

Part I

Is this a catalogue? Technically yes, but Hordern House has created something on a far different level. It is a book itself, a tribute to the Pacific voyage collection of David Parsons. Parsons has put together a magnificent collection of Pacific voyages, but has now chosen to focus on Spanish and Portuguese expansion starting at the time of Columbus and the still earlier texts on which they relied as they began their explorations. Therefore, he has decided to put his extraordinary Pacific collection on the market. The result is this catalogue-book, and it is worthy of the collection it describes. A hard-cover, quarto book, it includes 138 thoroughly described works, richly illustrated, with an image from John Harris' 18th century compendium of voyages on the dust jacket.

The title of this catalogue is *The Parsons Collection. Rare Pacific Voyage Books*. This is only part one, covering the period from Dampier to Cook. The second part, to be published during 2006, will cover the post-Cook period (1780s) to the mid-19th century.

David Parsons is an Atlanta, Georgia, collector, roughly half of the globe away from Hordern House, of Sydney, Australia. In the catalogue, he explains his own collecting career. It starts with a fascination with the novels of Patrick O'Brian, who wrote fictional tales of the sea, including one based on the voyage of George Anson. Parsons decides to attend the New York Book Fair while on a business trip to that city and picks up a few titles. Undoubtedly, other book collectors will understand what follows. The collecting becomes more serious, the collection broader, and the importance of the material more pronounced. Starting with titles strictly in English, it spreads to first editions in many languages. A major collection of Cook material is put together, while chronologically, the Cook era collection spreads back to the 17th century and forward to the mid-19th. Then there comes an interest in association copies, and a desire to find books in the finest condition. It is a process, no obsession, that many a book collector has been through. At its end, there is a magnificent library. As with other great collections, the time comes when it is dispersed. The Hordern catalogues will remain a monument to this fine library, and one can be confident that the provenance of having been a part of the Parsons Collection will follow each title to the next library it graces.

Item 17 in the catalogue is a first edition of the account of the aforementioned Anson's journey, *A Voyage Round the World...By George Anson, Esq...* published in 1748. This is a rare, thick paper copy, with the signature of John Phillipson, who shows up on the list of subscribers as having subscribed to a "Royal Paper" copy. Phillipson is not identified, but we would presume he is the same John Phillipson who served as a commissioner of the British Navy at the time. George Anson set out with six ships in 1740 to harass the Spanish along the coast of South America. Five of his six ships did not complete the voyage,

being either wrecked or forced to return. Most of his men died, primarily of disease. However, luck would be with Anson, if not most of his men. With his one remaining ship, he was able to capture a Spanish vessel loaded with enormous treasure, and he would conclude the trip by circumnavigating the globe, returning home a wealthy man. Copy priced at \$27,500 Australian (US equivalent of approximately \$20,685). For those preferring languages other than English, items 18-20 are copies in French, Russian, and Italian.

Item 22 is *A Voyage to the South Seas, in the Years 1740-1. Containing a faithful Narrative of the Loss of His Majesty's Ship the Wager on a desolate island...* by John Bulkeley and John Cummins. This is the story of two members of the crew of the "Wager," one of Anson's sister ships that didn't make it. Actually, the crew of the "Wager," split into two groups, those who stayed with their captain after the ship was wrecked, and those who did not. Bulkeley and Cummins were among the group which did not. Neither group had a good time of it, though members of each would eventually find their way back to England. This party of survivors made their way through the Straits of Magellan in a longboat and then on to Rio. \$5,500 (US \$4,137).

Although published two decades after Cook's final trip (in 1803-1807), James Burney's *A Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean* is one of the most thorough histories of pre-Cook voyages ever published. Burney, who produced this five-volume set, sailed with Cook on his second and third voyages, but saved that material for later. Item 42. \$25,000 (US \$18,804).

Item 49 is another early history, *An Historical Collection of several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean*, by Alexander Dalrymple. Dalrymple was a brilliant student of the seas, and he hoped to get the commission to explore the South Pacific that eventually went to Cook. However, he demanded too much, such as being commissioned an admiral, and the result was he lost the voyage's command. A glimpse at Dalrymple's personality can be seen in the book's "undedications" to earlier travelers. One is to Byron "who discovered scarcely anything but Patagonians," and another to Wallis, discoverer of Tahiti, who "infatuated with female blandishments forgot for what he went abroad and hastened back to amuse the European world with stories of enchantments..." Female blandishments can do that to you. \$22,500 (US \$16,924).

