

Finch & C^o



AFRICAN SHONA / TSONGA CARVED WOOD HEADREST

A SOUTH AFRICAN SHONA / TSONGA CARVED WOOD HEADREST OF ARCHITECTURAL FORM
SMOOTH DARK PATINA WITH PATCHES OF LIGHT BROWN TO THE SPREADING CIRCULAR FEET
OLD CHIP TO ONE EDGE OF TOP BAR

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 13CM HIGH, 17CM WIDE, 7.5CM DEEP - 5 INS HIGH, 6¾ INS WIDE, 3 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

HEADRESTS WERE OFTEN TAKEN BY NEWLY WED BRIDES TO THEIR NEW HOMES. THEY WERE COMMISSIONED BY HER FATHER FROM A LOCAL CRAFTSMAN. SEVERAL TYPES AND STYLES OF HEADREST COULD BE FOUND IN ONE HOMESTEAD AS THEY WERE COMMISSIONED BY DIFFERENT MALE MEMBERS OF THE EXTENDED FAMILIES FROM CARVERS WORKING NEAR THE DIFFERENT BRIDE'S LOCALITIES. THIS CUSTOM OF THE BRIDE BRINGING A HEADREST AS A GIFT FROM HER HOME SYMBOLISED THE LINK SHE WOULD CREATE BETWEEN HER ANCESTORS AND HER NEW HUSBAND'S, WHO WOULD GIVE SPIRITUAL PROTECTION FOR THE CHILDREN SHE WOULD PRODUCE FOR HIM.