



THURSDAY, JULY 31, 1775

## SOUTHERN CONTINENT A MYTH: COOK'S TOUR HITS THEORY FOR SIX

### TROPICALITIES

By Columnist L. G. GRAY, special to *News of New Zealand* and syndicate newspapers

Last evening I dined with those professional funsters, Boswell and Johnson. They had spent the afternoon at the Admiralty, and the talk across the table was solely of Captain Cook and his doings of the last three years. Boswell, who had been talking to the crew while they were waiting for their deferred pay, was full of a hundred curious stories—stories which Johnson dismissed airily.

*Johnson:* The trouble Boswell is that you're gossip, happy and rumour conscious. It's all very well to be carried away by grand but indefinite notions of world tours. But there's so little to be learnt. Too much is conjecture. You, nobody at all, knows enough of language: you can believe what you see but everything intellectual and everything abstract—politics, morals, religion—can only be darkly guessed. Anyway, one set of savages is much like another.

*Boswell:* I can't see how you can say the people of Tahiti (alternative spelling, Otaheite) are savages.

*Johnson:* Don't cant in defence of savages.

*Boswell:* They can navigate.

*Johnson:* A dog or cat can swim.

*Boswell:* They carve ingeniously.

*Johnson:* A cat can scratch, so

The Great Southern Continent, thesis of continental theorists since the voyagings of Dutchman Abel J. (for Janzoon) Tasman, does not exist. Captain James Cook, modern-day explorer, navigator, surveyor, and physician, has brought his ship, "Resolution," safely back to England. And, an Admiralty spokesman made plain yesterday, Captain Cook, after two voyages of hemisphere traverse, does not believe possible the existence of a large land-mass within the reach of navigation and still undiscovered.

However, Captain Cook has left British colours flying on several previously unknown islands likely to be of great value in this country's plan of an empire far-flung and prosperous. A pointer to this was seen yesterday on the Stock Exchange when overseas stock bounced several points higher with the release of the news.

Main discoveries of this voyage include New Caledonia, largest island in the south Pacific except New Zealand (alternative spellings: Nova Zeelandia, Nieuw Zeeland); an island named Georgia; and a coast still unexplored named Sandwich Land.

can a child with a nail. Bozzy, get on with your dinner, and don't lose your sense of perspective.

And Johnson continued dryly by saying he hadn't been told all these stories: I didn't know I was so much respected. What can't be known in London is not worth knowing, anyway, he said.

### FAMINE IN FRANCE

Thousands of the French peasantry (alternative word, proletariat) are starving in the worst famine ever to smack France. Taxes are even heavier, domination from the ruling classes more oppressive. Political observers predict a violent upheaval from the masses before many years.

"I reckon I know every currant in the Pacific pudding, and I've chewed at most of them," Captain Cook said last evening when interviewed in his cottage by our Hampshire representative. Smilingly busy with her work, and justifiably proud, was the captain's god-child wife (nee Batts). "We sailed between 60,000 and 70,000 miles, taking three years and eighteen days, with the loss of only four men—three by accident and one from stomach trouble and a quart of rum. Not a one died from scurvy. I saw to that," the Captain continued. "We struggled for three years with ice and hunger and hardship to prove the fabled wealth of Antarctica was a mischievous myth. Now there is no doubt about it."

Captain Cook (promoted after his new-world voyage I, 1769-71), gave details of his appointment in 1772 to an exploratory expedition to settle once and for all the existence of a great southern continent. H.M. sloop "Resolution" was his ship (462 tons; crew 112; cost £4,145), and with a smaller ship, "Adventure" (Captain Furneaux, captain; crew 81; cost £2,103) he sailed from Plymouth, July 13, 1772. The ships touched at Madeira and the Cape of Good Hope, setting out from there to explore the southern latitudes for

approximately six months—"And all we found was ice."

The two ships sailed for New Zealand (previously charted by Captain Cook), but were separated. "Discovery" berthing at Plymouth a year ago. "After leaving us, Furneaux reached New Zealand, where his relationships with the Indians were... happy—they killed and ate ten of a boat's crew. I had always suspected these Indians were cannibals; this melancholy occurrence affords definite proof," Captain Cook said.

"Resolution" eventually reached New Zealand safely, and after some time set out to spend the winter among the Society Islands. Came the spring, and Captain Cook made further exploration eastwards, and later steering northwards he navigated the southern tropic from Easter Island to the New Hebrides and discovered an island named by him New Caledonia. After a third try, he gave up all hope of finding a landmass and returned to England.

Informed circles mention unofficially that Captain Cook is to be raised to the rank of post-captain, and to be appointed captain of Greenwich Hospital. It is also suggested that he will be balloted a member of the Royal Society in recognition of his paper on scurvy.

### MAPS TO BE REDRAWN

To the Editor of *News of N.Z.*

SIR,—  
On behalf of the mapmakers of this country I wish to appeal to the Government to take further steps that would put beyond all doubt the existence of the Southern Continent. Captain Cook says there is no such place, but is he qualified to make such a claim after only two voyages? If what he claims is true, every world map will be out-dated and will have to be redrawn—a terrific undertaking. The matter is too important to depend on the word of one man.

Yours, &c.,  
Mapmaker.

Asked to comment on this letter, Captain Cook said that after this last voyage there was now no room for doubt; the whole ocean had been covered ("no piece of seaweed has been left unturned"); the results were conclusive. "I was led up the garden path," said the captain. After a first reading of his journal we suggest he was kidded up a bluegum tree.—Ed.

### NOBLE SAVAGE ROCKS WOMEN

Matrons' eyebrows and debutantes' hearts were set fluttering last night when Omai was guest of honour at a society dinner. Brown-skinned handsome Savage Omai was brought back to England from the Society Islands (lat. 20 S.; long. 150 W.) with the Captain Cook exploratory party. He is to return to his island home with a later voyage.

Omai is no Indian. He is interested in neither scalps nor wild horses; his manners are most refined and his conversation is both quietly spoken and carefully chosen. Omai is the rage. Last night women and girls fought for his attention. Society conventions were disregarded. "Oh, my Omai," breathed one lass late in the evening. That's only what she thought.



These Indians eat their enemies. Six of the *Discovery's* crew made a menu.