

Finch & C^o



A FINE PAIR OF SCRIMSHAW WALRUS TUSKS

A FINE PAIR OF SCRIMSHAW WALRUS TUSKS ENGRAVED WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES FEATHER PLUMES AND THE PORTRAITS OF FOUR LADIES OF FASHION. THE POINTS PIERCED FOR ATTACHMENT, FINE COLOUR AND PATINA
CIRCA 1850
SIZE : 47 CMLONG – 18½ INS LONG

LITERATURE

KNOWN AS 'MORSE IVORY' THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN WHALERS FREQUENTLY TRADED GOODS WITH ESKIMO'S TO OBTAIN WALRUS TUSKS. SCRIMSHAW WAS NOT MADE FOR SALE AND THERE WERE THEREFORE NO STANDARDS OF QUALITY OR TIME LIMITS TO BE MET AND UNIQUE PIECES WOULD BE PRODUCED OVER LONG PERIODS FOR LOVERS, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS WHILST WAITING FOR THE APPEARANCE OF A WHALE AND THE WATCH'S CALL OF 'THERE SHE BLOWS'.

THE DUTCH WORD 'SKRIMSHANDER' MEANING 'IDLE FELLOW' OR 'ONE WHO FRITTERS THE TIME AWAY' IS MOST PROBABLY THE ORIGIN OF 'SCRIMSHAW' USING WHATEVER TOOLS WERE AT HAND ON BOARD. SCRIMSHANDERING PROVIDED DIVERSION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR IDLE HANDS AND MINDS DURING LONG DREARY DAYS. A MID 19TH CENTURY LOG ENTRY FOR ONE WHALER RECORDS 'THIS IS TERRIBLY SLOW TRAVELLING, SHIP HAS MADE 39 MILES OF NOTHING SINCE YESTERDAY. ALL HANDS SCRIMSHANDERING. SO ENDS THIS VERY LONG DAY'.