

Whaling Journal Transcription

Source page: Journal_Page6 (scanned image). | Transcribed page ID: Journal_Page6T.

Printed / Typed Header

Printed: from | **Handwritten title:** Leaving San Francisco

Form label: ENGINEER'S NAME. | **Typed:** Mr. William Ormond, 1431 Fifth Street, Alameda, California

Form label: REMARKS. | **Handwritten:** 1

Handwritten Journal Entry

Leaving San Francisco at 10-30 a.m. April 1st 1893 for a trading and whaling cruise in the Arctic having got everything in readyness and everyone on board the ship was hauled out into the stream to prevent the men from running away, [and sober up] two good watchmen kept watch over night each with a club and sixshooter, they were kept busy as several attempts were made to steal a whaleboat and get ashore some would have jumped overboard but by a liberal use of the club were persuaded to go below for a while, after a few tough fights (fight on board a whaler means fight to a finish) as to who should boss the forecastle and who gets the best bunks &c the boss being fixed and the whisky all gone, nature gets the better of them as daylight approaches and we have quietness for an hour or so untill they awake in the morning but they are not nearly so noisy or so quarrelsome as the night before they have got sore heads they wonder where they are how they came to be here and who they have got to be shipmates with and how long they are in for. Up on the quarter deck are the officers boat headers boat steerers and a few friends who have come off with the agent in the tow-boat to bid us good bye they leave us at Meggs wharf we each blow three whistles which means good bye good voyage we watch them for some time waving our handkerchiefs; we still remaining on deck taking our last look at the city and thinking of our friends we have left behind us, the good times they will be having and we will be missing. As we get out in sight of the cliffs we can hear the sea lions roar and fancy we hear the organ in the pavillion grinding music for a spare audiance

Handwritten Notes at Bottom of Page

Joined S.S. Karluk, Dec 6th, 1892. Left San Francisco April 1st 1893.
Left Karluk Oct 26th, 1894

Journal Page 7 — Transcription

Printed / Typed Header

- ENGINEER'S LOG of Steamship
- Handwritten title (top center): Our Crew
- Printed (top right): on Voyage
- Printed column headers across the top table (engine/steam measurements; coal, ashes, oil, etc.)
- Printed section label at bottom: ENGINEER'S STORES. (ON HAND / EXPENDED / REMAINING, etc.)

Handwritten Journal Entry

We could see some people on the rocks waving their handkerchiefs but could not recognize any even with the glasses. I did not see any of those pathetic good byes that one is liable to see when a ship is going away on a long trip, I think there is nothing that is more foolish or amusing to other people than to see a sailor bid good bye to his wife or best girl just before the ship sails more especially if they be anyway chicken hearted. As we are dreaming away and looking at the cliffs we are suddenly brought to our senses by the sea coming in through the scuppers and wetting our feet, the ship beginning to pitch in fact it looks squally and we all feel bad more or less when we think of our being parted from civilization for so long, we sneak away one by one each to his particular room, some to sleep, others to read others to think and dream; of course one or two men are on duty, about ten o'clock at night we stopped the engines set sail, altho blowing a strong N.W. gale just the course we want to go, not being able to steam against [it?] we cleared more to the south.

April 2nd

Next day we begin to look around whom we have for shipmates. So far we don't appear to have a tough crowd forward. If there be ain't so rash in expressing our opinion so will reserve our opinion for the future when it will be more able to judge.

Our crew is a very heterogenous and taking all the Pacific whaling fleet constitutes perhaps the most cosmopolitan assemblage to be found in any single industry anywhere on the globe. some not able to speak a word of English, we have one on our crew a Hungarian others who never saw

Note: The final line ends mid-sentence on this page and appears to continue onto the next page.

Journal_Page8 — Transcription

Section A: Printed / Typed Elements

- Header (handwritten): "from Nativity of Crew to Wages and lays."
- Printed column headers: "ENGINEER'S NAME." and "REMARKS."
- Printed log table present at bottom with columns: "Lat.", "Lon.", "Knots Run".
- Page number: "3" (top right).

Section B: Handwritten Text

a ship in their life before, probable only been on a visit to the city lost his bearings met a good pamaratan in the shape of a Boarding house runner who took him home clothed him fed him and gave him whisky the next thing he was aboard a whaler, if he had any friends its the old story of another man disappeared. In hiring sailors for whaling voyages, the service of men designated as shipping masters are called into requisition. Various systems are resorted to, to obtain men, plying with liquor of the vilest description doling out sufficient money to enable them to keep within the clutches of the harpies who float around the Barbary coast and water front region, in some cases conveying desireable men into the interior towns untill the ship is ready to sail, besides these people we find a class of men who ought to find something better to do, educated people who have been raised and practiced a profession such as doctors lawyers, artists &c: they are liable to get broke once in a while like the rest of us, some through drink others through unlucky speculation, some has fell out with their wife others with their best girl, and wonder wheather it will be better to commit suicide or ship aboard a whaler, two years on board a whaler living on hard tack, salt-meat and beans twenty-one times a week will work changes on any man more so a tenderfoot.

