

Cook was instructed, with the consent of the natives, to take possession, in the name of the King of Great Britain, of convenient situations in such countries that had not already been visited by any other European power. . . . He did not arrive upon the north-west coast of America until the 7th of March, 1788, when he made the land about a hundred miles north of Mendocino. For several days afterwards he was prevented by violent storms from advancing, as he wished, towards the north, and was driven along the coast to some distance in the contrary direction. The wind then becoming favourable, he took the desired course, and on the 22nd of the month his ships were opposite a projecting point of the continent, situated a little beyond the forty-eighth parallel, to which he gave the name of Cape Flattery, in token of his improved prospects. He continued his voyage along the shore of what he supposed to be the continent, as far as the latitude of 49°. Under that parallel he found a spacious and secure bay, offering every facility for the repair of his vessels and the refreshment of his men, in which he cast anchor on the 29th of March, bestowing upon it, at the same time, the name of King George's Sound. This name he shortly afterwards changed to Nootka Sound, under the impression (which appears to have been incorrect) that Nootka was the term employed to distinguish the bay by the natives of the surrounding territory." In answer to inquiries the natives asserted they had never seen any other vessels, nor had they ever communicated with any other civilized people. Cook, therefore, felt justified in putting forward his claim as being the first discoverer of Nootka Sound, and it has since been almost universally conceded to him. The results of Cook's researches were far more important than those obtained by all the navigators who had hitherto explored this part of the sea. The positions of a number of points on the western side of America were for the first time accurately determined, and means were thus afforded for ascertaining approximately the extent of the continent. Henceforth Nootka became the place

to which vessels sailing from the south generally steered, and from which they took their departure on returning, as it offered greater facilities for obtaining water and provisions, as well as for repairs, than any other harbour in that part of the ocean. In 1790 a serious controversy sprang up between Great Britain and Spain, relative to the navigation of the Pacific and Southern oceans, and the unoccupied portions of America bordering upon those seas. This was the first occasion that the right of sovereignty asserted by Spain over this vast region had been formally contested, although her pretensions to exclusive navigation had long since ceased to be treated with deference by the rest of the world. Upon careful examination of official documents it has been clearly demonstrated that "before the arrival of the Spanish commander, Martinez, at Nootka, in May, 1789, no settlement, factory, or commercial or military establishment whatsoever had been founded, or even attempted; and no jurisdiction had ever been exercised by the subjects or authorities of any civilized nation in any part of America bordering on the Pacific, between Port San Francisco and Prince William's Sound." It is true other Europeans had landed at different places, displaying flags, and constructing crosses on behalf of their respective countries; but such acts were invariably deemed idle ceremonies, conveying no prescriptive property in the soil. After a protracted controversy, however, Spain undertook by treaty, in 1790, to restore several pieces of land and buildings in the vicinity of Nootka Sound, which were declared to belong to John Meares and other British subjects at the time of the occupation of that harbour by the forces of his Catholic Majesty. Notwithstanding this demand was earnestly pressed and conceded, many circumstances combine to show that the basis upon which it was urged was very slight. The convention, nevertheless, having been concluded, Captain George Vancouver, who had been one of Cook's lieutenants, was commanded to proceed there immediately, and receive the surrender of such lands and buildings as were specified in this treaty. He was

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