

Finch & C^o



ALASKAN YUPIK ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY BOAT HOOK OR GAFF

AN ALASKAN YUPIK ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY BOAT HOOK OR GAFF WITH FLUTED SURFACES AND SPURRED

FEATHERED LINE ENGRAVINGS

SMOOTH SILKY OLD CREAMY PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 27.5CM LONG, 4.5CM WIDE, 2.5CM DEEP - 10¼ INS LONG, 1¾ INS WIDE, 1 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

UMIAKS, THE BOATS USED FOR WHALE HUNTS, VARIED ONLY SLIGHTLY IN DESIGN FROM ONE END OF THE ESKIMO WORLD TO OTHER. MADE OF A WOODEN FRAME COVERED WITH A SEAL OR WALRUS SKIN TARPULIN, A 9 METRE (30 FEET) LONG CRAFT COULD EASILY CARRY A LOAD OF 900KG AND EIGHT PEOPLE, YET BE LIGHT ENOUGH WHEN EMPTY TO BE CARRIED BY FOUR MEN. THE SINGLE OR DOUBLE MAN KAYAK USED FOR HUNTING SEALS AND FOR FISHING, WAS THE HUNTER'S MOST PRIZED POSSESSION AND A SYMBOL OF HIS MANHOOD. USUALLY MADE OF DRIFTWOOD IN A TIGHT SKIN COVERING, IT WAS STRONG AND FLEXIBLE. IT WOULD NOT FREEZE OR BE CUT BY NEWLY FORMED ICE, AND WHEN HANDLED BY AN EXPERIENCED PADDLER EQUIPPED WITH A SKIN SPRAY SKIRT TIED AROUND THE COCKPIT, IT WAS VIRTUALLY UNSINKABLE.

STORED IN THE COCKPIT, BOAT HOOKS WERE ATTACHED TO A WOODEN SHAFT BY MEANS OF LEATHER STRIPS FASTENED THROUGH THE HOLES DRILLED TO ONE END. IT WAS A TOOL THAT OCEAN HUNTERS TRAVELLING ON THE SEA OR THE ICE COULD NOT DO WITHOUT. IT WAS USED TO PULL HARD TO REACH ITEMS OUT FROM INSIDE THE ENDS OF A KAYAK, RETRIEVE FISH TRAPS OR NETS FROM THE WATER, OR EVEN RESCUE ANOTHER BOAT THAT HAD FLOATED AWAY.