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Scrimshaw Observer

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A Hero's Box Made by Benjamin Clough, Scourge of Murderous Mutineers

by Stuart M. Frank

At our Scrimshaw Forensics® sessions in New Bedford, we invite people from all over to bring in scrimshaw (by appointment) for examination and vetting. Our hope is that we can identify and authenticate the scrimshaw, impart historical context, and optimally identify the particular maker, provide biographical details, including ship-names, dates, and home ports, and maybe indicate pieces in other collections that are "attributed to the same hand." In some cases, the examination leads to disappointment for us and for the owners: not all scrimshaw is Great Art and there are a lot of fakes and forgeries out there. But happily, people often bring in good scrimshaw, sometimes even world-class gems.

One of the best—unique in our experience—was submitted a few months ago, by a four-generations collateral descendant of the maker: a rectangular candle-box constructed of six polished planks of sperm whale panbone (jawbone), with tiny, expert dovetail joinery at the corners and a sliding lid, polychrome engraved via pinprick transfer on the top and all four sides. The top has two scenes: a monochrome view of the Bullfinch Building of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, designed by Charles Bullfinch (1763-1844) and built in 1821, with a horse-drawn sleigh in the foreground; and a cityscape viewed from a hillside, with an equestrian figure, a tree, and two cows on the hilltop foreground, and a harbor and

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Panbone candle box by Benjamin Clough.

30th Annual Scrimshaw Weekend Friday, May 4 – Sunday, May 6, 2018

The annual Scrimshaw Weekend is the world's only forum devoted to the indigenous shipboard art of whalers during the "Age of Sail." Enthusiasts from across the country and abroad will gather to share the enjoyment of this distinctive and beautiful art form.

Weekend highlights and lecture topics:

- Presentations on the history and identification of scrimshaw
- Recent discoveries about significant makers and genres

- Newly discovered whaleman and navy scrimshaw artists
- Auctioneering and the how-to's of buying and selling
- The modern manufacture of legitimate scrimshaw replicas and scrimshaw-themed merchandise
- Annual market report
- Antique Scrimshaw Collectors Association (ASCA) report
- Field trip to an important private collection

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Scrimshaw Observer

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Our mission: To promote and protect the trade, collection, and study of antique scrimshaw, the historic and culturally important folk art of the whaleman.

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A Hero's Box . . . , continued

and a hill across the water in the distance beyond, surmounted by images of songbirds, leafy plants, and a bumblebee. The ends have genre scenes: a farmer and a milkmaid with two cows; and a dramatic wolf attack. The long sides and top are each engraved with “candy-cane”

(“barber-pole”) striped borders along all four edges. One has two fashion-plate images of women in elaborate gowns, three songbirds, leafy vines, and small flowers; the other has the U.S. Capitol with its three original Pantheon-type domes, flying two flags, with fences and trees. (The original copper dome, completed in 1823, was the

result of combining designs by Dr. William Thornton, Benjamin Latrobe, and Charles Bullfinch. The present dome is a replacement, constructed during 1855-66, which indicates that the scrimshaw was likely done sometime before 1855, probably based on one of the myriad contemporaneous illustrations of the iconic building.) The provenance states explicitly that Clough made the box himself “on a voyage in the South Pacific,” though the “circa 1830” date ascribed by the family is probably more than a decade too early.



Benjamin Clough (1819-1889) had a long and colorful career in the whale fishery. Born in Monmouth, Maine, he was the sixth of seven sons and ninth among ten children of farmers Asa Clough and

Mary F. Griffin. He was a career whaleman. His earliest voyages are not recorded, but his journals of the ships *Rajah* of New Bedford (1839-41) and *Sharon* of Fairhaven (1841-45) survive, and the seminal heroic episode of his life occurred when he was third mate of the *Sharon*. They sailed in May 1841, and in November 1842 three native crewmen who had been shipped in the Gilbert Islands mutinied and murdered Captain Howes N. Norris. The remaining ship's company escaped in the whaleboats, whence Ben Clough recaptured the ship—initially alone and unassisted:

All efforts to retake the ship proved unavailing. Mr. Clough volunteered to undertake the task himself. Dropping overboard from one of the boats, after swimming for an hour and a half he climbed into the cabin window, and single-handed encountered the natives and re-took the ship. To his daring intrepidity are to be attributed the return of a valuable cargo, and what was more important, the preservation of the surviving crew from the miserable fate which would have overtaken them had they attempted to reach any of the cannibal islands in those seas. (*Vineyard Gazette*, May 1889)¹

