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Britain, Canada and the North Pacific: Maritime Enterprise and Dominion, 1778-1914 (Variorum Collected Studies Series)

Barry M. Gough

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From the time of Cook, the British and their Canadian successors were drawn to the Northwest coast of North America by possibilities of trade in sea otter and the wish to find a 'northwest passage'. The studies collected here trace how, under the influences of the Royal Navy and British statecraft, the British came to dominate the area, with expeditions sent from London, Bombay and Macau, and the Canadian quest from overland. The North West Company came to control the trade of the Columbia River, despite American opposition, and British sloop diplomacy helped overcome Russian and Spanish resistance to British aspirations. Elsewhere in the Americas, the British promoted trans-Pacific trade with China, harvested British Columbia forests, conveyed specie from western Mexico, and established the South America naval station. The flag followed trade and vice versa; empire was both formal (at Vancouver Island) and informal (as in California or Mexico). This book features individuals such as James Cook, William Bolts, Peter Pond, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie. It is also an account of the pressure that corporations placed on the British state in shaping the emerging world of trade and colonization in that distant ocean and its shores, and of the importance of sea-power in the creation of modern Canada.

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