

# The Changing Face of Sir Julius von Haast

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Sir Julius von Haast was a prominent personality in late nineteenth-century New Zealand and he was photographed many times. About 25 photographs of him have been identified from the Haast family collection held in the Alexander Turnbull Library and other archival collections, and a checklist of these has been prepared. Unfortunately, several recent publications have used illustrations, supposedly of Haast, that have been misidentified. No images of Haast as a young man have been found. The earliest photograph was taken in 1859, soon after he arrived in New Zealand. Aged 37, Haast is a tall solidly built man with black hair and a beard. Portraits taken over the next 5 years are similar, including one taken with his new bride, Mary Dobson, whom he married in 1863. Work-related photographs show him with the spectacular exhibition of moa skeletons that he organised at Canterbury Museum. He also appears within a group of notables at the opening of the Colonial and Vienna Exhibition in Christchurch in December 1872, when his beard had turned grey. The remaining photographs are of Haast as a much older man, several taken in between 1885 and 1887 when he was Commissioner at the Colinderies Exhibition in London. An oil painting, commissioned by Canterbury Museum, was created by Allan Bowles Cambridge soon after Haast's death, and is based on one of these photographs.

**Keywords:** cabinet cards, Canterbury Museum, carte de visite, Julius von Haast, moa skeletons, nineteenth-century photography, photographic portraiture

## Introduction

Photographs are a powerful window into the past, and we are fortunate that the life of Sir Julius von Haast spanned the development of commercial photography in the nineteenth century. When he was born in 1822 it was largely in an experimental phase, but by the end of his life there were photographers in every town. In those days developing photographic images was a complicated procedure involving chemical processing, so it was mostly done by professionals with a studio and attached darkroom. A visit to the photographer was an important and costly event, generally to obtain portraits of individuals or family groups, which were most often reproduced in carte de visite format (64 x 100 mm) or as larger cabinet cards (110 x 170 mm).

Because Haast was a prominent personality in late nineteenth-century New Zealand, he was photographed many times, particularly in his later years. This paper gives a brief view of some of his activities as revealed by the photographs we have been able to locate. They are arranged chronologically, so Haast is seen gradually ageing as the years pass.

The majority of the photographs of Julius von Haast come from a collection of family documents donated to the Alexander Turnbull Library by his son and biographer, Heinrich von Haast, between 1948, when he published the biography, and 1953, when he died, while further material was deposited posthumously by his widow Mary von Haast (Nolden 2016: 76). Many images were not labelled, and as the collection contained photographs of friends and scientific colleagues, there has been confusion about the identification of the portrayed subjects in some photographs (Nolden 2017). This has led to the incorrect identification of Haast in some publications. In this paper we present two lists. Table 1 lists photographs of Julius von Haast that we are confident have been correctly identified, with information

on the source and date of the photograph, where available. Table 2 lists published photographs of Haast that have been incorrectly identified in published documents.

Although most of the Haast photographs are studio portraits, we are fortunate that the early Canterbury photographer Dr Alfred Barker (Turner 1990) was interested in the Canterbury Museum and scientific matters, and took several photographs that included Haast.

### Photographs in the 1850s and 1860s

Our knowledge of Haast's life before his arrival in New Zealand is incomplete and fragmentary (Nolden 2016), and no photographs from this period have been located. The earliest photograph is a formal portrait taken in 1859 (Fig. 1) and attributed to Bruno Hamel, a professional photographer who accompanied Ferdinand von Hochstetter's party in their exploration of the central North Island in 1859. Haast was then 37, and the image shows him as a tall, solidly built man with black hair and a black beard.

The next photographs that can be confidently dated are a set of four studio portraits (Table 1: 3–6) taken shortly after Haast married Mary Dobson in June 1863. The photographer is not identified, but is inferred to be James Elsbee, who owned the studio later taken over by Daniel Mundy. One image shows Mary and Julius together (Fig. 2). In a letter dated 2 November 1863, Joseph Hooker congratulates Haast on his marriage, and thanks him for the photograph of the couple he had recently received (Nolden et al. 2013: 54).

