

# Finch & C<sup>o</sup>



## **BERING SEA INUIT ESKIMO MODEL OF A SEALSKIN COVERED ONE-HATCHED KAYAK**

A BERING SEA INUIT ESKIMO MODEL OF A SEALSKIN COVERED ONE-HATCHED KAYAK

THE HUNTER SEATED HOLDING A PADDLE WITH WOOD BONE AND IVORY HARPOONS, SPEARS SOCKET PIECES AND A LINE RACK ATTACHED TO THE DECK, COMPLETE WITH A WOODEN MODEL OF A SEALSKIN FLOAT ON A GUT AND IVORY LINE

SOLD TOGETHER WITH A WOODLANDS NATIVE AMERICAN EASTERN CREE OR NASKAPI MODEL OF A CEDAR WOOD AND BIRCH BARK 'CROOKED' CANOE

CIRCA 1900 – 1910

SIZES: A: 46CMLONG – 18CMLONG

B: 29.5CMLONG – 11½ INS LONG

## **LITERATURE**

USED PRIMARILY FOR HUNTING SEA MAMMALS THE KAYAK WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO INUIT CULTURE. COASTAL AND RIVER DWELLERS WERE DEPENDENT ON THESE VESSELS FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD AND BOWHEAD WHALES, NARWHALS, WALRUS AND SEALS WERE ALL HUNTED WITH A KAYAK EQUIPPED AS IN THIS MODEL. DESIGN VARIED IN DETAIL FROM ONE REGION OF THE ARCTIC TO ANOTHER, BUT THE BASIC PLAN OF A SLENDER VERY FAST SEALSKIN COVERED HUNTING CRAFT PROPELLED BY PADDLES NEVER VARIED. KAYAKS WERE CONSTRUCTED MOSTLY OF DRIFTWOOD SHAPED INTO GUN-WHALES, STRINGERS AND STANCHIONS SECURED TOGETHER WITH PEGS OF WOOD AND BONE, AND LASHINGS OF BALEEN AND SKIN. THE OILED SEALSKIN COVERING WAS SEWN OVER THE FRAME BY THE WOMEN TO FIT EXACTLY AND WAS AS LIGHT AS PARCHMENT. IN SMOOTH WATER THE KAYAK COULD TRAVEL WITH EASE AT 7 MILES AN HOUR.

BOTH CANOES AND KAYAKS HAD TO BE FLEXIBLE TO GIVE WITH THE MOVEMENT OF ROUGH WATER AND THE HUNTER'S LIVES DEPENDED ON THE GOOD CONDITION OF THEIR VESSELS. THE MATERIALS FOR EACH TYPE OF CRAFT WERE THEREFORE CAREFULLY CHOSEN; WITH THE BIRCH BARK USED FOR THE CANOES BOTTOM CONSISTING OF ONE WHOLE SHEET IT HAD TO BE OF EXCELLENT QUALITY. THESE CANOES WITH EXTREME ROCKERS, OR CURVE OF THE BOTTOM LINE, WERE USED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE 19TH CENTURY FUR TRADE TO FREIGHT THE BEAVER PELTS AND BEAR SKINS AND WERE VERY RESPONSIVE IN THE UNFORGIVING RIVER RAPIDS.