

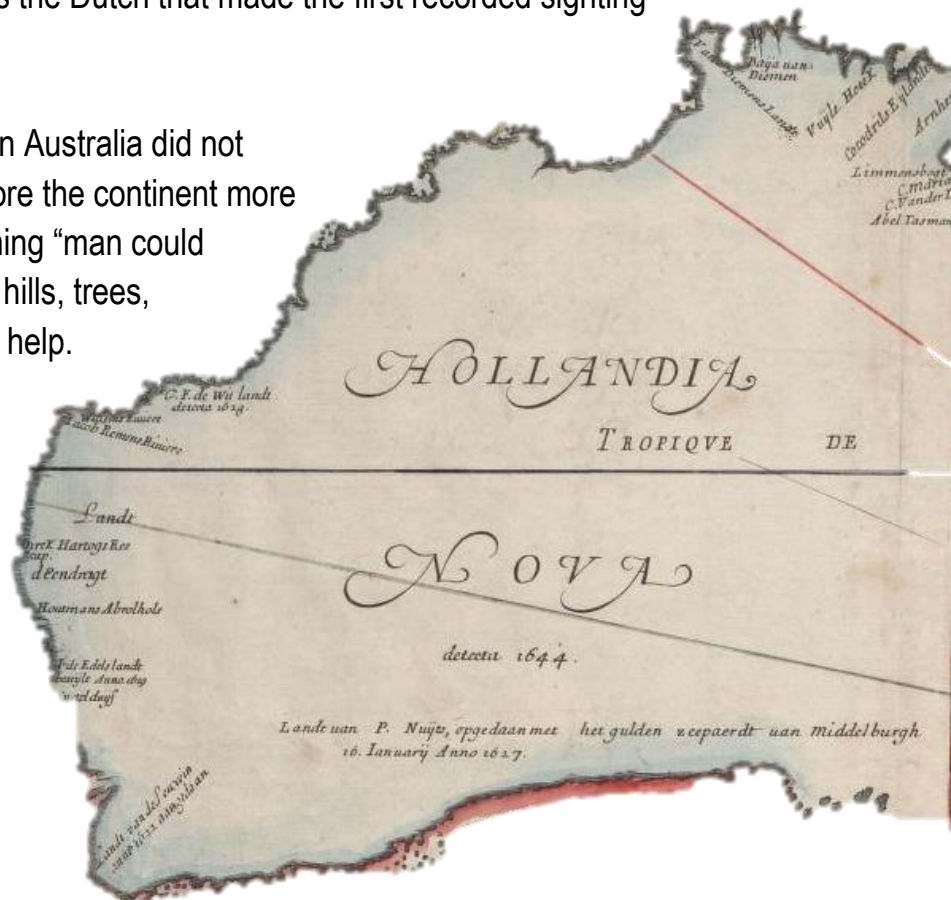
# The Pacific and European Contact

Taken from Jerry Bentley & Herb Ziegler's "Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past" (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 2006), 686-691.

- ❖ The peoples of Oceania had no inherited or acquired immunities to diseases that were common to peoples throughout the eastern hemisphere, and their numbers plunged when epidemic disease struck their populations. For the most part the people of Oceania experienced the arrival of Europeans and the breakout of epidemic disease later than the rest of the world.
- ❖ European mariners explored the Pacific basin between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, but only established permanent settlements in Guam and the Mariana Islands (colonized by Jesuits) before the late-18<sup>th</sup> century.
- ❖ From the second century European geographers speculated on the existence of a *terra australis incognita* – an “unknown southern land” – that they thought balanced out the huge landmasses of the northern hemisphere. European mariners expected to find this continent, but their main reason for entering the Pacific was trade and the pursuit of profit.
- ❖ Portuguese traders, operating in the Philippines, likely charted the western and northern coast of Australia as early as 1520, but it was the Dutch that made the first recorded sighting of the southern continent in 1606.

- The dry landscape of Western Australia did not encourage the Dutch to explore the continent more aggressively. Reports of nothing “man could make use of” (no mountains, hills, trees, precious metals, etc.) did not help.

- The Dutch still persisted in mapping the coastline, becoming closely associated with the continent in the minds of Europeans. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the landmass was marked as “New Holland” on most European maps.



- ❖ No Europeans visited the eastern coast of Australia under the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Captain James Cook approached the continent from the southeast and charted the region in 1770.
  - It was only after Cook's 1770 voyage that Europeans began to take interest in Australia. In 1788 a British fleet arrived at Sydney carrying 1000 passengers, 800 of them convicts, who established the continent's first European settlement as a penal colony. Free settlers would not outnumber convicts until the 1830s.
  - The Indigenous Peoples – a multitude of distinct societies – of the continent had very little interaction with Europeans until this point.