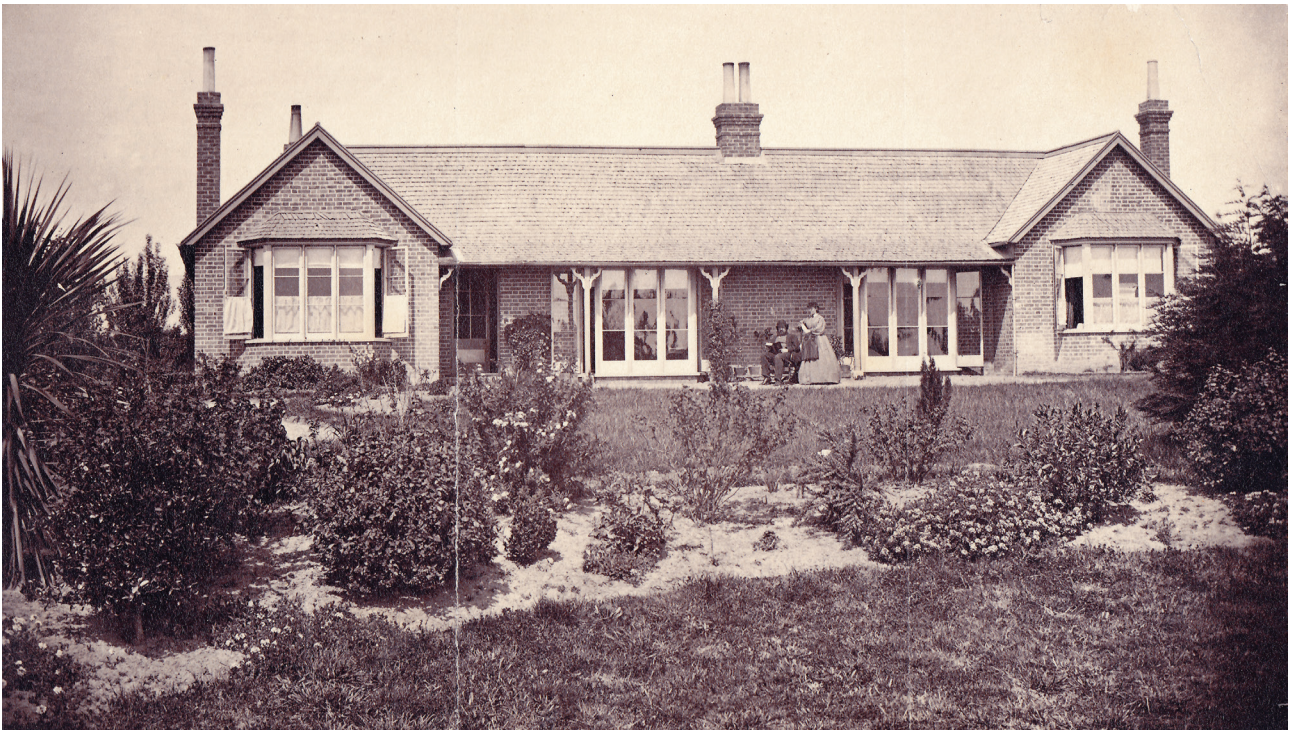


**Figure 1.** Earliest known portrait of Julius Haast, with a dedication to Arthur Guyon Purchas, dated Auckland, 26 July 1859. Photographer Bruno Hamel (attributed). John Webster Collection, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 881-01



**Figure 2.** Portrait of Mary and Julius Haast taken about the time of their wedding in June 1863. Photographer James Elsbee (attributed). Alexander Turnbull Library PA2-2164





**Figure 3.** Julius and Mary Haast outside their new home, Glückauf, in 1865. Photographer unknown. Hochstetter Collection Basel HCB 2.18.10

The couple settled in Avonside, Christchurch, and a photograph dated 1865 shows them outside their new home (Fig. 3) that Julius named Glückauf (a German miner's greeting). And of course, this was the start of their family. Mary and Julius had five children, all born at Glückauf – four sons and one daughter.

