

Introductory Remarks

by

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Good morning.

I would like to welcome all of you to this, the second day of the third annual Pacific Islands Studies Conference. Although several of you have suggested that, convened here barely after dawn on a Saturday morning, we are nothing but a crowd of April fools, I choose, rather, to underscore the fact that our conference began last month, last evening, on March 31, and continues today into the month of April. I think we are to be commended for our tenacity in the quest of knowledge about Captain Cook. I wonder if Dr. Daeufer realized any of this last evening when, in his opening remarks, he pointed out that these annual conferences have become progressively longer.

That they are becoming longer is, I think, an indication of the increasing awareness among Pacific-interested members of our faculty and community that, although we come from disparate disciplines with interests in particular island groups, we have a great deal to say to one another.

In recognizing that our general purpose is to provide a forum for Pacific-interested faculty members to communicate their specialized research interests to one another and to the community, we point to the fact that a multitude of disciplinary interests --from the arts, the sciences and the humanities -- can find fruitful application in the Pacific.

The history of these research interests, and of those who pursued them, is now over two hundred years old. Meeting here, we honor Captain James Cook of the Royal Navy. We marvel at the depth and the breadth of his general knowledge and curiosity, his scrupulous attention to the condition of his ships and men, so crucial to the fulfillment of the several scientific purposes of his voyages; and we are humbled by his willingness to address the issue of his impact and that of his ships, his crews and his intentions, on the people with whom he came into contact.

In his carefully detailed journals Cook described himself as "one employed as a discoverer." We stand in awe of the steadfastness of purpose reflected in the hundreds and hundreds of entries detailing so many years at sea.

One need only read how many April firsts Cook passed as commander of the voyages to gain a sense of his commitment and of his contribution to posterity. On April 1, 1768, the Royal Society of London received notification from the Admiralty that Britain's participation in the observation of the transit of Venus across the sun in an effort to measure the distance from earth to the sun, was assured. A commander had been chosen and a ship, to be called Endeavor, would set out for a South Pacific observation site.

On April 1, 1769, Cook was within three days and 350 miles of Tahiti. He wrote of his concern over the accuracy of his sightings. On April 1, 1770, highly concerned with the condition of Endeavor and of her men, Cook set a westward, southern course home from New Zealand after nearly three years at sea. A year later they had progressed only as far as Capetown, having mapped the eastern coast of Australia.

In 1772, Cook was preparing for the second voyage. In April of 1773,

he was once again in New Zealand. In 1774, he was in the eastern reaches of Polynesia near the Marquesas, and in 1775, he had returned to Capetown. April of 1776 found Cook preparing for the third voyage which, by April of 1777, was underway, with Endeavor in the Cook Islands. Two hundred years ago today, having found Hawaii, Cook was anchored on the coast of Vancouver Island at Nootka Sound, attending to the needs of the ship.

And finally by April 1, 1779, Captain Clerke had days before abandoned a westward discovery track and was heading north to make one final attempt to discover -- in honor of his fallen captain -- a northwest passage linking Britain with the Pacific.

The years were long, the distances immense, and the consequences of these voyages long-lasting and resounding for the entire Pacific region.

The contributions in our program today are diverse. All fit within the sphere of Cook's many interests. Although reference to Captain Cook in today's presentations may at times be only tangential, no discipline represented here was far outside the province of Cook himself.

In my role as outreach coordinator of the Language and Area Studies Center for Pacific Islands Studies, I would like to thank Professor Carl J. Daeufer, the Center's director, for supporting this conference. I would especially like to thank Professors Norman Meller, Floyd Tilton, and Donald Johnson of the Pacific Islands Studies Program's affiliate faculty for their role in the germination of the Cook idea, and as a member of the staff of the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council, I would like to thank PAAC's executive director, Brenda Lei Foster, and her staff for giving the organization of this conference top priority when so many other things needed to be done.

A month ago, when I was off introducing myself to East Asia, Michiko

Kodama, a graduate student in Pacific History, resolutely and competently identified and then accomplished scores of conference-related tasks. I must thank her most of all. We would like to thank the Honolulu Advertiser, the East-West Communication Institute and the University Press of Hawaii for providing materials for displays.

We wish to welcome those of you from Kauai Community College, Maui Community College, and Hilo College, as well as the many people I see from Oahu's Community Colleges, Brigham Young and Chaminade Universities. And, of course, I wish to thank our colleagues who took the time to prepare today's presentations: Professor William J. Bonk: "Hawaii Foundation for History and the Humanities Program for the Cook Bicentennial," Dr. Edward C. Creutz: "The Role of the Bishop Museum in the Pacific," John Charles: "The Yorkshire Haunts of Captain Cook," Bruce Palmer and Richard Mayer: "Some Sources in British and Dutch Libraries on the 18th and 19th Century Pacific Voyages," Dr. Charles H. Lamoureux: "The Scientific Significance of Cook's Third Voyage," Dr. Peter N.D. Pirie: "The Consequences of Cook's Hawaiian Contacts on the Local Population," Yeuh-Heng Yang: "Contemporary Agricultural Patterns and the Nutritional Status of People in Select Pacific Islands," Dr. Timothy Macnaught: "Captain Cook and Pacific Islanders: 'All Imaginable Humanity?'" Dr. Kenneth O. Sanborn: "Mental Health in the Pacific," and Dr. Craig Severance: "Interests and Dependencies: The Pacific After Cook."

Finally, we wish to acknowledge Mr. William P. Johnson, Dr. Donald D. Johnson, and Dr. James McCutcheon who have generously consented to call upon their skills in organization and extemporization in their roles as conveners during today's sessions.

Now, it gives me tremendous pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. William

Johnson, a Hawaiian scholar and assistant coordinator of the Hawaiian Studies Project at the University of Hawaii (Manoa Campus) who will convene the first session and introduce this morning's speakers.