

# Pacific Most Likely for Uncharted Isles

Geography

Even though modern map makers have charted almost every scrap of land on the earth, whether large or small, there may still be some uncharted islands in the vast stretches of the Pacific. Successors to Defoe wishing to write of an unknown island upon which their hero is shipwrecked, might still do so without fear of contradiction if they placed it in the Pacific Ocean, slightly south of the equator and about a hundred miles south of the Caroline Islands. This region is to the north of New Guinea; it is out of the way of steamer tracks and has never been adequately charted.

But, on the whole, Robinson Crusoe would have a difficult time today trying to find an unknown desert island to get wrecked upon. In his time, a little more than two hundred years ago, the Pacific Ocean was dotted with thousands of unknown, uncharted islands, both verdure-clad and barren.

The profusion of these oceanic oases, especially in the equatorial region, and the fact that they were not placed on any sailing charts, made

it an easy matter to pick out a nice, lonely island as remote from the world of men as a corner lot on Mars. Alexander Selkirk, the original Robinson Crusoe, lived on the island of Juan Fernandez, three hundred and sixty miles west of Valparaiso, for three years without seeing another human being.

The story of the discovery and charting of the Pacific's islands is a fascinating tale, replete with romance and studded with the names of many doughty adventurers. Islands have been discovered, lost, and in some cases rediscovered. The Solomon Islands, for instance, were lost for two centuries and then found again. Most interesting, however, are those phantom isles sighted once or twice by mariners of sailing ships and then never seen again. A great deal of this island hide-and-seek was due to uncertain methods of determining latitude and longitude at sea. The rest was due to the sighting of floating patches of marine life which, at a distance, looked like islands, to submarine earthquake and volcanic action which might push a mass above the

surface of the water temporarily, and to the ever-active imaginations of deep-water sailors.

Fifty years ago more than a thousand tiny phantom isles were reported to freckle the Pacific's seventy million square miles. The United States Hydrographic Office, at that time, published a "List of Reported Dangers in the Pacific Ocean." The list, in three volumes, contained over three thousand reported shoals, reefs, and islands, most of them with the notation "Existence Doubtful" or "Position Doubtful". Today, the majority of these reported dangers, especially the islands, have definitely "disappeared".

Although possible, it is improbable that other islands may be discovered in the vastness of the Pacific's wilderness of waves. The improbability of this lies in the fact that submarine volcanic and earthquake activities have caused wrinkle-like elevations of the ocean's bottom on which the many groups of islands occur and the general direction of these "wrinkles" may be fairly easily traced.

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# Telephoned Pictures in British Press

Phototelegraphy

American equipment for picture transmission, similar to that now used for sending photographs from New York to San Francisco over telephone and telegraph wires, permits the Glasgow and Manchester editions of the London *Daily Express* to publish the same pictures that appear in the London edition. While all the large cities in England have their own newspapers, the London papers circulate throughout the British Isles to an extent far greater than that of any New York papers in other parts of the United States. To expedite the distribution, several of the London papers have branch publishing houses in other cities, where editions are printed closely resembling the London edition of the same day. News can be tele-

graphed promptly, but previously photographs had to be mailed, with the loss of several hours.

In a report just made to the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York, L. A. O'Brien, who directed the installation of the equipment, described the operation of the system.

Every day from 6:00 to 10:00 p. m. the *Daily Express* has a private

wire leased from the British Post Office, which operates the telegraph and telephone service, over which the pictures can be transmitted. About eight five by seven inch pictures can be sent in an hour. On the average fifteen pictures are sent every day. The pictures are retouched before they are sent to simplify the work at the receiving end. At present most of the transmission is from London to Manchester and Glasgow, where the pictures are received simultaneously. So successful has been the operation of the system, however, that two-way equipment will shortly be installed at all the stations, so that pictures may be sent from any of the three cities to the other two.

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