

**HAWAIIAN HISTORICAL  
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1779, A NARRATIVE OF THE  
DEATH OF CAPTAIN COOK**

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Hawaiian Historical Society Reprints, (No. 2) 1779, a Narrative of the Death of Captain Cook by David Samwell

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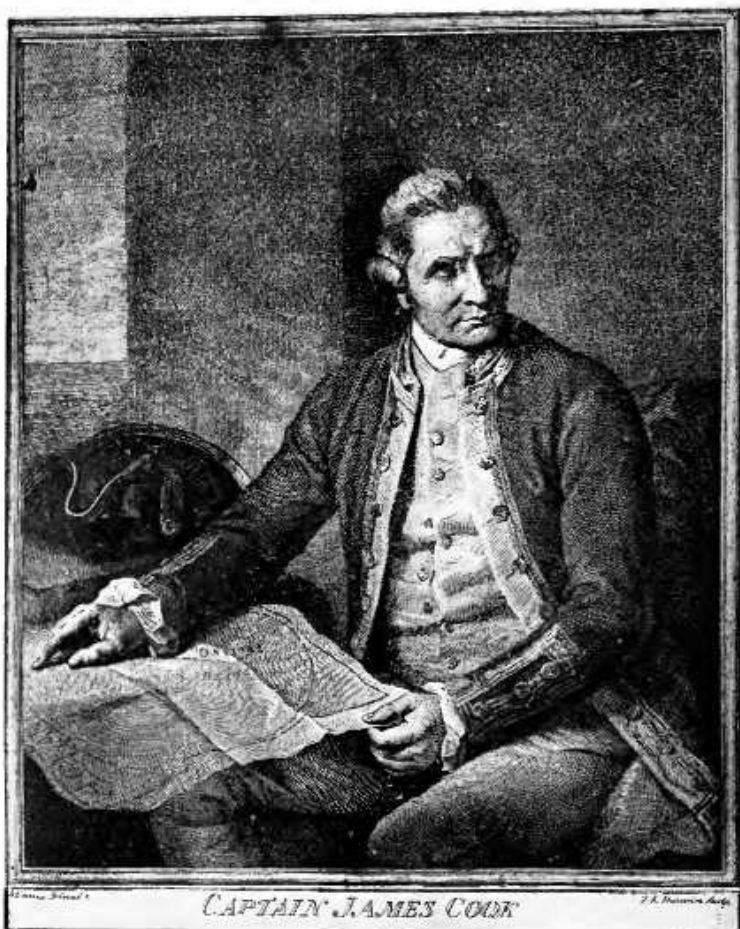
Hawaiian  
Historical Society Reprints, (No. 2)  
(1779)

A Narrative of the Death  
OF  
Captain James Cook

By DAVID SAMWELL  
Surgeon of The Discovery

LONDON:  
Printed for G. C. J. and J. Robinson, Pater-Noster-Row  
MDCCLXXXVI

(The Edition of this Reprint is Limited to 500 Copies)



*CAPTAIN JAMES COOK*

A  
N A R R A T I V E  
OF THE  
D E A T H  
OF  
CAPTAIN JAMES COOK.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME  
P A R T I C U L A R S,  
CONCERNING HIS  
L I F E A N D C H A R A C T E R.

A N D  
O B S E R V A T I O N S  
RESPECTING THE  
I N T R O D U C T I O N  
OF THE  
V E N E R E A L D I S E A S E  
I N T O T H E  
S A N D W I C H I S L A N D S.

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B Y D A V I D S A M W E L L,  
S U R G E O N O F T H E D I S C O V E R Y.

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L O N D O N:  
P R I N T E D F O R G . G . J . A N D J . R O B I N S O N , P A T E R - N O S T E R - R O W ;  
M D C C L X X V I .

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## Foreword

In presenting this reprint to our members the editor wishes to express his thanks to Professor W. T. Brigham of the Bishop Museum for furnishing him with a photograph of Captain Cook, from which the cut in this reprint was made; to Mr. John F. G. Stokes of the Bishop Museum for his assistance in identifying the Hawaiian names, and to Mr. J. W. Waldron for furnishing a typewritten copy of the book of which this is a reprint.

The modern Hawaiian names are inserted in brackets following those given in the text.

This reprint was edited and indexed for the Hawaiian Historical Society by Bruce Cartwright, Jr.



## Preface

To those who have perused the account of the last voyage to the Pacific Ocean, the following sheets may, at first sight, appear superfluous. The author, however, being of the opinion, that the event of Captain Cook's death has not yet been so explicitly related as the importance of it required, trusts that this Narrative will not be found altogether a repetition of what is already known. At the same time, he wishes to add his humble testimony to the merit of the account given of this transaction by Captain King. Its brevity alone can afford an excuse for this publication, the object of which is to give a more particular relation of that unfortunate affair, which he finds is in general but imperfectly understood. He thinks himself warranted in saying this, from having frequently observed, that the public opinion seemed to attribute the loss of Captain Cook's life, in some measure, to rashness or too much confidence on his side; whereas nothing can be more ill-founded or unjust. It is, therefore, a duty which his friends owe to his character, to have the whole affair candidly and fully related, whatever facts it may involve, that may appear of a disagreeable nature to individuals. The author is confident, that if Captain King could have foreseen, that any wrong opinion respecting Captain Cook, would have been the consequence of omitting some circumstances relative to his death; the goodnatured motive that induced him to be silent, would not have stood a moment in competition with the superior call of justice to the memory of his friend. This publication, he is satisfied, would not have been disapproved of by Captain King, for whose memory he has the highest esteem, and to whose friendship he is under many obligations. He is sanguine enough to believe that it will serve to remove a supposition, in this single instance, injurious to the memory of Captain Cook, who was no less distinguished for his caution and prudence, than for his eminent abilities and undaunted resolution.