Clough shot one of the mutineers, another was killed by a shipmate with a cutlass, and the third was captured and landed at Sydney in December 1842. Thomas Harlock, Jr., took over as relief master. In recognition of Clough's courage and

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A Hero's Box . . . , *continued*



Mutiny aboard the bark *Sharon*, 1842. Panel from the Whaling Panorama by Benjamin Russell (1804-1886) and Caleb Purrington (1812-1876), 1848. New Bedford Whaling Museum.

pluck, when the ship arrived home in February 1845 the owners awarded him a fine boxed sextant and gave him his first command: captain, at 26, of the next voyage of the *Sharon* (1845-48). He afterwards commanded the ships *Frances Henrietta* of New Bedford (1848-51) and *Niagara* of Fairhaven (1851-54), bark *General Scott* of Fairhaven (1855-58), and ship *Northern Light* of New Bedford (1864-67). Between voyages in 1854 he married Charlotte Chase Downs (1833-1909), daughter of Captain Charles Downs.

Clough... had made enough money to be able to afford a nine-month vacation, spending most of his time [on] Martha's Vineyard, where he was courting a beautiful Tisbury girl, eighteen-year-old Charlotte Chase Downs.

With strange irony, Charlotte's father was none other than Captain Charles Downs, the man who, when in command of the whaleship *Oscar* [homeward bound in 1836] had gammed at length with thirty-year-old Captain Howes Norris of the *London Packet* and had humiliated him with compelling evidence that his men were deliberately wasting provisions. This encounter had led directly to the mortifying mutiny on the *London Packet*, and so had contributed to the paranoia that was such a decisive factor in the violent suppression of the rebellion on the *Sharon*.²

The couple had three children and lived in Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, next door to Charlotte's parents, and later in Vineyard Haven. Captain Clough retired there in 1867, "having grossed over four hundred thousand dollars in the course of a brilliant whaling career, and settled to becoming a pillar of Martha's Vineyard society,"³ and was elected to the state legislature. For reasons unexplained, the panbone box descended to a niece, Florence Taber Lewis of Vineyard Haven, who eventually passed it along to her great-grandson.

Clough's journals, papers, carte-de-visite family portraits, and the brass sextant are in the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

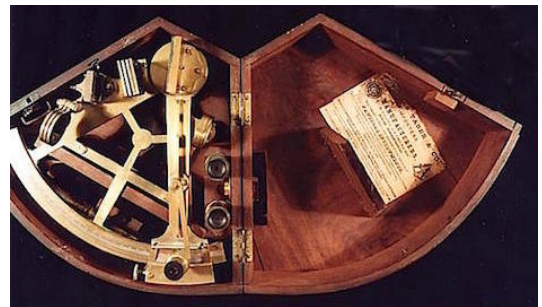
¹Quoted by Joan Druett, *In the Wake of Madness: The Murderous Voyage of the Whaleship Sharon* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 2003), p. 229.

²Ibid, p. 222.

³Ibid, p. 228.



**Captain Benjamin Clough.
Carte-de-Visite portrait.
New Bedford Whaling
Museum 2000.100.2003.**



Trophy sextant presented to Benjamin Clough for his heroic rescue of the whaleship *Sharon* of Fairhaven from mutineers in 1842; made by E. & G.W. Blunt of New York, in a wood keystone box, labeled "Charles Taber & Co., Importer & Manufacturers, No. 45 Union Street and No. 8 North Water Street., New Bedford." New Bedford Whaling Museum 2000.30.1&2.

Stuart M. Frank is the founder and director of the Scrimshaw Forensics® Laboratory, founder and organizer of the annual Scrimshaw Weekend at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and author of Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved and several other books and monographs about nautical art, including Classic Whaling Prints and the forthcoming Dutch and Flemish Old Master Paintings in the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

Scrimshaw Market Report

Skinner Sale Includes Charles Ball U.S.S. *Constitution* Scrimshaw

by Andy Jacobson

The marine segment of Skinner's November 4, 2017 Americana sale presented a *Constitution* cane and associated tooth, along with a variety of scrimshaw ranging from period to contemporary. There were lesser examples from the late Ernie Helides's collection of canes and raw teeth. This mid-level sale was a true opportunity for the normal collector. Budget-breaking rarities were pretty much absent.



