pencil and paper
and written some lines here he said.
Strange for have said that to me, I
believe I was at that time the only girl in
all Irawaki who ever wrote a line.
I did write some verses in the evening but
never showed them to him.

Lines Written on Visiting Glenavon Spring
the War 1860.

Oh! I could sit and gaze far hours,
Passing alone
Upon thy lovely blooming flowers
Dreaming that fories in their leaves
First tried them.

Oh on that tiny winding stream
O'er grown with weeds
That not would quily flash and gleam
Like silver north the golden beam
Of summer's sun.

As upward turn my wandering eye
I have the trees,
To watch the gauzy clouds float by
A spray of sail at last a sky
Of deepest blue.

But now my stay so short so brief
I may not pause,
To linger here and look at leaf
Or trace one fair or fragrant nook
With thy sweet flowers.

One rapid glance around me cast
Noting the trace
Of Kinn's step I upward passed
With painful thought that trace the last
For years perchance.

Sweet Peace we little knew had been
Than meet to us.
Until we smelt the maiden's tear
And saw extended on his pier
One gone for ever.

Oh! we may learn to wear a smile
And heedless laugh
I will but the careless eye beguile
For still we feel beneath the mile
A manful heart

One hour can loosen Wier's red hands
And set him free
But grey eyes in many lands,
Can tell how hard to clasp the bands
Thrice since has passed

We heard shouts and had to hurry on
He complimenting me on my lightness
in springing over every little obstacle
They were all in the cart when we came
and did not fail to laugh at us. We
had a pleasant drive and got a bunch
of white hawthorn from one of the hedges.
Capt Miller quoted Byron and begged a few
flowers from me. Miss Reynolds immediately
insisted upon his taking all her flowers.
I believe our safe return was quite a relief
from anxiety about us to those in town.

The next morning I was helping
Mr Richardson to put the gooseberries in bottles when
Colonel Wgatt called he saw a tall thin elderly
man who looked as if he had been made of porce-
-ment however he was very pleasant and helped
to do the gooseberries.

Who proposed it I do not know but ^{Miss Fox} ~~Miss Fox~~
made up her mind to have a dance the
next evening. Mr W. was delighted at
the idea, and promised to send his man to
help make the furniture he also came & helped
himself. The Fox Palace & Kings were having
in a large store divided into rooms by
curtains & rough boards. It was uncomfortably



Emily Cumming Harris, carte de visite. Alfred Bock, City Photographic Establishment, 140 Elizabeth St, Hobart town [1860s]. 60mm W x 105mm H. Harris family album, Roseanne Cranstone collection. The photograph has been hand-coloured with watercolour paint that has damaged the print.

Either the photo chemicals or the type of card has prevented the watercolour from bonding into the paper and it has stayed on the surface of the card. Over time the colour has smudged and shifted on the photograph and has given the whole photo a green tinge.