

**SOME CURSORY
REMARKS, IN HIS
VOYAGES TO NORTH
AMERICA 1750-1751**

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Some Cursory Remarks, in His Voyages to North America 1750-1751 by James Birket

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JAMES BIRKET

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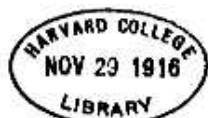
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1750-1751



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PREFACE

The diary here printed under its original title, "Some Cursory Remarks made by James Birket," came undoubtedly from the collection of Dr. William Thornton, now on deposit in the Library of Congress. It was preserved by Mrs. Margaret Bayard Smith, the wife of Samuel Harrison Smith, founder and first editor of the *National Intelligencer*, and descended to Mrs. Smith's grandson, J. Henley Smith, by whom it was presented to the University for publication.

Of Birket himself nothing is known, beyond what is stated in his itinerary. He was probably one of Thornton's West India friends, a merchant and sea-captain living in Antigua, where the name is found among the records sufficiently often to establish the presence of a Birket family there. Among the Thornton papers is a little brochure, *The Ladies' Advocate, a Poem*, printed in Antigua in 1748, which bears the name of James Birket, the owner. How the diary came into Thornton's hands we do not know. Presumably it was given to him by Birket, either in Antigua or in Tortola of the Virgin Isles, where Thornton lived, and must have contained information which the latter would value, preparatory to visiting the United States, as he did some years later, when he took up his residence there.

PREFACE

It is evident from the diary that Birket was in more or less frequent communication with many of the merchants of the Northern Colonies, and probably acted as correspondent and factor for them in their commercial dealings with Antigua. His observations show the mercantile bent of his mind and contain information that is not easy to obtain elsewhere.

C. M. A.

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