Lot 144, the "Charles Ball USS *Constitution* Whalebone Cane and Scrimshaw Whale's Tooth," was the controversial star of the show. Mr. Ball served aboard the frigate from 1839-1841. The consignor was apparently a Ball family member. Thanks to the diligence of intrepid scrimshaw historian Paul Vardeman, we discovered that a similar cane, possibly by the same hand, is in the Mystic collection (see Malley, *Graven by the Fishermen...*, p. 95). That stick has a similar collar and a different mushroom cap knob. To this eye, the Skinner example had a sloppily married, too small clenched-fist knob with an added mid to late 20th-century brass "D" ring. The collar was uneven and had what appeared to be a dripped wax filling. The work was not commensurate to the quality and proportions of the shaft. The "D" ring is an abomination.



The *Constitution* tooth was the subject of extreme speculation. The prime concern was whether the two pieces had always been together or if the tooth were a later addition. The tooth seems to be a decade later than the cane. There is a related tooth in a private collection. The market only partially answered those concerns. The \$50,000 to \$70,000 estimate was aggressive. There were two phones. The tooth opened at \$36,000 and was slowly hammered down to one telephone at \$40,000, which may have been bidding against the reserve or a passel of weak left bids. No matter, that still translates into a whole pile of money: \$49,200. The other phone, the Internet, and the room were silent observers.

There were a dozen single cane lots and five multiple stick lots. The canes were presentable mid-level examples that were the type that used to elicit excitement before we became spoiled by an overabundance of exceptional material in the last few years.

Lot 149, a 34³/₄" inscribed spiral shaft cane, sold for \$1,046. It cost \$1,540 as Lot 196 at Rafael Osona's on Aug. 6, 1994.

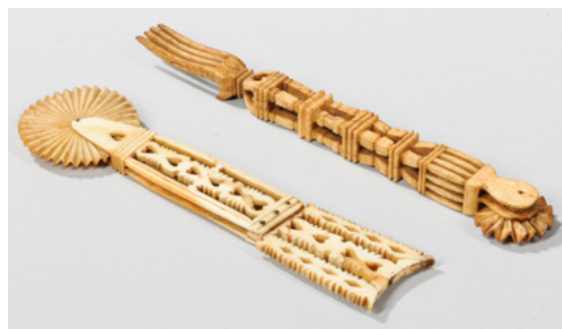
Lot 151, a 36¹/₂" coiled snake and fist cane, sold for \$984.



Lot 152, a large 39⁷/₈" narwhal cane, realized \$1,845.

Lot 156, a 36" "L" shaped stick, brought \$738.

There were four mixed crimper lots. Of particular note was Lot 170, two once-great crimpers. The first had open work hearts and diamonds sporting multiple breaks and old repairs. The second was a fine double-wheel architectural example with one broken wheel and the other long gone. \$2460.



Lot 173, three crimpers all with beautiful patinas but some significant apologies, sold for a reasonable \$523. The largest was worth the lot.

In a seemingly unending attempt to dispose of Ernie Helides's undecorated teeth holdings, this sale had thirteen lots. Massachusetts residents got to acquire some bargains.

The priciest tooth was Lot 194, a massive 9" unpolished example that sold for \$3,198.

Andy Jacobson is the owner of Andrew Jacobson Marine Antiques in Ipswich, MA, selling a full line of quality marine antiques for 39 years. He also provides auction consultation services and qualified appraisals of collections and estates.

“Foster” At Last!

