Finch & Co



A FINE SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WHALEBONE STAY BUSK

A FINE SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WHALEBONE STAY BUSK INSCRIBED IN BLACK INK:
'ONCE IN A SPERM WHALES JAW DID REST BUT NOW INTENDED FOR A FEMALES BREAST'
ETCHED WITH AN ANCHOR, TWO ENTWINED HEARTS, A FLOWER IN A POT, BIRDS, A HOUSE AND A COMPASS
OLD SMOOTH GOLDEN PATINA
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 4CM HIGH, 38.5CM WIDE – 15 INS WIDE, 1½ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

MADE OF WOOD, BALEEN OR WHALE BONE THE STAY BUSK WAS INSERTED INTO A VERTICAL POCKET IN THE FRONT OF A WOMAN'S CORSET TO KEEP THE GARMENT FROM BUNCHING WHEN TIGHTLY LACED. MADE BY SAILORS WHILST AT SEA ON BOARD THE WHALING SHIPS AS LOVE TOKENS FOR THEIR SWEETHEARTS, STAY BUSKS WERE POPULAR SCRIMSHAW ITEMS BECAUSE THEY PROVIDED A SURFACE THAT COULD EASILY BE ENGRAVED. A FLAT EVEN SLAB OF PAN-BONE WAS DECORATED WITH NOSTALGIC AND SENTIMENTAL LOVE MOTIFS AS THE BUSK WAS WORN NEXT TO THE LADY'S HEART.