

Finch & C^o



POLYNESIAN COOK ISLANDS RAROTONGA FINE SHELL HAT BAND OR NECKLACE

A POLYNESIAN COOK ISLANDS RAROTONGA FINE SHELL HAT BAND OR NECKLACE

LATE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 21.5CMDIA, 2CMDIA (SHELL STRAND) – 8½ INS DIA, ¾ INS DIA (SHELL STRAND)

LITERATURE

'HEI' WERE NECK ORNAMENTS COMPOSED OF LAND SNAIL SHELLS OR SEASHELLS AND COULD BE MADE FROM MORE PERISHABLE LEAVES, FLOWERS AND SEEDS. IT WAS A UNIVERSAL ITEM OF ADORNMENT IN POLYNESIA, WHICH WAS WORN BY MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

TRADITIONALLY IN POLYNESIA GARLANDS OF SCENTED LEAVES AND FLOWERS, SUN VISORS AND CAPES WERE A COMMON PART OF EVERYDAY DRESS. FISHING HATS WERE ALSO ESSENTIAL FOR PROTECTION FROM THE GLARING SUN ON THE SEA AND INTRICATE, COLOURFUL HATBANDS WERE USED TO KEEP THEM IN PLACE. CONTACT WITH WESTERN CULTURES LED TO A NEW INTRODUCED FORM IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY OF THE 'PANAMA' HAT MADE FROM THE YOUNG LEAF OF THE COCONUT PALM. HATBANDS THEN DEVELOPED TO ADD POLYNESIAN INTEREST TO THIS EUROPEAN STYLE OF PACIFIC HAT.