

YEAR 6, ACTIVITY 1

COOK CLAIMS AUSTRALIA - EXTRACT

Wednesday, 22nd. Gentle breezes at East by South and clear weather. We had not steer'd above 3 or 4 Miles along shore to the westward before we discover'd the land ahead to be Islands detached by several Channels from the main land; upon this we brought too to Wait for the Yawl, and called the other Boats on board, and after giving them proper instructions, sent them away again to lead us thro' the Channell next the Main, and as soon as the Yawl was on board made sail after them with the Ship. Soon after we discover'd rocks and Shoals in this Channell, upon which I made the Signal for the boats to lead thro' the next Channel to the Northward laying between the Islands, which they accordingly did, we following with the Ship, and had not less than 5 fathoms; and this in the narrowest part of the Channel, which was about a Mile and a 1/2 broad from Island to Island. At 4 o'Clock we Anchor'd about a Mile and a 1/2 or 2 Miles within the Entrance in 6 1/2 fathoms, clear ground, distance from the Islands on each side of us one Mile, the Main land extending away to the South-West; the farthest point of which we could see bore from us South 48 degrees West, and the Southermost point of the Islands, on the North-West side of the Passage, bore South 76 degrees West. Between these 2 points we could see no land, so that we were in great hopes that we had at last found out a Passage into the Indian seas; but in order to be better informed I landed with a party of men, accompanied by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, upon the Islands which lies at the South-East point of the Passage. Before and after we Anchor'd we saw a Number of People upon this Island, Arm'd in the same manner as all the others we have seen, Except one man, who had a bow and a bundle of Arrows, the first we have seen upon this Coast. From the appearance of the people we expected they would have opposed our landing; but as we approached the shore they all made off, and left us in peaceable possession of as much of the Island as served our purpose. After landing I went upon the highest hill, which, however, was of no great height, yet no less than twice or thrice the height of the Ship's Mastheads; but I could see from it no land between South-West and West-South-West, so that I did not doubt but there was a passage.

I could see plainly that the lands laying to the North-West of this passage were compos'd of a number of Islands of Various extent, both for height and Circuit, ranged one behind another as far to the Northward and Westward as I could see, which could not be less than 12 or 14 Leagues.

Having satisfied myself of the great Probability of a passage, thro' which I intend going with the Ship, and therefore may land no more upon this Eastern coast of New Holland, and on the Western side I can make no new discovery, the honour of which belongs to the Dutch Navigators, but the Eastern Coast from the Latitude of 38 degrees South down to this place, I am confident, was never seen or Visited by any European before us; and notwithstanding I had in the Name of his Majesty taken possession of several places upon this Coast, I now once More hoisted English Colours, and in the Name of His Majesty King George the Third took possession of the whole Eastern coast from the above Latitude down to this place by the Name of New Wales,* (* The Admiralty copy, as well as that belonging to Her Majesty, calls it New South Wales. The island where the ceremony was performed was named on Cook's chart Possession Island, and is still so called.) together with all the Bays, Harbours, Rivers, and Islands, situated upon the said Coast; after which we fired 3 Volleys of small Arms, which were answer'd by the like number from the Ship.