The late appearance of this Narrative has been owing to the peculiar situation of the writer, whose domestic residence is at a great distance from the metropolis, and whose duty frequently calls him from home for several months together. He has the pleasure of adding, that, in publishing the following account of Captain Cook's death, he acts in concurrence with the opinion of some very respectable persons.

# Narrative of the Death of Captain Cook

In the month of January, 1779, the "Resolution" and "Discovery" lay about a fortnight at anchor in the bay of Kerage, goo, ah\* (Kealakekua), in the Island of Ou-why-ee (Hawaii). During that time, the ships were most plentifully supplied with provisions by natives, with whom we lived on the most friendly terms. We were universally treated by them with kind attention and hospitality; but the respect they paid to Captain Cook, was little short of adoration. It was, therefore, with sentiments of the most perfect good-will towards the inhabitants, that we left the harbour, on the fourth of February. It was Captain Cook's intention to visit the other islands to leeward, and we stood to the westward, towards Mowee (Maui), attended by several canoes full of people, who were willing to accompany us as far as they could, before they bade us a final adieu.

On the sixth, we were overtaken by a gale of wind; and the next night, the "Resolution" had the misfortune of springing the head of her foremast, in such a dangerous manner, that Captain Cook was obliged to return to Keragegooah (Kealakekua), in order to have it repaired; for we could find no other convenient harbour on the island. The same gale had occasioned much distress among some canoes, that had paid a visit from the shore. One of them, with two men and a child on board, was picked up by the "Resolution," and rescued from destruction: the men, having toiled hard all night, in attempting to reach the land, were so much exhausted, that they could hardly mount the ship's side. When they got upon the quarter-deck, they burst

\* I take it for granted, that most of those into whose hands these pages may fall, have perused Captain Cook's Last Voyage, and therefore, I have all along mentioned the names of the principal actors in this account, as people with whom they are already acquainted. But as I differ so much in the orthography of the language of the Sandwich Islands from that used in the printed Voyage, it becomes necessary for me to explain the names I use in this narrative, by those already known. It may appear strange, how we should differ so much; but so it is:— which is the most accurate, some future visitor may determine.

Karakakooa	I call	Ke,rag,e,goo,ah (Kealakekua)
Terreeoboo	—	Kariopoo (Kaleiopuu, better known as Kalaniopuu)
Kowrowa	—	Kavaroah (Kaawaloa)
Kaneecabareea	—	Kaneekapo,herei (Kaneekapulei)
Maiha maiha	—	Ka,mea,mea (Kamehameha)

into tears, and seemed much affected with the dangerous situation from which they had escaped; but the little child appeared lively and cheerful. One of the "Resolution's" boats was also so fortunate as to save a man and two women, whose canoe had been upset by the violence of the waves. They were brought on board, and, with the others, partook of the kindness and humanity of Captain Cook.

On the morning of Wednesday, the tenth, we were within a few miles of the harbour; and were soon joined by several canoes, in which appeared many of our old acquaintances; who seemed to have come to welcome us back. Among them was Coo,aha\* (Kuaha), a priest: he had brought a small pig, and some cocoa nuts in his hand, which, after having chaunted a few sentences, he presented to Captain Clerke. He then left us, and hastened on board the "Resolution," to perform the same friendly ceremony before Captain Cook. Having but light winds all that day, we could not gain the harbour. In the afternoon, a chief of the first rank, and nearly related to Kariopoo (Kalaniopuu), paid us a visit on board the "Discovery." His name was Ka,mea,mea (Kamehameha): he was dressed in a very rich feathered cloke, which he seemed to have brought for sale, but would part with it for nothing except iron daggers. These, the chiefs, some time before our departure, had preferred to every other article; for having received a plentiful supply of hatchets and other tools, they began to collect a store of warlike instruments. Kameamea (Kamehameha) procured nine daggers for his cloke, and being pleased with his reception, he and his attendants slept on board that night.

In the morning of the eleventh of February, the ships anchored again in Keragegooah bay (Kealakekua Bay), and preparation was immediately made for landing the "Resolution's" foremast. We were visited but by few of the Indians, because there were but few in the bay. On our departure, those belonging to other parts, had repaired to their several habitations, and were again to collect from various quarters, before we could expect to be surrounded by such multitudes as we had once seen in that harbour. In the afternoon I walked about a mile into the country, to visit an Indian friend, who had, a few days before, come near twenty miles, in a small canoe, to see me, while the ship lay becalmed. As the canoe had not left us long before a gale of wind came on, I was alarmed for the consequence; however, I had the pleasure to find that my friend had escaped unhurt, though not without some difficulties. I take notice of

\* Called Koah by Cook.—Ed.