Matthew Flinders Encyclopedia Article

Matthew Flinders

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1774-1814

British naval officer and explorer who was the first to circumnavigate Australia, publishing an illustrated account of his expedition, *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (1814) on the eve of his death. Flinders began his naval career in 1789, served from 1791 to 1793 under the famed Captain William Bligh (1754-1817), explored portions of Australia's coast from 1795-99, then commanded the expedition of the *Investigator* from 1801-03. The *Investigator* and its crew of sailors and scientists (who collected thousands of specimens during the expedition) completed the first circumnavigation of the continent, putting to rest several false notions about the geography of the island.