Finch & Co



AMERICAN SAILOR'S SCRIMSHAW WALKING CANE WITH A SPERM WHALE TOOTH DOUBLE ENDED HANDLE

AN AMERICAN SAILOR'S SCRIMSHAW WALKING CANE WITH A SPERM WHALE TOOTH DOUBLE ENDED HANDLE CARVED TO REPRESENT THE AMERICAN EAGLE AND A HUNTING DOG THE EYES INLAID WITH BALEEN THE SHAFT TURNED FROM A SOLID PIECE OF WHALEBONE

MID 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 80CM LONG - 31½ INS LONG

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LITERATURE

MADE ON BOARD WHALING SHIPS DURING THEIR LONG SEA VOYAGES, SAILORS MOSTLY MADE WALKING CANES TO SELL ON THEIR RETURN TO THEIR HOME PORT TO AUGMENT THEIR 'SHARE'. THE TIME SPENT SCRIMSHAWING DID NOT AFFECT THEIR WAGES AS A PECULIAR FORM OF PAYMENT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE WHALING INDUSTRY IN THAT WHALERS WERE NOT PAID A REGULAR SALARY. INSTEAD THEIR PAY WAS BASED ON A PRE-SET SHARE IN THE PROFITS. THIS WAS CALLED A 'LAY' AND VARIED FROM QUITE A LARGE PORTION FOR THE CAPTAIN TO ALMOST MINISCULE SHARES FOR A GREENHAND OR INEXPERIENCED SEAMAN.