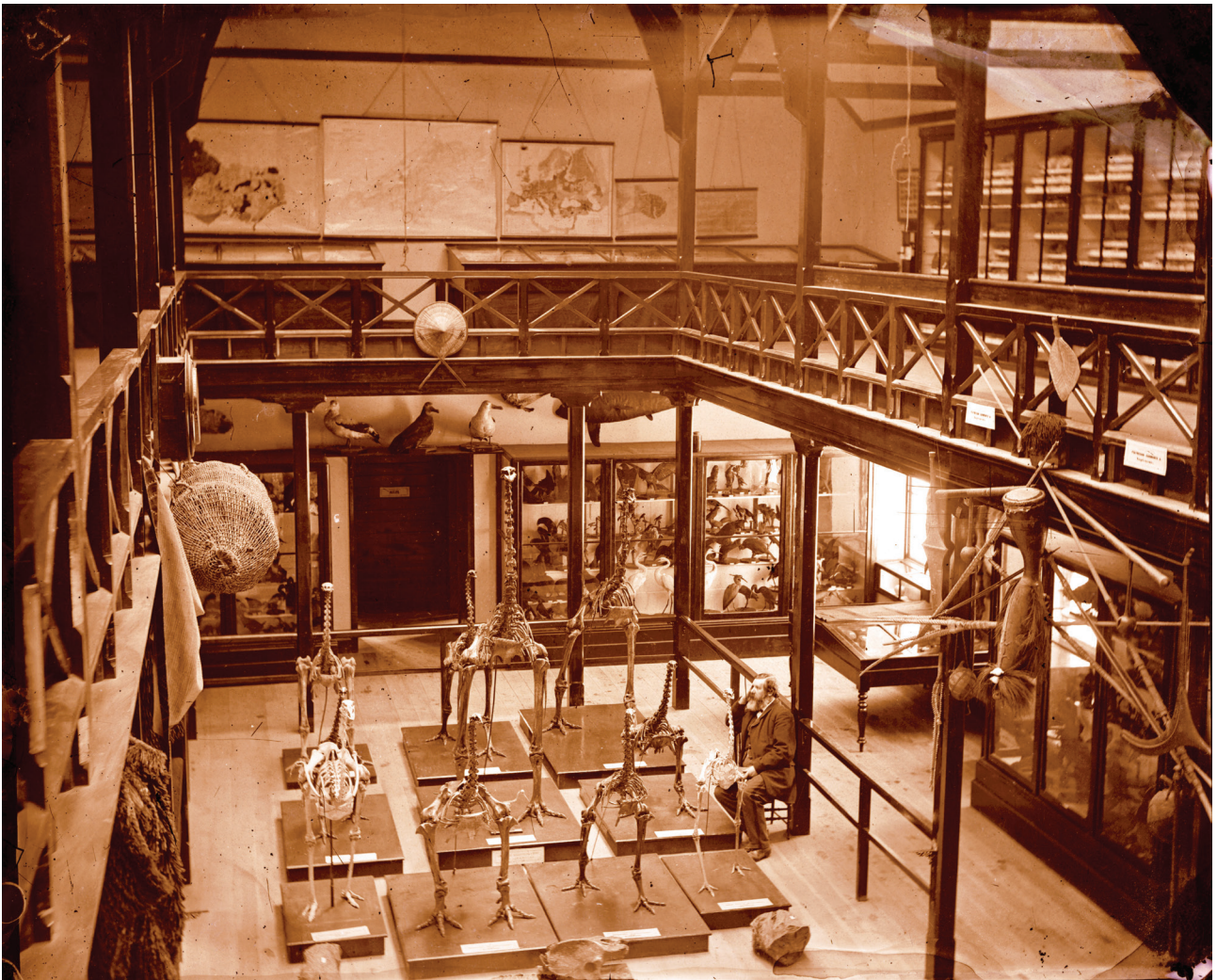
In the early 1860s Haast explored the whole of Canterbury province (which then included the West Coast), but sadly we have no photographs of this aspect of his life apart from one tantalising portrait. In 1865 Haast was awarded the Order of Franz Joseph by the Austrian Emperor as a mark of thanks for naming the Franz Josef Glacier after him, and he was photographed wearing the medal (Table 1:9). It was the first of many decorations that Haast sought and was to receive over the next 20 years.

