Finch & Co



A RARE 'ADELIE' PENGUIN EGG FROM THE AUSTRALIAN 1911-14 EXPEDITION

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EGG, PAPER, WOOD

ADELIE LAND, ANTARCTIC

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

SIZE: 7CM HIGH, 5.5CM DIA. (MAX) - 2¾ INS HIGH, 2¼ INS DIA. (MAX)

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LITERATURE

THE ADELIE PENGUIN 'PYGOSCELIS ADELIAE' IS A SPECIES FOUND ALONG THE ENTIRE COAST OF THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT, THE ONLY PLACE WHERE IT LIVES. TOGETHER WITH THE EMPEROR PENGUIN, THE MOST SOUTHERLY DISTRIBUTED OF ALL PENGUINS. THE AUSTRALASIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION (1911-14) WAS THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN LED EXPEDITION TO THE ANTARCTIC. HEADED BY DOUGLAS MAWSON, THEY EXPLORED THE LARGELY UNCHARTED ANTARCTIC COAST DUE SOUTH OF AUSTRALIA. FRANCIS HOWARD BICKERTON (1889 - 1954) WAS AN EXPLORER, SOLDIER, ENTREPRENEUR, BIG GAME HUNTER, AVIATOR AND FILM MAKER. NOT ONLY DID HE CONTRIBUTE TO THE AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION, HE WAS LATER RECRUITED BY SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON'S 'ENDURANCE' EXPEDITION. APART

FROM COLLECTING THIS RARE EGG SPECIMEN, THE EXPEDITION ALSO DISCOVERED THE ADELIE LAND METEORITE, WHICH IDENTIFIED THE ANTARCTIC REGION AS THE RICHEST METEORITE FIELD ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET.

WITHOUT DOUBT, BICKERTON'S LIFE AND CAREER, WAR-TIME ANTICS, HUNTING EXPEDITIONS, EXPLORATIONS, BUSINESS INVESTMENTS, PARTY GOING IN LONDON IN THE 1920S, WERE THOSE OF 'LEGEND'. VITA SACKVILLE-WEST FELL PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH BICKERTON AND ASKED HIM TO BECOME THE FATHER OF HER CHILD (AN HONOUR WHICH HE DECLINED) HOWEVER, SHE DID TAKE BICKERTON AS THE MODEL FOR LEONARD ANQUETIL, THE HERO IN HER BEST NOVEL, 'THE EDWARDIANS' (1930).

PROVENANCE

F.H. BICKERTON

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION

CF:

AN OLD NOTE READS: 9, OSBORNE PLACE, PLYMOUTH. 'ADELIE PENGUIN EGG FROM ADELIE LAND, WINTER (… ?) OF AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION 1911 -14. F.H. BICKERTON.' THE EGG INSCRIBED IN PENCIL: 'ADELIE PENGUIN EXPEDITION 1911 - 14 F.H. BICKERTON'

FOR ANOTHER EGG, FROM THE 'TERRA NOVA' EXPEDITION, SEE: SOTHEBY'S, TRAVEL, ATLASES, MAPS AND NATURAL HISTORY AUCTION, NOVEMBER 2022