

Finch & C^o



VICTORIAN BOTANICAL COLLECTION OF NAMED NEW ZEALAND FERNS

A VICTORIAN BOTANICAL COLLECTION OF NAMED NEW ZEALAND FERNS

EACH ONE MOUNTED ON CARD CONTAINED IN A PURPOSE MADE BOX CONSTRUCTED OF NEW ZEALAND MOTTLED KAURIE WOOD

107 CARDS STAMPED TO THE REVERSE 'NEW ZEALAND FERNS MOUNTED BY ERIC CRAIG PRINCES ST AUCKLAND SOLD WHOLESALE AND RETAIL'

AN OLD ATTACHED LABEL INSIDE THE LID READING: 'NEW ZEALAND FERNS AND FERN ALLIES; COLLECTED, DRIED, AND MOUNTED, BY ERIC CRAIG; PRINCES STREET, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND'

CIRCA 1850 – 60

SIZE: 21.5CM HIGH, 14CM WIDE – 8½ INS HIGH, 5½ INS WIDE (CARDS)

14CM HIGH, 26.5CM WIDE, 19CM DEEP – 5½ INS HIGH, 10½ INS WIDE, 7½ INS DEEP (BOX)

LITERATURE

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK FIRST SET FOOT ON NEW ZEALAND SOIL IN 1769 AND HE AND HIS CREW RECORDED THEIR FIRST VISIT BY WAY OF CHARTS, MAPS AND COLLECTED FAUNA, FLORA AND CURIOSITIES. COOK'S THREE VOYAGES MARKED THE BEGINNING OF BOTANICAL RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS, BUT MANY MORE EXPEDITIONS WERE REQUIRED BEFORE THE MARVELLOUS DIVERSITY OF THE FLORA WAS PROPERLY SURVEYED. EVEN SO WHEN THE 'ENDEAVOUR' RETURNED HOME THE CABINS WERE FULL TO OVERFLOWING WITH 30,000 PLANT SPECIMENS, AND JOSEPH BANKS WAS TO REMAIN AT THE CENTRE OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS PROMOTING THE ROLE OF SCIENTISTS IN VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY, AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT IS NOW CALLED 'ECONOMIC BOTANY', ESPECIALLY THE TRANSFER OF PLANTS FROM ONE PART OF THE WORLD TO ANOTHER.

NEW ZEALAND HAS BEEN A LAND APART FOR 80 MILLION YEARS WITH THE RESULT THAT IT IS HOME TO A COLLECTION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD. THE GIANT TREE FERN IS NOW GROWN IN GARDENS ALL OVER THE TEMPERATE WORLD, BUT IN THE MID 19TH CENTURY THE VICTORIANS WERE STILL ORGANISING AND FUNDING

COLLECTING TRIPS TO FIND UNKNOWN SPECIMENS OF FERNS. THE VICTORIANS HELD A PARTICULAR FASCINATION FOR THEM CREATING SPECIAL 'FERNERIES' IN CONSERVATORIES AND CONSTRUCTING ENTIRE FERN GARDENS, SO THIS SOUVENIR OF NEW ZEALAND'S UNIQUE FERNS WOULD HAVE BEEN A 'MUST HAVE'.