

# Basic Detail Report

---



## Snuff Box

### Date

c. 1870

### Medium

Sperm whale ivory, silver and ink

### Description

Stories of the Man in the Moon and other anthropomorphized depictions of the moon apparently

stem from early astronomers seeing faces in the pocked surface of earth's satellite. Over time this has developed into images of the moon such as the one featured in this whale tooth scrimshaw, which show the moon with human features such as eyes and a mouth. Like many other scrimshaw objects, this carved snuff box was made by a New England whaler sometime in the late 19th century. With months or sometimes years at sea, whalers had plenty of time to carve spare whale parts into utilitarian or decorative objects. Few were talented enough to create high-quality freehand carvings, indicating that this moon was almost certainly traced from a book.

### Dimensions

2 1/2 × 1 1/2 × 1 1/2 in. (6.4 × 3.8 × 3.8 cm)