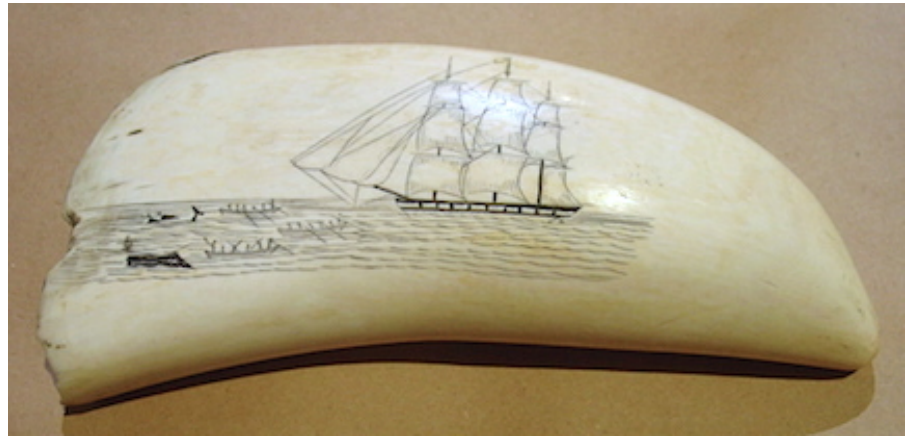
by Stuart M. Frank

At the very first Scrimshaw Weekend, at the Kendall Whaling Museum in 1989, a distinguished British gentleman then living in Montreal identified a tooth in the museum collection that has a sperm whaling scene as virtually identical in every respect with one that descended in his wife’s family—including not only the scene itself but the manner of draftsmanship, the very white color and high polish of the ivory. He explained that around 1900 the tooth had been presented as a gesture of gratitude to the wife’s grandfather, a chaplain to fisherman in the herring fishery of Grimsby, Lincolnshire, by a fisherman named Foster, who was forty or fifty years old at the time and had inherited that tooth and several others from his father, a fisherman and former whaleman in the South Sea sperm whale fishery who had done scrimshaw in his youth. Nothing further was known about Foster the whaleman or Foster the son; ever since, a dozen or more teeth have been rightly and wrongly attributed to that same hand. And, of course, over the years a few self-appointed experts have expressed doubts about the truth of the yarn, or that such a fellow named Foster ever existed at all.

Comparisons conducted in consultation with Janet West and the late Donald E. Ridley at the Kendall in 1990 resulted in the attribution of several other teeth (in the Hull Maritime Museum and Scott Polar Research Institute in England; at Mystic Seaport, Nantucket, the Kendall, and elsewhere in the USA, including Flayderman, p. 71, top right) and possibly also a busk (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Merseyside, England). Some are monochrome; others have subtly applied color. This quest led to the provisional identification of similar work by a different hand, whose monogram signature on a specimen in the Penobscot Marine Museum identifies the artist only as “IWY.” In fact, although the workmanship on the type-specimen Foster teeth is of very good quality, the images are so generic, simple, and straightforward that any further attributions have been tenuous. For example, an anonymous artist whose scrimshaw is stylistically and conceptually similar to Foster’s is the so-called Naval Engagement Engraver, with whose work the resemblance includes the overall layout and design of nautical scenes, the simplicity of draftsmanship, with uncrowded deployment of ships and other images on the tooth, and the techniques employed in shading the sails and the sea.

After years of searching, it turns out that the sometime whaleman who produced the Grimsby tooth (and at least some of the others) was almost certainly Charles Foster (1829–1865), born in Margate, Kent, England, the son of William and Sarah Foster. He was whaling out of Hull and probably London in the 1840s and ’50s. At Hull in 1854, he married Margaret Dewick, who bore him a daughter and three sons before her death in 1859. By the time of the 1861 UK Census (and perhaps much earlier), Foster was a fisherman living in Great Grimsby and had already married for the second time, to a widow with the improbable name Kezia Slater Kate Patey Wakeham (1835–

1885), a native of Brixham, Devonshire. She bore Foster a son and three daughters before Charles died at Caistor, Lincolnshire, in 1865. Kezia soon married for her third time, to a younger man, Edward Horton (1843–1876), a fisherman who presumably helped to raise Charles and Kezia’s children for the few years he had remaining. There is little doubt that Charles was the Foster mentioned in the Grimsby provenance and that NBWM 2001.100.1086 was made by him. I am also fairly confident that he must have done more than the one; but the work is so generic and so simple that I am not wholly convinced about any of the other attributions.



Polar Institute collection accession #Y: 62/15/24 Side A. A brigantine and a similar ship with a pennant inscribed “Trident,” putting to sea past a mole with a lighthouse.



Side B. A British whaleship hove-to, cutting in a whale. Photos courtesy Polar Institute Museum.



From Flayderman, *Scrimshaw and Scrimshanders*, p. 71.

Eldred's Auction Starts Strong with Kobacker Scrimshaw

by Andy Jacobson

Eldred's three-day November 2017 Americana Sale started strong, featuring the first session of the Kobacker Scrimshaw Collection. With the exception of the Osona sale of one of their three consecutively dated "Susan's" teeth, the scrimshaw collection was intact. A subsidiary grouping of Napoleonic P.O.W. holdings had been gradually dispersed. The entire collection was last famously displayed and viewed at the Kobackers' Nantucket home during a 2002 Scrimshaw Weekend field trip. The collection was well known and eagerly anticipated.

The Kobackers were advised by a small group of highly competitive dealers. The collection was composed of relatively small categories of select crimpers, large patriotic teeth, and examples by many of the better regarded scrimshaw artists, including Frederick Myrick, the Banknote Engraver, William Gilpin, and N. S. Finney.



The tone of the sale was immediately set with Lot 2, a large 9.25" boldly carved walrus ivory pipe decorated with a bearded gent that sold for \$1,560. (All prices include the buyer's premium.)

