

Basic Detail Report



00003716

Title
Whaling spade

Date
c 1850

Medium

Iron, wood

Dimensions

Overall: 36 x 390 x 77 mm, 1 kg

Name

Spade

History

After killing the whale the first processing task was to strip off the valuable oil-producing blubber which lay beneath the skin (flensing). Early deep sea whalers towed the whale to the side of the ship and stripped the blubber with large flensing knives. It was then hauled on board for processing and the carcass thrown overboard. Early bay whalers used a similar process, towing the whales to shore stations where they were flensed in the shallow waters prior to being processed on land. No part of the whale was wasted in the modern whaling process. The dead whale was hauled up tail first onto the flensing deck by a massive cable. Teams of flensers started from the head and stripped the blubber and then hacked it into manageable blocks. Pressurised steam digesters separated the oil from the liquid product which was dried, ground into powder and sold as whale meal for animal feed.