Here is another look at the prickly personality of Dr. Dalrymple: *A letter from Mr. Dalrymple to Mr. Hawkesworth, occasioned by Some groundless and illiberal Imputations in his Account of the late Voyages to the South*. John Hawkesworth put together the official version of Cook's first voyage, while the latter prepared for his second trip. Dalrymple here responds with a vitriolic attack. It is ostensibly a complaint about Hawkesworth's presentation, but it more likely hides Dalrymple's resentment that Cook got the call. Dalrymple is extremely critical that no one had been able to prove or disprove the theory of a massive southern continent, claiming he would not have come back in "Ignorance." He was a

strong proponent of this theory, which Cook would disprove on his second journey as he sailed through part of the area said to be within the continent's borders. Instead, Cook would establish the size of the more limited Australian continent. Item 89. Price on request.

Naturally there is a complete set of *Cook's Voyages*. There are eight volumes in the set, and this one includes first editions of the first and third voyages and a fourth edition of the second. The fourth edition of the second voyage was published contemporaneously with the first edition of the third voyage (1784). The first voyage was published in 1773, and this book under Hawkesworth's name is a wonderful account, Dalrymple's opinion notwithstanding. Item 72. \$85,000 (US \$63,936).

Captain James Cook is most remembered for the discoveries on his journeys, New Zealand, much about Australia, later Hawaii and explorations along the coast of North America. However, a totally different discovery of Cook's opened the door for much wider exploration in the years ahead. Scurvy was the scourge of all sailors in the era, killing large numbers of them, such as happened to Anson. Cook read David McBride's 1767 medical book, *Experimental Essays on medical and philosophical subjects: particularly...IV On the scurvy...* In fact, Cook took a copy of this book with him on his first voyage. It helped him find the antidote to the disease. Item 83. \$6,000 (US \$4,513).

When Cook came back with his cure, he generated a paper which Sir John Pringle presented to the Royal Society in 1776 (wasn't something going on in America at this time?). The result is this first account of the cure for scurvy discovered by Cook comes under Pringle's name and the title *A Discourse upon some late improvements of the Means for Preserving the Health of Mariners...* Cook could not deliver it as he was back at sea. Item 84. \$80,000 (US \$60,175).

Item 86 is *An Introduction to Physiology...* by Malcolm Flemyng. What does this medical, anatomical book have to do with Cook's voyages? The answer is it went along on his first voyage on the "Endeavor." It belonged to William Perry, the surgeon's mate, who was promoted to surgeon when his superior died. The book includes many of Perry's handwritten marginal notes, and some more detailed comments plus an anatomical drawing of the eye. On the front pastedown, Perry has written, "This Book went round the World in the Endeavor in 1768 /69 /70 /71." \$78,500 (US \$59,046).

Hordern House Rare Books is located on the web at www.hordern.com. Their phone number is (61-2) 9356 4411.

Part II

Hordern House, of New South Wales, Australia, has recently released the second part of their magnificent catalogue of the collection of David Parsons. Parsons, an American collector from Atlanta, developed one of the finest collections of Pacific voyages you could imagine. In January, we reviewed the first part of this collection, which started with Dampier's voyages in the 1670s and ended with Cook. This second part of the collection begins with the post-Cook era, and continues to the mid-19th century.

David Parsons reported that he decided to put his Pacific voyages collection up for sale to concentrate on a collection of Spanish and Portuguese expansion at the time of Columbus. We can see two very good reasons why he selected Hordern House to conduct the sale, though some might think an Australian bookseller out of the way. First, a great many Pacific voyages involved Australia or Pacific islands for which Australia is their closest large neighbor. Australia was the major stopping point for the greatest of all Pacific explorers, Captain James Cook. However, collectors of other areas, and America in particular, will find some of the greatest works for their libraries being offered in this catalogue. Just as Cook visited many other lands during his explorations, including the west coast of America, Parsons' collection covered many other Pacific countries. Indeed, many of these explorers never touched Australia. For example, there is a section on Russian explorers whose Pacific voyages never took them from the northernmost latitudes. These works are particularly interesting to collectors of Americana, as the Russians usually went to Alaska, or perhaps as far south as Nootka Sound (along Canada's Vancouver Island).

