Finch & Co



AN EXCEPTIONAL NORTH AMERICAN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WHALEBONE WALKING CANE

AN EXCEPTIONAL NORTH AMERICAN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WHALEBONE WALKING CANE THE KNOP OF CARVED SPERMWHALE TOOTH INLAID WITH TORTOISESHELL HEARTS AND A STAR THE FOUR SQUARE MID SECTION INLAID WITH TORTOISESHELL SCENES DEPICTING A WHALEBOAT BETWEEN TWO GIANT SPERM WHALES AN AMERICAN EAGLE STARS FOXES CATS AND HORSEMEN THE OCTAGONAL STEM PROFUSELY INLAID WITH TORTOISESHELL MUSKETS HARPOON GUNS KNIVES HEARTS AND DIAMONDS

CIRCA 1830-60

SIZE: 88.5CM LONG - 34¾ INS LONG

LITERATURE

PATRIOTIC AMERICAN MOTIFS ALWAYS LOOMED LARGE IN THE WHALE MEN'S ARTISTIC REPERTORY. SOME OF THEM MAY HAVE BEEN COPIED FROM TATTOOS, ESPECIALLY THE AMERICAN EAGLE. WALKING STICKS WERE A FAVOURITE PRODUCT OF THE SHIPS CARPENTER MADE IN ORDER TO WHILE AWAY THE TIME ON A TWO OR THREE YEAR VOYAGE. IN THE 'CRUISE OF THE CACHALOT' FRANK BULLEN RECORDED HOW ONE SUCH CARPENTER STARTED WORK ON HALF A DOZEN WALKING STICKS 'Â€¦. A HANDLE IS CARVED OUT OF A WHALE'S TOOTH AND INSETS OF BALEEN, SILVER, COCOA-TREE OR EBONY GIVE VARIETY AND FINISH.... THE WORK TURNED OUT WOULD.... TAKE A VERY HIGH PLACE IN AN EXHIBITION OF TURNERY, THOUGH NEVER A LATHE WAS NEAR IT'.

WHEN THE WHALE MEN BROUGHT THEIR SCRIMSHANDING ART TO THE PEAK OF PERFECTION THEY CREATED AN IMPORTANT NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS FOLK ART, BUT SCRIMSHAW DID NOT SURVIVE THE DEATH OF THE AMERICAN WHALING INDUSTRY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.