Lot 5, Ceres Artisan/William Gilpin 6.75" sailor and eagle "Free Trade & Sailor's Rights" under a full rigged ship vignette with no apologies estimated at \$15-\$20K, brought \$19,200 from the floor.



Lot 9 was a pair of 7.75" polychrome teeth decorated with a variety of patriotic motifs including Lady Liberty and American eagles. One tooth had a spread eagle topped scene filled with crossed whaling implements within a foliate border above a whale ship under sail and a full portrait of a sperm whale. Multiple extended parallel age cracks that passed through the scenes clearly did not affect the price. Estimated at \$15-\$25K, it sold to a phone bidder at \$30,000.

Lot 10, fronted by an exquisite polychrome-decorated scene of a seated Lady Liberty beneath an eagle clutching an "E Pluribus Unum" banner, was attributed to N. S. Finney. The back had a photo realistic semi-pastoral scene. The saw tooth border at the base is reminiscent of many Finney examples. It blew by its high estimate, selling for a well-deserved \$42,000.



Lot 13, a large, virtually 6" x 13.5" double side decorated panbone, sold to a buyer in the room for \$36,000. Unlike the mysterious Skinner \$52,000 August panbone, the allure of this piece was undeniable. The front had pretty much everything one would want in a whaling scene: an overactive whaling scene with a whaleship, whaleboats taking whales, stove boats and waifed whales. A full sperm whale portrait filled the back, along with the notation "...1835 Ship Briton." There was a significant chip in the upper left corner that reduced some of the geometric border. The contrast and clarity of both sides was impeccable.



Lot 15, a large 9.25" double fisted, double wheel crimper that had a four-column openwork, baleen banded shaft and fluted wheels, was estimated at \$20-\$30,000 and sold to a phone bidder for \$30,000.

Lot 18, a reticulated diamond, heart, and geometric decorated 7" whale ivory crimper with an ingenious folded testing fork and elaborately figured wheel, eclipsed its \$10-\$15,000 estimate, selling for \$39,000 to become the most expensive in recent memory.



Lot 23 was a 5.75" extended hand and cuff crimper with much better than average carving. The alleged killing lance motif on the wheel mounts seemed a bit fanciful and there was an old repair. The crimper deserved and received a big hand from bidders. Estimated at \$4-\$6,000, it went to the phone at a very strong \$20,400.

Eldred's Auction, *continued*

Every sale has its bargains. This event was no exception. Those who closely examined the catalog and were opportunistic and quick with their paddles were rewarded. Lot 3, a pair of banded 10.5" knitting needles sporting delicately carved boots and heels, were hammered down for \$600. They had been optimistically estimated at \$1,000–\$1,500. Knitting needles remain grossly undervalued. Lot 20, a delicately carved 5.75" crimper that had a stepped and reeded shaft and a fine open work wheel, was estimated at \$1,000–\$1,500. Instead of a testing fork there was a serrated ventilating (?) finial. Apparently any deviation from the norm is a deal breaker. At \$600, this delightful crimper may well have been the steal of the sale.



The day's biggest story was the incredible shrinking market for Frederick Myrick's "Susan's" teeth. Estimated at \$60,000–\$80,000, Bill Bourne, finding no reasonable opening bid went backwards to \$28,000. There were no takers. A dealer in the audience offered \$20,000, which was summarily rejected, and the tooth passed. Lot 35 was signed but late, dated Feb. 7, 1829. There were multiple parallel age cracks extending through the design. It was a solid but rather undistinguished example. Today's highly selective collectors were uninterested.

The modern market for Myrick's work began at Richard Bourne's Hyannis auction room in August 1971 when a Susan's tooth sold for \$11,000. The next price rise occurred at the Barbara Johnson Sale Part 2, September 1982. Lot #420, the centerpiece of Everett U. Crosby's 1955 book *Much Ado About Scrimshaw*, a presentation tooth from Myrick to Mr. Prince Coffin, realized \$44,000. That price was only exceeded in August 1997 when Rafael Osona sold a "Susan" for \$50,600.

You'd have to fall back 35 years to the second tooth to find a publicly traded Susan for under \$50,000. That no one was willing to take advantage of an opportunity to acquire a legitimate Myrick Susan for \$33,600 net is telling. Has the market bottomed or moved on?

