Joseph Banks, Sir Biography

Joseph Banks, Sir

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Joseph Banks, Sir Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

Biography

Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) was an English traveler and animal and plant breeder, but most of all a scientific promoter. His whole adult life was directed toward the advancement of science.

Joseph Banks, born on Feb. 13, 1743, in London, was the son of William Banks of Revesby Abbey, Lincolnshire. At age 9 Joseph entered Harrow; 4 years later he transferred to Eton, where at age 15 he started a lifelong interest in natural history. He entered Christ Church, Oxford, in 1761, but he found botanical studies so stagnant that he had to go to Cambridge for tutoring.

In 1764 Banks began his travels. He collected plants in Newfoundland, toured western England and observed its natural and human history, and then in 1768 embarked on the *Endeavour* on Capt. James Cook's first voyage of exploration in the Pacific. Although most of the results of Banks's expeditions were never published, these findings did seep into the general body of knowledge through his key positions in science and his personal generosity in allowing people to use his materials.

After 1772 Banks became increasingly involved in administering scientific undertakings in England; his personal botanical collections, which were to become the finest private ones in England, consumed some time, however. By the mid-1770s Banks was supervising the collection and propagation of plants from all over the world at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. In 1778 he became president of the Royal Society. For the next 42 years he presided over the scientific academy, developed an acquaintance with most branches of science, and became one of the most distinguished members of the scientific community. He encouraged and administered George III's introduction of Merino sheep into England between 1788 and 1820.

Banks used his considerable power and influence beneficently. During the dark years between 1789 and 1815, when the English government was almost exclusively concerned about surviving the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, Banks helped plan and looked after the interests of New South Wales, Australia, in London. On several occasions he also intervened with his own government and Napoleon's to protect scientists and their property against seizure.