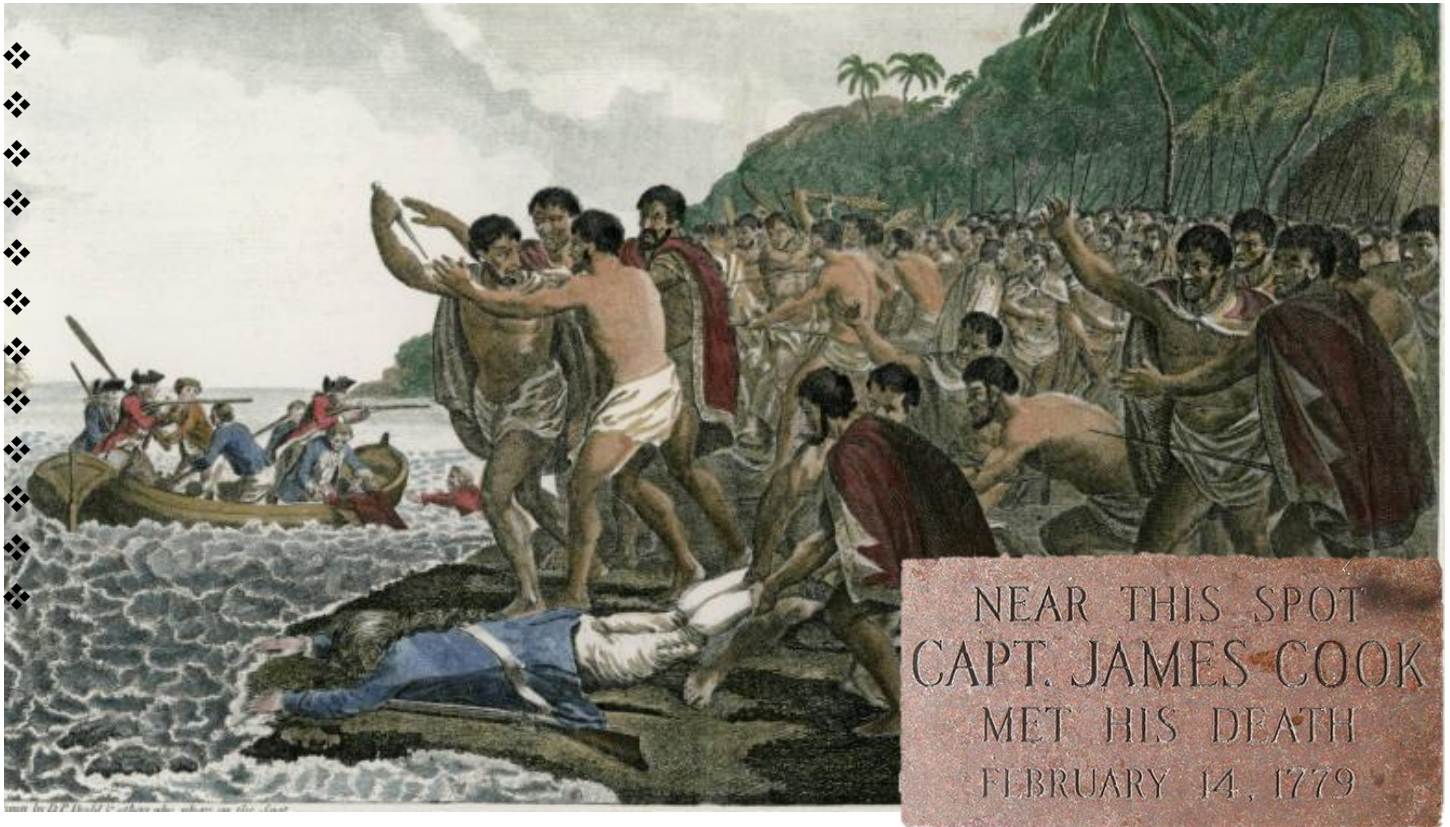
- ❖ Ferdinand Magellan and his crew became the first Europeans to cross the Pacific Ocean in 1521. Since Magellan didn't survive this voyage, many historians actually give the "first to circumnavigate the globe" honour to his Malay slave, Enrique. Enrique (likely from Malacca) had been at Magellan's side since around 1511, when Magellan took him as a spoil of war (re-naming him Enrique). Multi-lingual, Enrique allowed Magellan to communicate with local Indigenous Peoples throughout Southeast Asia.

- ❖ The Spanish made First Contact with the Marquesas, Tuamotu, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and New Hebrides (and possibly the Kingdom of Hawai'i) during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Spanish had little interest in these islands and did little to establish any relationships.

- The only islands that interested Spain were Guam and the Mariana Islands, which were put under the jurisdiction of the viceroy of New Spain (located in Mexico).

- ❖ Most Pacific Islanders had fleeting encounters with Europeans during the early modern times. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century growing European and North American settler interest in the Pacific basin increased dramatically.





- ❖ English and French Traders explored the Pacific Ocean in search of commercial opportunities, as well as the elusive Northwest Passage. Although trade was mostly peaceful, misunderstandings often led to minor skirmishes, and European captains occasionally opened fire on various Pacific communities.

### Captain Cook and Hawai'i

- ❖ In search of the Northwest Passage, Captain Cook landed in the Hawaiian Islands in 1778. He immediately recognized Hawaiians as a people related to Tahitians and other Polynesians whose lands he had visited during his previous explorations.
- ❖ Cook and his crew got along well with the Hawaiians who readily traded pigs and provisions for iron. Sailors and Hawaiians avidly consorted with one another, resulting in the transmission of numerous venereal diseases (even though Cook had ordered infected sailors to stay onboard their ships).
- ❖ After a few weeks' stay Cook departed for the north. When he returned south in 1779 a much different climate – one in which the islanders were much less accommodating. One dispute ultimately led to Cook's head being bashed in.