In contrast, we do have a pictorial record of his work on the giant extinct moa. The discovery of a rich trove of moa remains in a swamp at Glenmark in 1865 was fully exploited by Haast. His taxidermist, Frederick Fuller, reconstructed skeletons for display and exchange with other museums and scientific



**Figure 4.** Julius Haast (left) with taxidermist Frederick Fuller examining moa bones. Photograph by Alfred Charles Barker. Hochstetter Collection Basel HCB 2.1.4





**Figure 5.** Main hall of Canterbury Museum soon after it was opened in 1870. Photograph by Alfred Charles Barker. Canterbury Museum 1944.78.66

institutions. A Barker photograph, taken on 26 September 1867, shows Haast and Fuller examining moa bones (Fig. 4).

### **Photographs in the Early 1870s**

There are only two photographs that can be definitely dated from this period, both taken by Dr Barker. In them Haast is looking older than in the earlier photographs – his beard is grey, but the hair on his head is still black.

The earliest part of the present Canterbury Museum buildings was opened in October 1870. It was built around a main hall featuring the spectacular moa skeletons reconstructed by Frederick Fuller. In the photograph of the main hall Haast is shown seated contemplating the moa display (Fig. 5).

In December 1872 the Colonial and Vienna Exhibition was held in Christchurch to select material for display at an international exhibition occurring in Vienna in the following year. Dr Barker took a photograph of the organising committee (Fig. 6), probably on the opening day. Haast is seated, right of centre.





**Figure 6.** Group of notables at the opening of the Colonial and Vienna Exhibition in Christchurch, December 1872. Standing, from left: Alfred Charles Barker (photographer), Robert Heaton Rhodes, unknown, James Hector, Thomas Potts, John Enys, unknown, unknown, William Miles Maskell. Seated: Rev Charles Fraser and Julius Haast. Photograph by Alfred Charles Barker. Alexander Turnbull Library PA1-Q-166-052

