Finch & Co

LARGE SAILORS SCRIMSHAW PANBONE PLAQUE

A RARE LARGE SAILORS SCRIMSHAW PANBONE PLAQUE ENGRAVED WITH AN ARCTIC MARITIME SCENE OF A FULL RIGGED WHALING SHIP SAILING BEFORE AN ICEBERG THE MEN IN THE CROWS NEST WITH TELESCOPES LOOKING OUT FOR WHALES

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 24.5CM HIGH, 39CM WIDE - 9½ INS HIGH, 15¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE LARGE FLAT THIN SLABS OF PANBONE TAKEN FROM A SECTION AT THE REAR OF THE SPERM WHALE'S JAW WERE LARGE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THIS PANEL AND WERE A GOOD SURFACE ON WHICH THE SCRIMSHANDER COULD ENGRAVE WHALING OR WHALE RELATED SCENES. EXCEPT FOR THE TEETH, PANBONE WAS THE FAVOURITE PART OF THE SPERM WHALE TO SCRIMSHAND. SHIP PORTRAITURE BEGAN IN ABOUT 1800 AND THE PORTRAYAL OF A SHIP AND ITS GEAR WAS NEARLY ALWAYS ACCURATE FOR THE SCRIMSHANDERS KNEW THEIR VESSELS EXCEEDINGLY WELL AFTER MANY LONG MONTHS AT SEA SEARCHING FOR THEIR QUARRY.

SCRIMSHAW WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF DAILY LIFE ON BOARD A WHALER. IT PROVIDED A PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL OUTLET AS WELL AS A SOCIAL DIVERSION AMONGST THE CREW. THERE WAS OFTEN NO REWARD OTHER THAN THE PLEASURE OF CRAFTING AND COMPLETING A PIECE AND THE JOY RECEIVED FROM GIVING IT TO A LOVED ONE. IT WAS NOT OFTEN CRAFTED FOR SALE AS THE TIME INVOLVED WOULD HAVE MADE THE COST PROHIBITIVE.