Only 4 of the 52 lots failed to find a new home. The passed lots were:

- Lot 6, a fine pair of St. Helena teeth topped by anthropomorphic faces estimated at \$8–\$12,000.
- Lot 19, an undistinguished crimper optimistically estimated at \$700–\$1,000.
- Lot 35, the aforementioned Susan.
- Lot 39, a swift with a bold fist and cuff clamp estimated at \$5–\$7,000 and passed at a reasonable \$2,800, which reflected the wildly uneven swift market.

By my count, the collection grossed \$464,175. By dollar, three buyers accounted for 63% or \$293,200 of the total. That indicated a highly competitive market for top tier objects.



The sale included other interesting non-Kobacker scrimshaw material. Of special merit was Lot 65, a dazzling small 3.75" polychrome tooth decorated with a stylized American flag above a spread eagle clutching a Union shield. The back was bird, vine, hex and star festooned, all surrounded by a saw tooth base border. There was a significant chip on the lower left side. A crowd favorite, it outperformed its \$2–\$3,000 estimate, selling for \$5,100 to the telephone.



Two non-Kobacker whaling teeth perfumed well. Lot 66, a 7.25" polychrome decorated tooth with active whaling scenes on both sides including cutting-in, stove boats, and fluttering birds, was estimated at \$10–\$12,000 and realized \$9,600.

Lot 70, an 8.5" tooth decorated on both sides with active whaling scenes, was strongly estimated at \$15–\$20,000 and sold for \$13,200.



Lot 88, an 8.5" open work crochet hook with a delicate hand finial holding a polychrome rose, sold within estimate for \$1,320.

It's the same old song and dance. Great, fresh material seeks its own strong level; the rest is anyone's guess.

Collectors' Corner

The Bird/Whale Engraver

by Paul E. Vardeman

An article in the New York *Times* published September 6, 1998 titled “Chasing the Great White Whalebone” included an illustration of a tooth owned by the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, MA, which was scrimshawed with a brig above a classic scene of a whale knocking a whaleboat into the air and spilling the crew and gear. The image was vaguely familiar, but the location of a scrimshaw collection in an area such as Pittsfield came as a surprise.

I contacted the museum and learned that the tooth was part of a collection bequeathed to it in 1957 upon the death of Dr. Willis I. Milham, a retired professor of astronomy at Williams College. Dr. Milham was a collector of all sorts of things, including 130 timepieces, 400 mechanical puzzles, meteorological instruments, Bennington ceramics, and a scrimshaw collection which, according to his obituary, was “reputed to be one of the three largest ever assembled in this country.” His scrimshaw collection was presented to the Melville Room at the Athenaeum.

The Atheneum’s inventory list describes the tooth as 5½”x 3½” with a:

Design of whaling ship, whales, boats and roses over whole surface. Front and back. Polychrome. Top: bouquet of red flowers, tree with three birds, whaling ship, vine encircling top. Bottom: spouting whale being harpooned, whale boats and sailors.

In 1957, the estimated value for the tooth was listed at \$75.



Berkshire Athenaeum

Further research turned up more scrimshawed pieces by this anonymous hand, whom I have dubbed “The Bird/Whale Engraver,” including a baleen plaque illustrated on p. 22 of Flayderman, three other teeth with similar images, and four busks.

Another tooth with a whaling scene much like the Berkshire tooth is in the Sag Harbor Whaling Museum collection. The image is of a whale boat being tossed and numerous large flying birds in the background. The presence of these birds on



Flayderman Eldred's Berkshire
this and another tooth has caused one auction cataloger to misidentify this artist as the Pagoda/Albatross Engraver.



Sag Harbor

All of the scrimshaw is freehand and the numerous sperm and right whales are extremely well executed. Two teeth have images of brigs, one flying a French flag.



Osona Aug. 6, 2015

The four teeth are all flat and wide and appear to have come from the same whale. In addition to the whaling scenes, there are seven separate illustrations of whales. An image frequently appearing on the teeth as well as the busks is a bird, either a robin or a dove sitting on a tree limb surrounded by leafy vines and an occasional clover. This unidentified bird was a favorite of this scrimshander: of the eight pieces identified, the bird appears twelve times.

The Bird/Whale Engraver, *continued from page 8*



Two privately owned teeth have recently been offered at auction. One brought \$80,500 at Eldred's in July 2011, considerably more than the \$75 valuation placed on the Berkshire tooth in 1957.

One faker has already shown up to copy the Flayderman busk, but instead of whalebone, this person scrimshawed a cow rib enhanced by adding a date and ship's name. Caveat emptor.