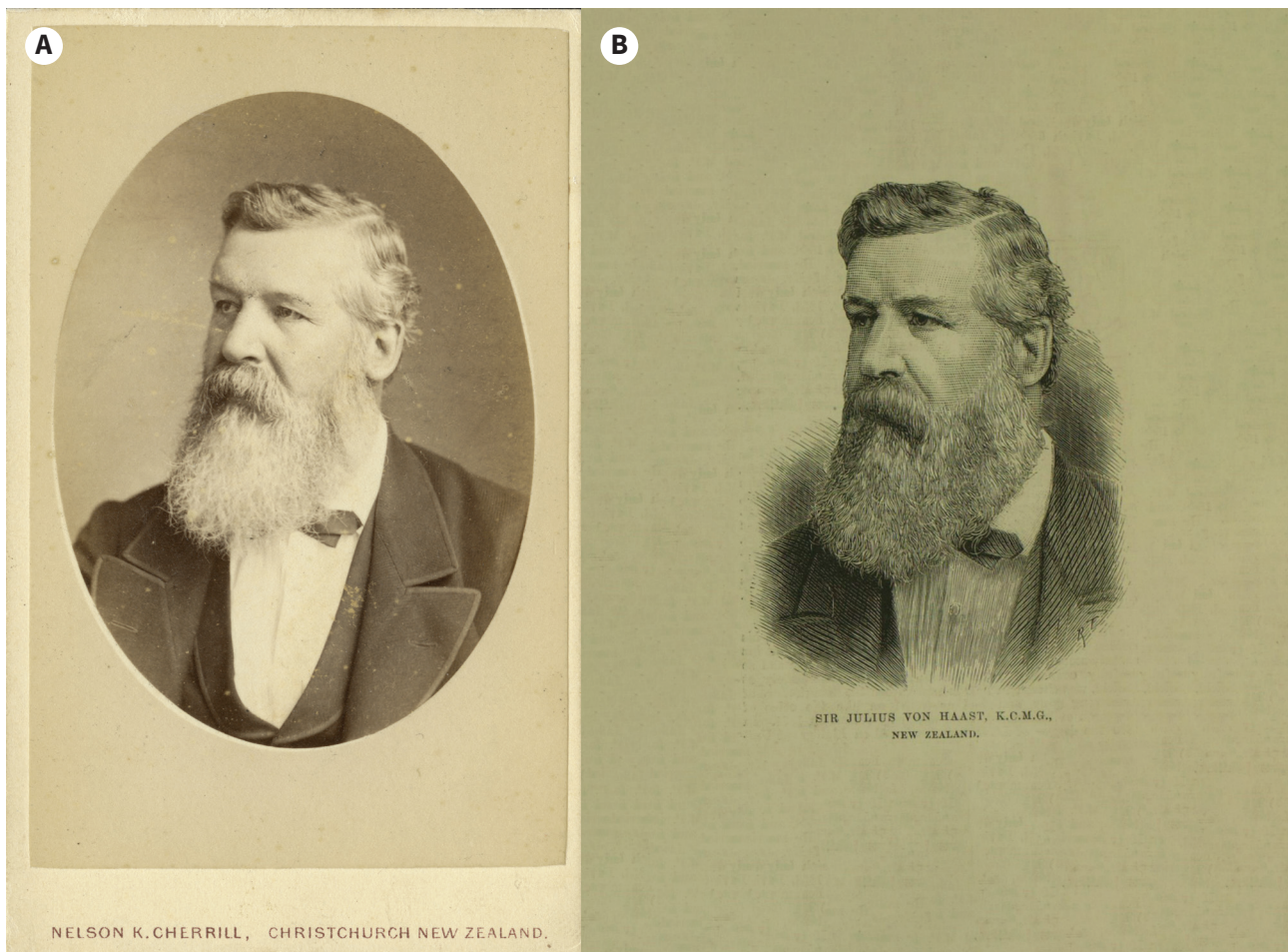
## Photographs in the 1880s

There is a gap in the photographic record of up to 10 years. The remaining photographs of Haast show him as an older man – a white haired, bearded patrician.

About 1881 Haast had a sitting with Nelson King Cherrill in Christchurch (Fig. 7A), and photographs taken during this sitting were the basis of cartes de visite that Haast sent to correspondents over the next few years. There is some variation in the mounted copies we have located – a sign that Haast re-ordered copies over the years.

Around 1882–1883 he had a sitting with E Wheeler & Son (Table 1: 19 and 20). One of these images was used to illustrate a biographical article (Bickerton 1884). As high-quality print reproduction of photographs was not available in New Zealand at that time, an endnote comments that the photograph was printed by the Autotype Co. in London and presumably sent back to New Zealand to be manually inserted in the journal.