Usually the only ones who can pull or steer a boat or knows the ropes are the boat steerers boat leaders and officers they have to be experianceed men. The mate starts a night-school after supper teaching them the ropes not any more than he can help. The boat steerers strike the whale their place is in the bow of the boat the boat leader in the stearn manages the boat after the whale is struck he takes charge of the whale, the boat steerers are usually Kanakas, negroes, natives of the Caroline islands, the Azores Cape de Vere islands south sea islands & Portuguese they seem to prefer them to white men

Whalers first ventured into the Pacific 1787.

The teeming Kodiak fishery of Alaska Coast discovered 1835-

Section C: Notes

- Note: Entry continues from previous page.
- Note: Entry continues on next page.

Journal_Page9 — Transcription

Section A: Printed / Typed Elements

Handwritten page number: "4" (top left).

Printed header: "ENGINEER'S LOG of Steamship" with handwritten vessel name: "Nativity and Lay" and printed "on Voyage".

Printed log columns across top (Hours, Pressure of Steam, Vacuum, Revolution of Engines, Temperature, Brine, Coal, Ashes, Oil, etc.).

Printed section header at bottom: "ENGINEER'S STORES." with columns "ON HAND." "EXPENDED." "REMAINING." "REVOLUTIONS MADE." and item labels including "COAL," "OIL," "TALLOW," "WIPING,".

Section B: Handwritten Text

because they put up with more will allow themselves to be knocked down with a blarne grin and never think of reporting the same when they got to the City they never or seldom seek promotion that has a tendency to make officers scarce and berths plentifull so that they can command their own price, some negroes and indians owing to their natural smartness have worked their way to be mate and to masters of the white men under them some are even better educated as there are captains in this business who can not write their own name, a few of the officers have a licence the most of them none, but now the law is passed and actually in force to have two licenced officers on board a captain and mate, but like all the rest of our laws they can be broke with impunity. The Old captain who has no licence looks up a man who has a captains licence but cant find a ship he engages him at a certain wage or lay with the understanding that he has to have nothing at all to do with the ship his position is only nominal he is only necessary to clear the ship also a necessary evil. The Captains Mates and Boatheaders are with few exceptions Americans hailing from New Bedford, Fairhaven, Vinyard, and locality. Our Crew consists of a Captain 3 Mates Supernumerary Boatheader, 1 Cooper, 1 Cook, 1 Steward 2 mess boys, 8 Seamen 2 Engineers 2 Fireman 1 Blacksmith. All but the Engineers are shipped on shares called a "lay" thus a lay which is a short "lay signifies that the person who signs for it is to receive one-tenth of the proceeds of the voyage. The lays given to the officers and men are generally as follows; Captain 1/6 to 1/5. Chief Mate 1/8 to 1/25. Second Mate 1/8 to 1/30. Third Mate 1/30 to 1/80. Fourth 1/40 to 1/60 Carpenters 1/70 to 1/350

Section C: Notes

Note: Entry continues from previous page.

Note: Entry continues on next page.

Journal_Page10 — Transcription

Section A: Printed / Typed Elements

Header (handwritten): "from Lays to and Wages."

Printed column headers: "ENGINEER'S NAME." and "REMARKS."

Printed log table present at bottom with columns: "Lat.", "Lon.", "Knots Run".

Page number: "5" (top right).

Section B: Handwritten Text

Cooper 1/50 to 1/70, Cook 1/50 to 1/50, Steward 1/60 to 1/75, Blacksmith 1/70 to 1/70, seamen 1/50 to 1/200, Fireman 1/60 to 1/[125?]: Engineers usually sign for 50\$ per month with the 50 lay also have a written agreement guaranteeing them 125\$ per month at the very least so if they get no whales they get their 125\$ per month, while the others get 18\$ per pound trip.

