Finch & Co



MARINE IVORY PANBONE & BALEEN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WALKING CANE

A FINE MARINE IVORY PANBONE & BALEEN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW WALKING CANE, THE SPERM WHALE TOOTH HANDLE CARVED AS A TURKSHEAD KNOT

THE SPIRAL WHALEBONE SHAFT INLAID WITH BALEEN

MID 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 89CM LONG – 35 INS LONG

SEE FINCH & CO CATALOGUE NO.12, ITEM NO.68 AND 93 FOR OTHER SAILOR SCRIMSHAW CANES

LITERATURE

THE SPIRAL WHALEBONE SHAFT OF THIS CANE WAS CARVED TO RESEMBLE THE TUSK OF THE NARWHAL. THE DECORATIVE ENDLESS KNOT OF THE TURKS-HEAD CARVED WITH NO SEAMS OF VISIBLE BEGINNING OR END WAS LIKENED BY THE SAILORS TO LOVE AND BECAME A SYMBOL OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND UNION.

ON BOARD SHIP THE TURKS-HEAD KNOT WAS NOT JUST DECORATIVE, BUT HAD MANY PRACTICAL USES, MADE OF ROPE IT WAS FREQUENTLY PLACED ON THE UP-AND-DOWN SPOKE OF A SHIPS STEERING WHEEL SO THAT AT A GLANCE ONE COULD SEE IF THE HELM WAS AMIDSHIP. IT WAS USED ON BELL ROPES, AS HANDHOLDS ON MANROPES AND AS FOOTHOLDS ON FOOTROPES. TIED TIGHTLY IT WAS EVEN SOMETIMES USED FOR SMALL BUTTONS.