**Figure 7. A**, Portrait of Julius von Haast by Nelson King Cherrill, circa 1881. Alexander Turnbull Library PA2-0471 **B**, Engraving reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* of 7 August 1886, page 12

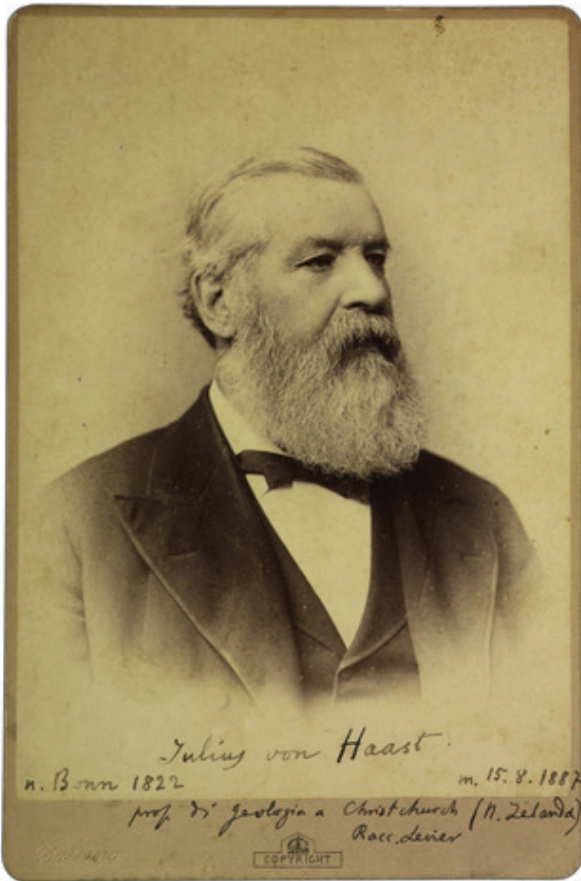
In 1885 Haast was appointed Commissioner to oversee the New Zealand court at the Colonial and Indian (Colinderies) Exhibition to be held in London in 1886. Julius and Mary von Haast left New Zealand in March 1886, and were away for over a year, and his doings were regularly reported in the press. An article in the *Illustrated London News* of 7 August 1886 featured an engraving clearly based on the Cherrill photograph (Fig. 7B).

While in London Haast had a photographic sitting with the celebrated society photographer, Alexander Bassano, who produced a set of cabinet card portraits that Haast sent to colleagues (Table 1: 22 and 23). The copy reproduced as Figure 8 came from the University of Padua – a sign of the extent of Haast’s correspondence.

The last photograph of Haast was taken during a visit to Germany in February 1887 (Fig. 9). The weather was miserable – it snowed heavily, and Julius wrote to Heinrich saying that his beard was as white as the day on which the photograph was taken. Heinrich later commented that his father looked an old and sick man (Haast 1948: 943). Julius was exhausted after his trip and died a few months later, soon after returning to New Zealand.

This photograph has particular significance. Haast was photographed wearing his German consul’s uniform (Haast 1948: 841 and 876) and his medals, and the collection is impressive. They include the KCMG (Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George) recently awarded by Queen Victoria, which entitled him to be called Sir Julius, and the Order of the Iron Crown awarded by the Austrian Emperor, which allowed him to use the title ‘von’.





**Figure 8.** Portrait of Julius von Haast by Alexander Bassano, London, 1886. Library of the Botanical Garden of the University of Padua IB.CC.2

## Comment

The photographs presented above show the changes in appearance of Sir Julius von Haast over almost 30 years, from his late thirties until his death at age 65. When he arrived in New Zealand, he was approaching middle age. In the succeeding eight years he undertook exploration of rugged and remote parts of the country and established himself as one of the pioneers of New Zealand geoscience. In terms of his photographs, those were his black-beard days.


In the late 1860s and early 1870s, he turned his interests to moa, Canterbury Museum, the organisation of exhibitions, and his ground breaking book *Geology of the Provinces of Canterbury and Westland* (Haast 1879). In his final decade – the white-beard phase – he had become an establishment figure as Professor of Geology, an authority in the museum world and finally New Zealand Commissioner for the Colinderies exhibition. His hair may have lightened, but we marvel at his energy and achievements. It is fitting that we can celebrate his 200<sup>th</sup> birthday together and remember his achievements.

