

HOWGATE  
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America, by Robert Greenhow, translator and librarian to the Department of State, published as Senate Doc. No. 174, 26th Congress, 1st session, it appears that the Spaniards were the first discoverers of that coast; that, previous to 1774 they had examined the coast as far north as the 43d degree of latitude, and the Russians sailing eastward across the Pacific from their dominions in Asia, had discovered land southerly, as far as the 55th degree of latitude. In 1774 the Spaniards attempted to explore from the 43d to the 60th degree, but the Spanish government carefully concealed all information respecting these explorations till 1802, when a meagre account of them was printed in an introductory essay to the narrative of the voyage of the schooners Sutil and Mexicana at Madrid.

In 1775 the viceroy of Mexico ordered that another expedition should be sent out for the purpose of examining the coast, and the Santiago and the Sonora were sent forth; the journal of Maurelle, the pilot of the latter, was published in London in 1782. On the 14th of August, 1775, Heceta, the commander of the Santiago, while sailing along the coast discovered a promontory called by him *Cape San Roque*, and immediately south of it in latitude 46° 16', an opening in the land which appeared to be a harbor.

This opening Greenhow thinks to have been the mouth of the Columbia river, thus first beheld by the native of a civilized country. In March, 1778, Captain Cook, the English navigator arrived on the coast, who passed the mouth of the Columbia unnoticed, and first saw land a little beyond the 48th parallel, to which he gave the name of Cape Flattery. The coast was carefully examined in search of the strait through which the Greek pilot Juan de Fuca was said to have sailed from the Pacific to the Atlantic in 1592, and Cook declared that no such passage existed. Passing the strait unnoticed he sailed along the shore of the island which he supposed to be the continent as far as latitude 49° 33' where he found a bay in which he anchored, calling it King George's sound, but afterwards Nootka sound, which he believed to be its Indian designation. (See Kerr's Collection of Voyages, Cook, Clarke and Gove, vol. xvi, chap. III. sec. 13, et seq.)

In 1785, a small English brig crossed from Canton to Nootka sound, from which she returned with a valuable cargo of furs, and in 1786, and the following years vessels were also sent direct from England by an association of merchants, called the King George's Sound Company, and also by the Portuguese and Russians, for the purpose of engaging in the fur trade.

The report of the success of the early voyages in pursuit of furs, excited that spirit of enterprise so characteristic of the American merchants, and we find that early in the year 1787, Joseph Barrell, an enterprising merchant of Boston, planned a voyage of discovery and mercantile adventure to this, then unknown portion of the American continent. The original plan of this voyage is in the hands of your committee. It is in a manuscript book entitled "Annotations on Business, by J. Barrell." It contains a minute detail and estimate of the anticipated expedition, the probable profits to be made, the plans to be adopted, and the steps taken to ensure success.

To show that the projectors of this great enterprise had nobler objects in view than mere private gains, we have only to quote the concluding paragraph of these proposals:

"From the preceding statements, it must appear obvious how very favorable success would be to the United States of America, as well as to individuals, for the discovery of a very valuable property would be brought into the country from a trifling source."

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