

Finch & C^o



NEW ZEALAND MAORI GREENSTONE CHISEL BLADE 'WHAO'

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19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 4.5CMLONG – 1¾ INS LONG

LITERATURE

NEPHRITE HAS AN ABILITY TO RETAIN A VERY SHARP HARD CUTTING EDGE ALMOST AS GOOD AS STEEL AND IS WELL SUITED FOR USE IN WOODWORKING. FROM THE EARLIEST MAORI TIMES UNTIL ITS FINAL REPLACEMENT BY METAL BLADES, THE MOST COMMON MAORI USE OF NEPHRITE WAS FOR ADZES AND CHISELS FASHIONED IN A WIDE RANGE OF SIZES FOR DIFFERENT WOODWORKING TASKS. CHISELS WERE HAFTED INTO STRAIGHT WOODEN HANDLES AND LASHED IN PLACE WITH PLAIED FLAX FIBRE CORDS. IT WAS THEN DRIVEN INTO THE TIMBER BY SHORT SHARP BLOWS FROM A WOODEN OR WHALEBONE MALLET. GOUGE CHISELS WERE A SPECIAL INVENTION FOR DELICATE WOODCARVING. WHEN THEY WERE NO LONGER REQUIRED AS TOOLS THESE SMALL BLADES WERE OFTEN GIVEN SUSPENSION HOLES AND WORN AROUND THE NECK OR AS EAR PENDANTS.