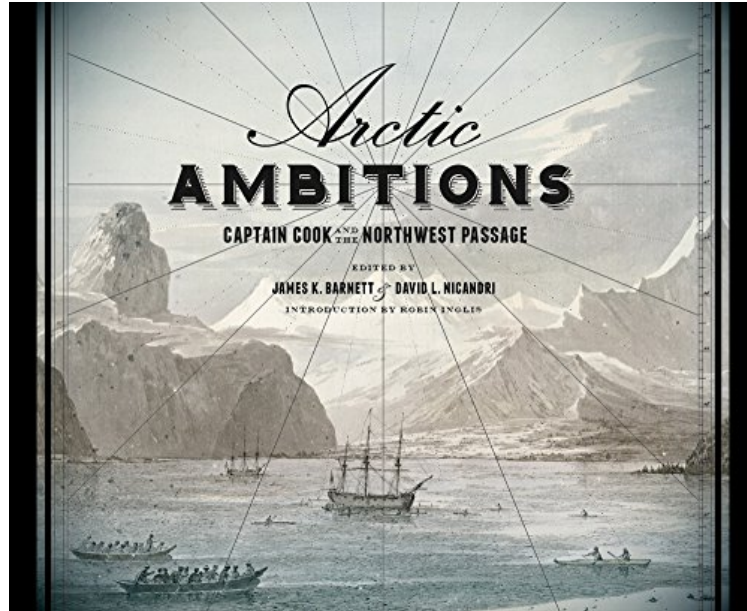


Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I recommend it.By Praire AspenExcellent book and great maps, illustrations and photos.1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good read!By E. LehmanThis is a scholarly book which takes time to read and enjoy.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Neglects the consequences for Native peoplesBy William H. DuBayIn many ways, this is an excellent book describing the adventures of not one, but several explorers. It comes at a time in which very big oil companies are waiting for the melting of the sea ice, which will aid them considerably in arctic oil exploration and cut thousands of miles off the routes between Europe and Asia. This work comes as a caution: don't expect the routes through the arctic to be reliable, open, and stable for any time soon."Arctic Ambitions" is an ambitious anthology, with each chapter written by an expert and filled with brilliant full-color reproductions of rare and early maps and illustrations gathered from museums and collections throughout the world. It focuses first on Captain Cook's third voyage from 1776 to 1778, the purpose of which was: 1. to find the Northwest Passage, 2. to map the outlines of America's northwest coast, and 3. to claim for Great Britain any territories not yet claimed by Russia and Spain.The work also covers George Vancouver's subsequent voyage (1794-1794) to finish Cook's work. While Cook's voyage stimulated the rush to the northwest for harvesting the pelts of seals and ocean otters, Vancouver's voyage was more successful in mapping. Though Cook was a thoroughly accomplished map maker, he used "running surveys" taken from his ships. Vancouver, however, sent his men rowing in long boats into the waterways and inlets to give us a much more detailed map of the North American coast from San Diego to Point Barrow. It was to remain the state-of-the-art map of the area for over a hundred years.Because Cook had been instructed to not "waste time" exploring the waterways and rivers south of the 65th parallel, he started at

Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island and did not bother to explore the the Strait of Juan de Fuca, now the border between Canada and Washington State. This Vancouver did, and very thoroughly. In less than a month, Vancouver discovered and named some the most prominent features of modern-day Washington State, including Puget Sound, Admiralty Inlet, Whidbey and Vashon Islands, Mounts Rainier and Baker, Hood Canal, Port Orchard, Port Discovery, Possession Sound, Restoration Point, Deception Pass, and Bellingham Bay. One purpose of Vancouver's expedition was to administer the Nootka Convention, which had previously settled the conflict between Spain and Great Britain over possession claims in Nootka Sound, nearly bringing the two countries to war. Vancouver made amicable contacts with Spanish authorities in Nootka to proceed with the agreement and to sign two more Nootka Conventions. While Vancouver did not share the same interest that Captain Cook had in the lives and customs of the northwest Natives, his crew regularly met and traded with the coastal Salish, Kwakiutl, Nuu-cha-nulth, Haida, Tlingit, Alutiiq, and Dena'ina peoples. Vancouver's exhaustive survey would not have been possible without the assistance of these people. While Cook discovered and claimed for England the inlet in Alaska named after him, he left it thinking it might be a great river that might extend into the deep interior of the continent, perhaps to Hudson Bay. In his later exploration of the inlet, Vancouver noted that, had Cook gone just a few miles further into the inlet, he would have easily seen his error. Cook was surprised at discovering the appreciation of northern natives for private property and their readiness to trade. The appearance of his ships in a harbor was often met with swarms of natives in canoes with furs and food to trade, mostly for beads and metal tools like axes and shovels. Neither Cook nor Vancouver made the mistake of offering them guns in trade. While both Cook and Vancouver expressed their disgust and anger over the degraded condition of Natives caused by their exploitation by Russian and American fur traders, the authors of *Arctic Ambitions* do not go further into the catastrophic effects of early European contacts. For example, none of the authors mention Vancouver's entering Native villages in which no one was left alive, possibly the results of small pox brought to the area by the Spanish in their 200-year presence in the area. While the Russians had opened a hospital in Sitka, it was closed soon after the purchase of Alaska by the U.S. in 1867. Nearly a hundred years would pass before a hospital would be built in Alaska serving coastal Natives. The last few chapters of the book go into the prospects of the retreating sea ice offering all-year transit to the companies drilling for oil on the arctic regions of the continental shelf. Many problems will have to be solved before that becomes a reliable option, including the development of new arctic ports and the marine infrastructure required by the regular transit of very large ships. Photo captions: Detail, Steve Mayo, 1996. "Captain Robert Gray's 'Columbia Rediviva' Crossing the Bar of the Columbia River, May 11, 1792." from "Arctic Ambitions," p. 288. Detail, John Webber, 1779. "Man of Unalaska," water color prepared for engraving, p. 148. Detail, "The Haag-Lloyd cruise ship 'Hanseatic League' in the Arctic during the summer of 2010," p. 358.

Captain James Cook is justly famous for his explorations of the southern Pacific Ocean, but his contributions to the exploration of the northern Pacific and the Arctic are arguably equally significant. On his third and final great voyage, Cook surveyed the northwest American coast in the hopes of finding the legendary Northwest Passage. While dreams of such a passage proved illusory, Cook's journey produced some of the finest charts, collections, and anthropological observations of his career, helped establish British relations with Russia, and opened the door to the hugely influential maritime fur trade. Accompanying an exhibition of the same name, *Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage* sheds new light on Cook's northern exploration. A collection of essays from an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars, the book uses artifacts, charts, and records of the encounters between Native peoples and explorers to tell the story of this remarkable voyage and its historical context. In addition to discussing Cook's voyage itself, the book also provides new insights into Cook's legacy and his influence on subsequent expeditions in the Pacific Northwest. Finally, the collection uses Cook's voyage as a springboard to consider the promise and challenge of the new north today, demonstrating that it remains, as in Cook's time, a unique meeting place of powerful political, cultural, economic, and environmental forces.

True to the title, the book and the show together aspire to completely reassess Cook's North Pacific explorations, and the volume itself--brimming with quality reproductions of period map work, expedition watercolors and later lithographs, artifacts or all description, and no fewer than eighteen separate essays by renowned experts in their respective fields--tackles the nuances of this important slice of history with integrity and vigor.--Jack Nisbet "Oregon Historical Quarterly" (01/01/2015) This book is exceptionally well designed and printed. Illustrating the text are striking reproductions of art work and maps produced by members of the expedition, especially John Webber...[A] good read. This book will appeal to readers who are new to the subject as well as experts in the field.--Marvin Falk "Alaska History" (01/01/2015) True to the title, the book and the show together aspire to completely reassess Cook's North Pacific explorations, and the volume itself--brimming with quality reproductions of period map work, expedition watercolors and later lithographs, artifacts or all description, and no fewer than eighteen separate essays by renowned experts in their respective fields--tackles the nuances of this important slice of history with integrity and vigor.--Jack Nisbet "Oregon Historical Quarterly" (01/01/2015) This book is exceptionally well designed and printed.

Illustrating the text are striking reproductions of art work and maps produced by members of the expedition, especially John Webber...[A] good read. This book will appeal to readers who are new to the subject as well as experts in the field.--Marvin Falk "Alaska History" (01/01/2015) About the Author James K. Barnett is the author of *Captain Cook in Alaska and the North Pacific* and coeditor of *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805*. David L. Nicandri is the author of *River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia* and the former director of the Washington State Historical Society.