Today we can look on the collection of medals and decorations as a record of Haast's reputation on the international scene established from an obscure museum at the bottom of the world. The only other New Zealand scientist who has received a similar level of recognition in his lifetime is Sir Ernest Rutherford.

After his death, the trustees of Canterbury Museum commissioned a painting of Haast by Alan Bowles Cambridge (front cover of this volume), which is undoubtedly based on the Bassano image in Figure 8. The painter has used some artistic licence – Haast was entirely white-headed in the 1880s, rather than the salt-and-pepper look he has been given.



Table of honours and decorations worn on Haast's German Consul uniform in 1887

	<p><b>1A. Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG)</b> collar and star, United Kingdom, 1886</p>	
	<p><b>1B. Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG)</b> badge, United Kingdom, 1886</p>	
	<p><b>2. Officier de l'Instruction Publique (Ordre des Palmes académiques)</b> [Officer of Public Instruction; Order of Academic Palms], Officier [Officer], France, 1886</p>	
	<p><b>3. Ordine della Corona d'Italia</b> [Order of the Crown of Italy], Cavaliere [Knight], Italy, 1879</p>	
	<p><b>4. Großherzoglich Hessischer Ludwigsorden</b> [Ludwig Order], Ritter I. Klasse [Knight 1st class], Hesse, Germany, 1877</p>	
	<p><b>5. Kaiserlicher Orden der Eisernen Krone</b> [Imperial Order of the Iron Crown] Ritter III. Klasse [Knight 3rd class], Austria, 1874</p>	
	<p><b>6. Herzoglich Sachsen-Ernestinischer Hausorden</b> [Saxe-Ernestine House Order] Ritter [Knight], Saxony, Germany, 1868</p>	
	<p><b>7. Verdienstorden Philipps des Großmütigen</b> [Order of Merit of Philip the Magnanimous]. Knight 1st class, Hesse, Germany, 1868</p>	
<p><b>8. Kaiserlich-Österreichischer Franz-Joseph-Orden</b> [Imperial Austrian Order of Franz Joseph], Ritterkreuz [Knight], Austria, 1865</p>		

**Figure 9.** In this studio portrait, taken in February 1887, Haast is wearing his German consul's uniform and his medals and decorations (illustrated on the right). Photograph by Fritz Meycke, Cologne & Bonn. Figure and information on medals compiled by Sascha Nolden. Alexander Turnbull Library PA3-0162; Curios-005-013/019



**Table 1.** List of photographs of Julius von Haast arranged in chronological order, noting the photographer (when known) and source of each image.

	Description	Photographer	Collection & reference	Comment
1	Studio portrait of Julius Haast	Bruno Lancel Hamel (attributed)	John Webster Collection, Auckland Libraries Heritage collections, 881-01	Earliest known extant photograph of Haast. Copy presented to Arthur Guyon Purchas on 26 July 1859.
2	Studio portrait of Julius Haast	Photographer unknown	Frontispiece to <i>The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast</i> , 1948. Location of original unknown	Probably taken about 1860.
3	Studio portrait of Mary and Julius Haast	James Elsbee (attributed)	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2164, PA2-2515, PA2-2343	Part of a group of four images taken around the time of their marriage on 25 June 1863.
4	Studio portrait of Julius Haast standing with top hat	James Elsbee (attributed)	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2512	As above
5	Studio portrait of Julius Haast sitting	James Elsbee (attributed)	State Library of New South Wales, P1/691	As above
6	Studio portrait of Julius Haast sitting	James Elsbee (attributed)	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2850	As above
7	Locket with head and shoulders hand-coloured portrait of Julius Haast	James Elsbee (attributed)	Alexander Turnbull Library, Curios-005-004	Part of a portrait taken with Mary Haast (3 above).
8	Studio portrait of Julius Haast	Christchurch Fancy Bazaar	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-1320	Taken about 1863–1865.
9	Portrait of Julius Haast wearing the insignia of the Order of Franz Josef	Photographer unknown	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2514	Probably taken 1865–1866. Haast was awarded the insignia in 1865.
10	Mary and Julius Haast outside their home, Glückauf	Photographer unknown	Hochstetter Collection Basel, 2.18.10	Taken in 1865.
11	Mary and Julius Haast outside their home, Glückauf	Photographer unknown	Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-5381-02	Probably taken 1865–1867. Vegetation has grown up around front of the house since above image was taken.
12	Mary and Julius Haast outside their home, Glückauf	Photographer unknown	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-f-080	Probably taken 1865–1867. Slightly different view but probably taken at same time as image above.