This "Lay" is an illusion and a snare it is supposed to give a man some idea of what he will get paid off with but it dont, There are no stated price for the pound of bone mentioned it may be 6\$ per lb in New York, the bone monopolists in San Francisco brings the market price down to any price they wish, when the whalers arrive in the city, These men who are on lays or shares sign to sell their share of the bone to the ships agent or owners at market price which makes quite a difference

There are also expences to be deducted of every man who has a lay for unshipping their bone, cartage, weighing, cleaning, storage, watching &c There no stated time when the agent will pay for his bone, if one insists on payment he dont get so much as the one who awaits the agents time, the captains officers and men have to take what they get and be thankful they got that much, what can they do? One or two men or the whole lot of men to buck against a monopoly especially in California is madness, if they have any fault to find they got to keep it to themselves or they wont get a ship next season. I firmly believe that these simple people believe that they have been paid sufficient for all the work and hardships they came through, they look satisfied and happy and ready to sign the same articles again.

The Engineers would have to do the same and done it as long as it paid them when it didn't they went to the owners and demanded their present arrangement and got it, Engineers are combined have a standard wage sign for it and get it every time without any trouble if they have a good catch they come in

Section C: Notes

Note: Entry continues from previous page.

Note: Entry continues on next page.

Journal_Page11 — Transcription

Section A: Printed / Typed Elements

Handwritten page number: "8" (top left).

Printed header: "ENGINEER'S LOG of Steamship ____ on Voyage" with handwritten entry: "Rough Weather".

Printed log table columns across top (Hours, Pressure of Steam, Vacuum, Revolution of Engines, Temperature, Brine, Coal, Ashes, Oil, etc.).

Printed section header at bottom: "ENGINEER'S STORES." with columns "ON HAND." "EXPENDED." "REMAINING." "REVOLUTIONS MADE." and item labels including "COAL," "OIL," "TALLOW," "WIPING,".

Section B: Handwritten Text

covered with the contents. The saloon being new, of course the damage has to be done first then they think it time to try and prevent a second occurrence, by fastening down the table and getting racks for dishes, after that is all done we get along much better, our chairs not being fixtures always slide to the lee side and usually at the most awkward time, just as we are about to lay hold of a very dainty morsel, we got to throw it down in a hurry throw out our hands to save ourselves as we get tossed up against the side of the saloon we try it again look round for the tit bit see it laying under the table along with the fork and knife as we try to pick them up The chair goes of on a tour by itself by the time we get comfortable fixed it is time for another slide this goes on as long as the rough weather lasts Our table broke away from its mooring twice which made quite a mess it was saved from upsetting by good seamanship. Before getting out of the saloon it would be forward and back and balance our partners several times then to get to our rooms was another problem, we had to watch our chance when the deck was clear of water and the ship a little steady between seas, then we might miscalculate our time, the ship would give a lurch and instead of making our room we would bring up in the tea scuppers and get wet next time we would invariably make it This would be our only bodily exercise as the rest of the time we would be in bed reading it was the only safe place to be, to sit on a chair was very uncomfortable as we had to jam ourselves and chair, which necessitated a continual strain on every part of our body which one soon tires off and a sailors natural position seems to be on the lee or horizontal for if left to themselves they soon get there.

Section C: Notes

Note: Entry continues from previous page.

Journal_Page12 — Transcription

Section A: Printed / Typed Elements

- Handwritten route note at top: "from Unimak Pass. to"
- Printed column headers: "ENGINEER'S NAME." and "REMARKS."
- Printed log table present at bottom with columns: "Lat.", "Lon.", "Knots Run".
- Page number: "9" (top right).

Section B: Handwritten Text

April 15th The gale was about the worst to night blowing a hurrican it broke up two of our whale boats carried away the pieces also two davits, doing considerable damage otherwise.

26th From the time of leaving the city we did not see any land or ships of any kind, we had a continual blow more or less all the time right ahead until the 26th when we sighted the island of Unalaska it being very foggy we lost sight of it again and night caught us in dangerous ground, we dodged about untill morning.

27th As the fog clears up in the morning we can see the entrance to the pass it is very narrow and surrounded with great high hills which has perpendicular faces going plumb into the water a ship can sail quite close to them without any danger of touching the bottom, the hills around looking bare and void of all vegetation having a great many sharp projections like so many church steeples some standing three to four hundred feet high with many fog banks around the whole looking very unearthly I wouldn't have been surprised to have seen a few great unknown monsters around here in fact I looked for them at every corner we turned I scanned all the crevices with the glasses, it was like going up a river but instead of the unsightly mudbanks of which we are so familiar we have great high walls who have looked the same for thousands of years. A little further in the pass we met a flock of myres (a kind of Arctic duck) about a mile long 30 or 40 yards broad, it is very common up here to see large flocks of birds, last time that I was up here about four years ago, I saw myriads of them the sky was black as far as the eye could reach in every direction and such a noise they made one would naturally think they had never seen a steamer before

Section C: Notes

- Note: Entry continues from previous page.
- Note: Entry continues on next page.

- Bottom note: “April 28th sighted land just once leaving [Unalaska?]”