

Latitude as far as Prince William Sound and Cook's Inlet, and took possession in the name of England. Captain James Hanna followed in 1785, Peters the same year, Portlock and Dixon in 1786, Meares in 1787, 1788 and 1789, and Vancouver in 1792-94. In 1789 at least twelve vessels were trading on the Northwest Coast. All were in search of furs. In 1792 quite twenty-eight vessels were reported on the coast, half of them in the fur trade. Vancouver gives a list of twenty-one vessels for that year, made up as follows: English, 6; East Indies, 2; China, 3; United States, 7; Portugal 2, France, 1.

Bancroft, in his history of Alaska, thus describes the events of the time: "The events of 1787-88 must have been puzzling to the natives of Prince William Sound. Englishmen under the English flag, Englishmen under the Portuguese flag, Spaniards and Russians were cruising about, often within a few miles of each other, taking possession for one nation or the other of all the land in sight."

The Nootka Sound Convention, 1790

International disputes and the clash of arms were bound to ensue, and trouble on the North Pacific Coast began with the Nootka affair in 1789. John Meares, a half-pay lieutenant in His Majesty's Navy, engaged in the fur trade on the Northwest Coast in 1786. In January, 1788, Meares proceeded from China to Nootka with the *Felici*. Reaching there in June, he purchased ground from Maquilla, the Indian Chief, built a house and fort and completed the Northwest America, the first ship constructed on this coast. With a number of other vessels subsequently acquired he engaged in the fur trade along the coast, purchasing the exclusive right to trade with the Indian chiefs, and exploring and occupying wherever he went.

The victories of Cortez in Mexico in 1520 and Pizarro's conquest of Peru in 1526 firmly established Spain on the shores of the Pacific, and it would have been strange if Spain had passed unnoticed the extension of other influences along the Northwest Coast. In 1774 Perez was dispatched from Mexico on a voyage of exploration and reached the Southern Coast of Alaska.