**Table 1.** Continued

13	Julius Haast (left) and his taxidermist Frederick Fuller with moa bones	Dr Alfred Charles Barker	Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-5381-01. Hochstetter Collection Basel, HCB 2.1.4	Taken on 26 September 1867 in front of Dr Barker's house in Christchurch.
14	Group of four portraits of Julius Haast taken at the same sitting	Daniel Louis Mundy	Geological Survey of Austria, GSA Signatur A 11637-BM.	With inscribed dedication by Haast dated 2 September 1869.
15	Interior of Canterbury Museum soon after it was opened in 1870, with Julius Haast sitting at lower right looking over the display of moa skeletons	Dr Alfred Charles Barker	Canterbury Museum, 1944.78.66	Probably taken late 1870 or 1871, soon after the new museum building opened.
16	Group at the opening of the Colonial and Vienna Exhibition in Christchurch. Haast is seated on the right.	Dr Alfred Charles Barker	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-Q-166-052. Canterbury Museum, 1957.13.312	Taken at the time the exhibition was opened in December 1872.
17	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Nelson King Cherrill, Christchurch	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-0471	Probably taken 1880.
18	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Nelson King Cherrill, Christchurch	Hochstetter collection Basel, HCB 5.2.H1	Inscribed date 1880; same sitting as 17 above but slightly different pose.
19	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Edmund Wheeler & Son, Christchurch	Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-7581-29	Probably taken about 1880.
20	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Edmund Wheeler & Son, Christchurch	Location of original unknown; copy negative Alexander Turnbull Library, ½-005290-F	Probably taken 1882–1883. Published by Bickerton (1884).
21	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Peter Schourup, Christchurch	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-1628	Probably taken early 1880s.
22	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Alexander Bassano, London	Library of the Botanical Garden of the University of Padua, IB.CC.2	Taken in 1886. This photo was later used as the basis for the 1888 painting of Haast by Allan Bowles Cambridge.
23	Portrait of Julius von Haast	Alexander Bassano, London	Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-4711-1	Taken in 1886.
24	Portrait of Haast wearing German Consul's uniform and his medals	Fritz Meycke, Cologne & Bonn	Alexander Turnbull Library, PA3-0162	Taken in February 1887.



**Table 2.** Published photographs that have been misidentified as Julius von Haast. Compiled by Simon Nathan.

	Description	Collection & reference	Comment
1	<i>A Welsh scientific eye surgeon</i> by G W Rice, page IV. Hawthorne Press, 2020.	Canterbury Museum, 19XX.2.2082	Identity unknown.
2	<i>Julius Haast in the Southern Alps</i> by C Burrows, page 19. Canterbury University Press, 2005.	Canterbury Museum, 2416	Person is Dr Carl Fischer.
3	<i>Moa</i> by Quinn Berentson, page 144. Craig Potton Publishing, 2012.	Alexander Turnbull Library, ½-047543-F	Couple is Anna and Robert Lendenfeld.
4	<i>Moa</i> (as above), page 147; Also Te Ara (online Encyclopedia of NZ), articles on Life Sciences, Research Institutions, and Museums.	Auckland Museum, 589-76	Figure is Frederick Fuller, taxidermist who worked for Haast.

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