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David Scott Mitchell.

THE NAME "PORT JACKSON."

SYDNEY, N.S.W.



PUBLIC attention has recently been again drawn to the misrepresentation in the Guide Books respecting the name given to our Harbour by Captain Cook. It is stated, in spite of repeated exposures of the myth, that Port Jackson was so named from its discoverer, a sailor on board Cook's vessel the *Endeavour*. There is one fact rather decidedly opposed to the invention; namely, that there was no sailor in the ship called Jackson. But, of what avail is fact, against accepted tradition; or is unanswerable evidence, in opposition to a plausible untruth once received and circulated? For the fourth or fifth time I offer that evidence to the public.

When the illustrious navigator commenced his grand voyage of discovery in these seas, the two joint Secretaries of the Admiralty were a Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Jackson, and a Mr. Phillip Stephens. Before sighting any portion of New South Wales Captain Cook lay some weeks in an open roadstead in New Zealand; and he called the two points or headlands of the bay Point Jackson and Point Stephens, after those Secretaries. Sailing along the eastern coast of New South Wales, he passed two openings which he did not stay to investigate, and he called the one Port Jackson and the other Port Stephens—for the same reasons presumably which had prompted the nominations at New Zealand. In point of fact, Captain Cook in his journal expressly mentions having called the two New Zealand headlands after the two Admiralty Secretaries. Here, therefore, we might safely conclude, had we no other grounds, was the source of the nomenclature of the next two occurring places of interest. And no doubt or difficulty ever would have arisen on the subject had not Sir George Jackson a few years afterwards (being then M.P. for Weymouth, and Judge Advocate of the Fleet), changed his name to Duckett, in accordance with the will of a relation. The name "Jackson" thus dropped out of recollection; and when "Port Jackson" became more famous, the question as to the name naturally arose, and seemed not easy of solution.

The conjecture appears then to have obtained currency, that the name was due to some sailor on board the *Endeavour*, who possibly had first observed the opening. But this surmise might have been set at rest by enquiry, had it not been for the genius of Dr. Lang, who in his History of New South Wales announced the guess as fact. Thenceforward, every guide book and account of Cook's voyage, great and small, has repeated the story. The accidental publication in Sydney about twenty years ago of the inscription on a monumental tablet at Bishops-Stortford in Hertfordshire, gave a clue to the truth; but the myth had now got too far to be overtaken. Sir George Jackson, alias Duckett, died in 1822, at the age of 97; and the tablet was erected to his memory by his widow; (or, as the present Sir George Duckett informs me, by his father, the second baronet)—who doubtless felt and gladly recorded the

honour done the deceased by the great navigator. The inscription mentions accordingly the names of Port Jackson and Point Jackson, as having been the result of Captain Cook's ancient friendship with the deceased Baronet. This publication, by whom I cannot now remember, appeared in our *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1858, or very early in 1869, and I was led, by natural interest in the subject, to write to the then possessor of the Duckett title, for fuller information. His reply, now lying before me, confirms the facts stated as to the two names. He added, that Captain Cook was born on Sir George's estate in Yorkshire, and doubtless brought up there. Thenceforward, his interests were probably not lost sight of by the friendly Secretary.

I communicated that letter without delay to the press, here and in Melbourne, and specially to Mr. Rusden; with the fact also of my having written to Mr. Childers, the then first Lord of the Admiralty, and received his reply stating that no sailor named Jackson was on board Cook's ship. I observe that Mr. Rusden in his *History* (vol. 1, pp. 9, 10), mentions the myth and its exposure; but without giving any authority for the latter. It would have been better, had he by way of confirmation referred to the letters in my possession.

Captain Cook's narrative is often mistakenly quoted, in reference to Port Jackson, as being a harbour fit only for boats. Captain Cook's entry is, that it was "a bay or harbour wherein there appeared a safe anchorage." Historically, the source of the name Port Jackson is of no moment. But, as the discoverer so called the bay after an early friend and patron—a fact honorable to both parties—in commemoration of their friendship, it is due to them that the invention or honest mistake which has so long misled the public should be authoritatively corrected.

ALFRED STEPHEN,

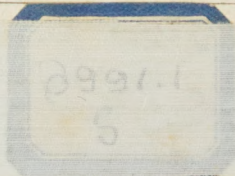
*Lieut.-Governor and formerly Chief Justice
of New South Wales.*

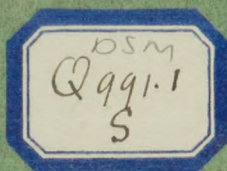
Sydney, N.S.W.

24th May, 1890.

The following is the concluding portion of the Memorial Tablet referred to:—"Captain Cook, of whom he was a zealous friend and early patron, named after him Point Jackson in New Zealand and Port Jackson in New South Wales."

*C. J.
S. J.*





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