The work of the Bird/Whale Engraver is of very high quality and merits further research to identify the scrimshander. Perhaps a good starting point would be to find the name of the French brig on the Osona tooth. After all, how many French brigs were whalers?



Hon. Paul E. Vardeman, retired judge, scrimshaw collector, and historian, lives in Kansas City, Missouri.



30th Annual Scrimshaw Weekend May 4 – May 6, 2018 *continued from page 1*

Friday, May 4

The 9th Annual Nautical Antiques Show runs from noon to 5 p.m., with early admission from 11 a.m. to noon. The show and its early-bird session are free for Scrimshaw Weekend attendees. Admission to the show is free for museum members and with regular admission to the museum for non-members. Early bird admission is available to museum members and non-members for an additional \$5.00.

8 pm: Scrimshaw Weekend's Opening Presentation

Saturday, May 5

10 am–10 pm

Saturday begins with registration and coffee, followed by a full day of presentations, buffet lunch, and an afternoon coffee break. The evening features a cocktail reception, banquet dinner, and keynote presentation.

Sunday, May 6

9:30 am–6:00 pm

Thrilling off-site field trip, location and time TBA. Price of field trip is not included in Scrimshaw Weekend admission. Includes round-trip transportation and lunch.

Scrimshaw Weekend Registration Information

Museum Members \$315 | Non-Members \$370

Plus 1 Dinner Guest \$75.00

Register online at whalingmuseum.org, or call 508-997-0046, or by mail: Send payment to Scrimshaw Weekend, New Bedford Whaling Museum, 18 Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford, MA 02740. Checks should be made payable to New Bedford Whaling Museum and include Scrimshaw Weekend in the check memo.

May 4, 2018

NAUTICAL ANTIQUES SHOW DEALER ALERT

The Nautical Antiques Show has had dealer sellout for eight years straight. Last year's dealers have right of first refusal; if you would like to be put on the dealer waiting list, please email Sandy Moss – sushandel@msn.com.

Update on Pending Ivory Legislation in Massachusetts

by Mark Jacobson

After the defeat of a similar bill proposing further restrictions on all animal ivory and ivory products failed in the Massachusetts legislature in 2015, a new set of bills, still pending, were reintroduced in 2016 to the Massachusetts Senate (SB450) and House (HB419). These bills provide more clarity on proposed ivory restrictions and focus more clearly and specifically on the trade of elephant and rhinoceros ivory products within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As reported in an earlier edition of the *Scrimshaw Observer*, the original 2015 bills were judged to be too broad and did not survive committee level testimony. Strong testimony from within the museum, art, antiques and scrimshaw trades successfully defended the cultural and historical value of scrimshaw and related antiquities composed in part or whole by marine mammal products. Important distinctions were shown between saving endangered animals and the preservation of historical/cultural treasures.

The Massachusetts House and Senate Committees concluded that marine mammals (whale, walrus, and dolphin) have had a strong track record of being adequately protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1972, and as such, including those species under any new restrictions was deemed unnecessary. Massachusetts would continue to follow the restrictions and guidelines of the EPA in its interpretation of restrictions on antique marine mammal ivory artifacts, without further restrictions.

Clearly, this was an important development in protecting scrimshaw and related art and antiques. However, we feel that without our collective testimonies, the scrimshaw trade and artform could likely have easily been jeopardized in a manner similar to the impact of similar legislation in New York, California, Hawaii, and New Jersey.

The defeat of these bills led to the creation of new and adjusted 2016 legislation focusing specifically on elephant and rhinoceros ivory (Senate Bill 450 and House Bill 419). These bills were/are specific to elephant and rhinoceros ivory, and make no mention of marine mammal products. That being said, they also do not specifically exclude them from the scope of the legislation.

Hearings were held in the fall 2017, and these bills remain pending. To date, nothing has been introduced to reopen the legislation to additional review of marine mammal restrictions. However, there have been newly introduced addendums regarding widening the scope of the bill to include mastodon and mammoth ivory products—both extinct species—that were also not part of the original bills.

The position of the Board of the Antique Scrimshaw Collectors Association is that the bills remain too broad. Adding codicils for extinct species should not be confused with proper legislation to provide protection against current poaching outrages with endangered elephants and rhinoceros.

Additionally, we feel it would be optimal for there to be a clear exemption made for marine mammal products, including scrimshaw and other antiques containing whale, walrus, and/or dolphin products. “Mission creep” within bills has a history of creating grey areas of confusion that make it difficult for well-meaning institutions and collectors to fully understand and properly comply.

As always, your voice has power in these matters. Scrimshaw as a cultural and historical treasure could still be placed into danger in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—the place where the art form all began!

