

Basic Detail Report



A View of Karakakooa in Owyhee

Date

1784-1786

Primary Maker

Taylor

Medium

engraving

Description

The principal goal of Cook's first two voyages had been to confirm the presence of a great Southern Continent believed to exist in the Antarctic region. Once Cook was able to dispel this myth, interest turned to exploration of the northern Pacific. Cook visited the Hawaiian Islands briefly – the first European to do so – while en route to the northwest coast of North America in search of a northern passage linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. He had not expected to encounter additional islands that far north, but was welcomed by the Hawaiians with reverence and respect bordering on veneration when he arrived at Waimea Bay, Oahu, in January of 1778. After sailing to the northwest coast of North America, Alaska, and into the Bearing Strait, Cook returned in January of 1779, anchoring at Kealakekua Bay on the island of Hawaii, where he was again greeted with veneration and huge crowds of people. Webber drew this view of Kealakekua Bay after returning to England for publication in the official account of the third voyage, for which it was engraved by William Byrne (English, 1743-1805). The lack of a large crowd, reported to have included around 1,500 canoes and upwards of 10,000 people, makes it unlikely that the scene depicts Cook's arrival. The Resolution and the Discovery dwarf the native canoes gathered around them, and at bottom left, a Hawaiian man paddles toward the British ships on a surf board made of wooden planks. For a reader of the account, this panoramic landscape of the Kona Coast, reproduced by Hogg in its correct orientation, would have reinforced Cook's initial peaceful welcoming by the Hawaiians and set the stage for the tumultuous events to come.

Dimensions

Sheet: 9 3/4 x 14 3/8 in. (24.8 x 36.5 cm) Mat: 16 x 20 1/8 in. (40.6 x 51.1 cm)