The other reason Parsons may have chosen Hordern House is the wonderful catalogues of his collection they have produced. Parsons' collection and provenance will always live in these catalogues, which in reality are large, fully described and richly illustrated memorials to his collection. Even if you are not in the market for the original books, if your interest is in Pacific voyages, you might want to contact Hordern House concerning a copy of this set. It is itself a collectible piece. Here are a few of the books that are offered in the second volume.

We will start with two foundation pieces for an Australian collection. Item 141 is *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay...* by Captain Watkin Tench. This is a first edition from 1789 of the earliest published authentic account of Australian settlement. Priced at \$21,000 Australian (approximate US dollar equivalent of \$15,960). Item 142 is Arthur Phillip's *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay...* Also published in 1789, this book not only provides the first official account of Australian settlement and the journey to Botany Bay, but many hand-colored plates of Australian natural history. AU \$65,000 (US \$49,400).

For those interested in the famous, or infamous, Captain Bligh, it is all here. It starts with two unrelated texts about the wonders of breadfruit. Bligh's mission on the *Bounty* was to transport breadfruit seedlings from Tahiti to the Caribbean,

where they could be used as an important food source. Then it moves on to Bligh's accounts of the mutiny, both his first and expanded second book. There is a copy of the account of the ship *Pandora*, sent to capture the mutineers, but which went down on a barrier reef. There are minutes of the court martial in England against the mutineers. Also, the extremely rare answer given by Bligh to allegations made against him during the proceedings. There is even a copy of the faked letters from chief mutineer Fletcher Christian, purporting to tell of his escape from Pitcairn Island to new adventures around the world. Item 164, however, recounts a second mutiny against Bligh much less known than the famed one on the *Bounty*. Fifteen years after the famous mutiny, Bligh was appointed Governor of New South Wales in Australia. Ultimately, Bligh proved to be about as popular there as he was with the crew of the *Bounty*. He was arrested and removed by subordinates on January 26, 1808, though he would eventually be exonerated back in Britain, be promoted to Rear Admiral, and live out his life without further insurrection. Item 164 includes six 1898 facsimiles of documents relating to his arrest printed in Sydney, along with a colored facsimile of a famous image of his arrest, where he was purported to have been dragged out from under a bed where he was hiding. Bligh may have been hiding in hopes of re-establishing his authority before he could be captured, but the image of him cowering in fear is almost certainly grossly unfair, as his amazing journey back in a small boat after the mutiny on the *Bounty* attests to his courage. AU \$9,000 (US \$6,840).

Item 167 is the official account of one of the most important voyages ever, though not for the new lands it discovered. It is a *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle, between the Years 1826 and 1836...* This four-volume set recounts exploration around South America and as far as Australia, but what makes it notable is the third volume. This was written by Charles Darwin, who traveled on the *Beagle* as a naturalist. Darwin observed fossils, animals, and native peoples along the many stops, and what he observed would later lead to his theory of evolution. AU \$78,500 (US \$59,660).

Another series within the collection pertains to the voyage of French explorer Jean La Perouse. La Perouse would first visit the Pacific coast of Asia. He had a habit of sending his journals home to France at various stops, which he did at Macao. He then proceeded to Australia, where he arrived at Botany Bay shortly after the British. He spent several amiable weeks there, again sent home his journals, and proceeded to sea. He was never heard from again. Within this series is the report generated from the journals he sent back, notices of concerns as it became feared he was lost, reports of attempts to find him, a fictitious account of finding him, and Peter Dillon's narrative of finally locating the wreckage of La Perouse's ships forty years later. Item 217 is a particularly fascinating related item. It is the story of Baron de Lesseps' overland journey through Russia, carrying the pages La Perouse sent home from Macao. De Lesseps spoke Russian, and completed a harrowing overland trip during 1787 and 1788, finally reaching France, text intact. His book, published in 1790, is

Journal Historique du Voyage de M. de Lesseps... \$4,200 (US \$3,192). The first English translation of this work is also offered.