Please contact your local representatives with all due urgency and inform them of your concerns for Senate Bill 450 and House Bill 419, now pending in the Massachusetts legislature.

Has a bill been introduced in your state?

Follow these easy instructions to get updates on pending legislation where you live.

1. Go to <https://legiscan.com>.
2. Click on “Search” near the top right corner of the page.
3. When the Search page opens, look at the search box at the left side of the page. Select your state, and enter a search term (e.g., “ivory”) in the box entitled “Full Text Search.”
4. Click on the Search button below that box.

A page will appear with search results. If your search yields bills that have been introduced, you’ll see them listed. You can then click on any bill to get details, see who is sponsoring the bill, the bill’s status, and other important information.

NOTICE: We are now accepting advertising in order to defray costs and to continue to produce and mail printed issues of the *Scrimshaw Observer*.

Advertising Rates

Full page	\$400	Half page	\$225
Quarter page	\$120	Eighth page	\$ 70

ASCA members receive a 25% discount.

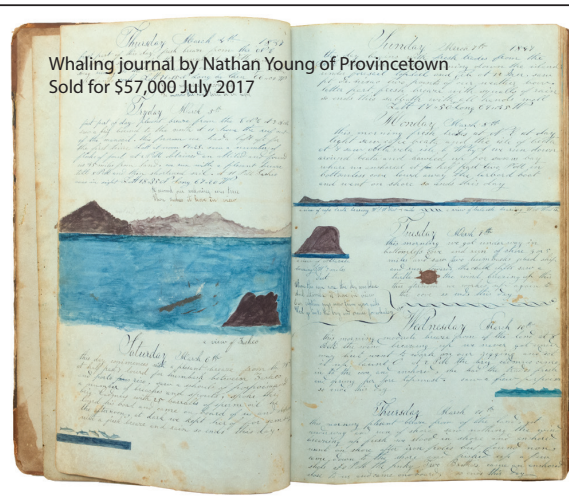
Content: Ads can be for auctions, antique dealers, and collectors buying or selling antique scrimshaw, appraisal services, repair services, auctions, shows, or seminars.

Advertising dimensions and specification are available on request. Ad deadlines will be 30 days prior to publication date. Payment by check is due with ad submission.

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Scrimshaw by Edward Burdett
Sold for \$456,000 July 2017
World-record price for scrimshaw

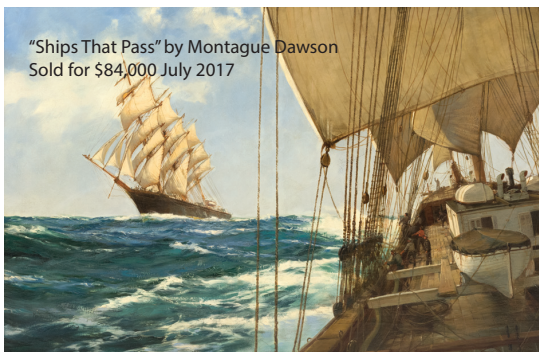


Whaling journal by Nathan Young of Provincetown
Sold for \$57,000 July 2017

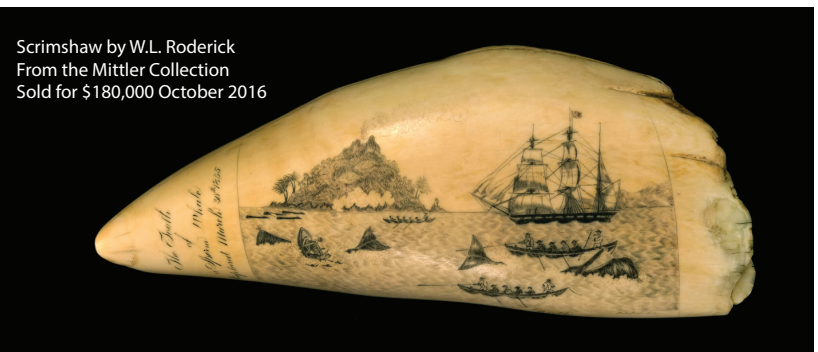
Reticulated
pie crimper
From the
Kobacker
Collection
Sold for
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"Ships That Pass" by Montague Dawson
Sold for \$84,000 July 2017



Scrimshaw by W.L. Roderick
From the Mittler Collection
Sold for \$180,000 October 2016



Evening Stroll by Harold Dunbar (detail)
Sold for \$78,000 August 2017
World record for the artist

Invitation to Consign
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