

back for Flores, Helein Islands & will probably get there in about 3 weeks we have taken no sperm whales & all hands are discouraged. The Captain favors the abandonment of sperm & going to bump back whaling but the officers are divided & it is as yet undecided what to do. one thing is evident if our prospects do not change before we get to the islands for if any of us will again come out in here. Lat 35 N Long 40 W

Thursday July 22. 1869

On Monday last we lowered twice for black fish & took out small one the last time it was tried out yesterday & made one barrel of oil. Last eve bet before six a school of sperm whales were seen & at 6 all the boats were lowered you can hardly imagine the excitement it occasioned on board & all hands started off determined to do their best we had a clear sky & a light wind & at dark 8 o'clock the boats returned with one first sperm whale it was a young one & will only make about 15 lbs of oil I will now try & give you a brief account of the manner in which whales are taken & tried. We have four boats & each boat has a crew of 1 officer 1 boat steerer & 4 men. when whales are seen from the mast head, the cry is given usually the first cry is "I see white water" which can be seen at a distance of from 4 to 6 miles. All hands are on the look out at once & the ship is headed for it. The Capt. takes his glass & goes to the mast head. if the "White Water" is caused by sperm whales their spout is next seen at a distance of 3 or 4 miles. then comes the cry "Their blows" & if the Captain sees fit, the boats which are always

equiped & ready to lower at an instant's notice, are cleared & lowered each man in his place the officer takes the helm & the boat steerer the bow if they get near enough the boat steerer throws his iron, & two if he can, when the whales goes down taking down & as much line as he chooses, which is kept coiled in a tub. they can not stay down long, but must come up in 20 or 30 minutes to spout (breath) when all hands begin to haul in on the line & the boat which makes but little resistance in the water swiftly approaches the whale, the boat steerer then tells the helm & the officer goes to the bow & if near enough to the whale kills him by putting a lance in his heart, but if too far off. he has a "bomb gun" in which he fires a loaded bomb 1 3/4 inch in diameter & 18 or 20 inches long if this explodes in the whale it is almost certain death, the ship then moves up to the fish & a chain from the bow is made fast to his flukes (tail) & he is towing along side, then two large tackle are fastened at the main mast head & taken to the windlass. the whales head cut off & hoisted in on deck. next the blubbest pieces are cut out of blubber (skin) about 3 or 4 feet wide & a large hook from this tackle is made fast in one end, & all hands heaving on the windlass the whale rolls over & over, as the officers with sharp, long handled spades, cut the blubber & it is hoisted on deck piece by piece till the fish is skinned when the carcass is cut loose to the hundreds of sharks which have long before began their attacks on them. The head is next cut open which is nearly all oil, similar to the heart of a juicy orange a quart of oil not containing over a tea spoon full of other substance, this is operated by pressing