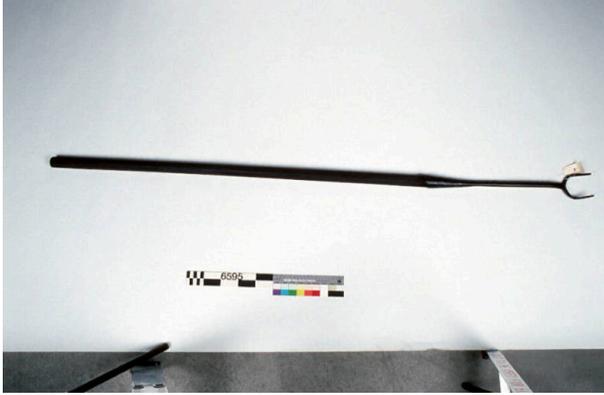


Basic Detail Report



00006595

Title

Two pronged blubber fork

Date

19th century

Medium

Steel, wood

Dimensions

Overall: 32 × 1622 × 76 mm, 1.5 kg

Name

Blubber fork

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. In the 19th century, great iron cauldrons called trypots were used at sea and on shore for the stinking, greasy job of boiling down whale blubber. Pairs of boiling trypots rested in a brick surround called the tryworks. At sea these were set on the deck between the foremast and the mainmast. The blubber was heated and stirred until the precious oil separated out. It was then ladled into large copper coolers and later poured into casks for storage and shipment.