

18th century whale oil rush lamp

£95



Description

An 18th century French provincial whale oil wall hanging rush lamp dated 1791.

Whale oil wall-hanging rush lamps were a practical form of domestic lighting used from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century.

Combining traditional rushlights with a small reservoir of whale oil, they provided a brighter and longer-lasting flame than simple tallow candles. A metal clip held the pithy rush stem, which acted as a wick, drawing oil from the container below. Designed to be suspended from a wall, these lamps saved valuable table space and illuminated kitchens, workshops, and cottages.

Their simple yet ingenious construction reflects a transitional period in lighting technology before the widespread adoption of gas lighting and, later, electricity.