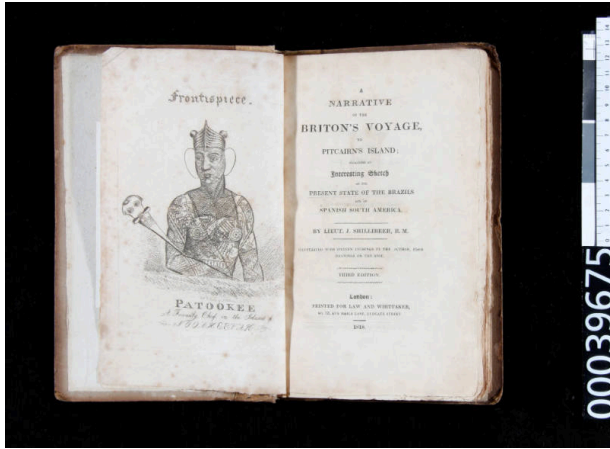


Basic Detail Report



00039675

Title

A Narrative of the BRITON's Voyage, to Pitcairn's Island

Date

1818

Primary Maker

Lieutenant John Shillibeer

Medium

Paper bound boards, paper

Dimensions

230 x 130 x 25 mm, 0.88 lb. (0.4 kg)

Name

Book

History

Shillibeer was a marine Lieutenant aboard HMS BRITON during its voyage to the Pacific in 1814. BRITON, accompanied by HMS TAGUS, made visits to Chile, Peru, the Galapagos and many other Pacific islands with the aim of locating the American frigate ESSEX which was disrupting British shipping in the Pacific during the War of 1812 between Britain and the United States. During the voyage the ships 'discovered' Pitcairn's Island - being only the second ship to visit the island since the BOUNTY mutineers and a group of Polynesians had settled there in 1790. Shillibeer's account tells of the situation of the mutineer's settlement only 24 years after its inception. The first description was made when the island was discovered by the American whaling ship TOPAZ in 1808. When BRITON arrived in 1814 only one of the original BOUNTY mutineers had survived - John Adams (alias Alexander Smith). Shillibeer's account describes an interview with Adams and is an important early description of the settlement that excited so much interest in later years. Despite Pitcairn Island's past of murder, suicide and violence the Captains of BRITON, Sir Thomas Staines and TAGUS, Captain Pipon viewed the island in a favourable light. John Adams had attempted to build a self sufficient community with Christian values, and the Captains argued it would be inhumane to arrest the population. BRITON's visit initiated an increase in contact between Pitcairn Island and the outside world. Inquisitive crews from America, Britain and Australia travelling on the Pacific trade route regularly stopped, making additional reports that presented a positive view of the islands' inhabitants. In 1887 Pitcairn Island was formally decreed a British settlement under the British Settlements Act. Today it is still inhabited by some 50 descendants of the BOUNTY mutineers.