

# Equiano's Journey to the Arctic

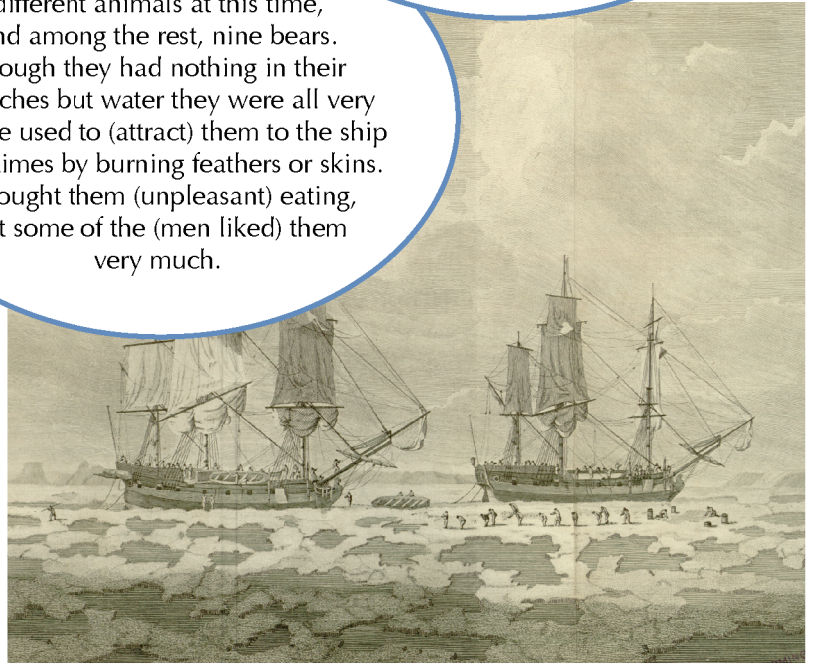


View of an iceberg from "A Voyage to the North Pole" by Captain Phipps, 1774

©Local Studies: Birmingham Central Library

We killed many different animals at this time, and among the rest, nine bears. Though they had nothing in their paunches but water they were all very fat. We used to (attract) them to the ship sometimes by burning feathers or skins. I thought them (unpleasant) eating, but some of the (men liked) them very much.

On the 20th of June we began to use Dr Irving's apparatus for making salt water fresh; I used to attend the distillery; I frequently purified from twenty-six to forty gallons a day. The water ... was perfectly pure, well-tasted and free from salt ... On the 28th of June we made Greenland, where I was surprised to see the sun did not set. The weather now became extremely cold.



Racehorse and Carcass from "A Voyage to the North Pole" by Captain Phipps, 1774

©Local Studies: Birmingham Central Library

The two ships got completely fastened in the ice that set in from the sea. This made our situation very dreadful and alarming; so that on the 7th day we were in very great apprehension of having the ships squeezed to pieces

We sawed some of the ice about the ships ... while we were at this hard labour I once fell into a pond we had made amongst some loose ice, and was very nearly drowned.



This painting by Richard Westall in 1809 imagines a scene where the 14 year old Horatio Nelson fights off a polar bear.

© National Maritime Museum, London, Greenwich Hospital Collection

## GLOSSARY

<sup>1</sup> Sea Horse was the name given to Walrus in the eighteenth century