

HMS *BOUNTY* AND PITCAIRN: MUTINY, SOVEREIGNTY & SCANDAL

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2007



WE WILL COVER FIVE TOPICS:

- ❖ **THE MUTINY**
- ❖ **SETTLING PITCAIRN**
- ❖ **THE DEMAGOGUE**
- ❖ **ISLAND LIFE**
- ❖ **SOVEREIGNTY & THE SEX SCANDAL**





THE MUTINY

A MAJOR *BOUNTY* MOVIE APPEARS ABOUT EVERY 20 YEARS...



Date	Movie/Play	Key Actors
1916	Mutiny on the Bounty (M)	George Cross
1933	In the Wake of the Bounty (M)	Errol Flynn (rumored to be descendant of mutineers John Adams & Edward Young)
1935	Mutiny on the Bounty (M)	Clark Gable Charles Laughton
1956	The Women of Pitcairn Island (M)	
1962	Mutiny on the Bounty (M)	Marlon Brando Trevor Howard
1984	The Bounty (M)	Mel Gibson Anthony Hopkins
1985	Mutiny (P)	Frank Finlay

...AND THERE ARE 5000 ARTICLES & BOOKS

A CONSTELLATION OF STARS HAS PLAYED THESE IMMORTAL CHARACTERS



THE TWO REAL MEN WERE FRIENDS AND SHIPMATES WHO CAME TO HATE EACH OTHER



**LIEUTENANT, LATER ADMIRAL
WILLIAM "BREADFRUIT" BLIGH**

**FLETCHER CHRISTIAN
MASTER'S MATE
MUTINEER**



ROYAL DESCENT of FLETCHER CHRISTIAN

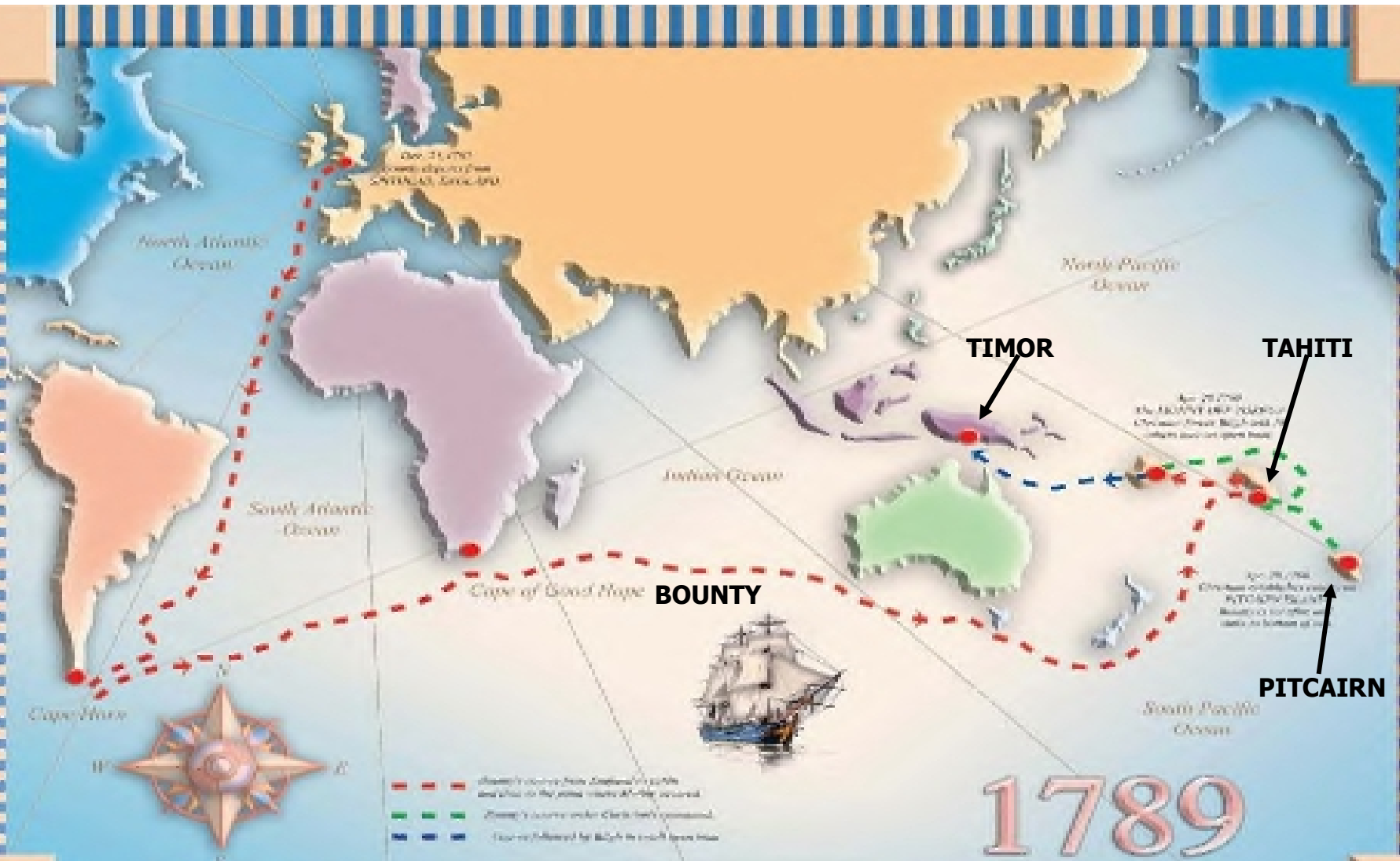
- **Edward III**
- John of Gaunt
- Joan Beaufort
- Richard Neville
- Richard Neville
- Margaret Neville
- Joan Huddleston
- Anthony Fleming



- William Fleming
- Eleanor Fleming
- Agnes Lowther
- William Kirby
- Eleanor Kirby
- Bridget Senhouse
- Charles Christian
- **Fletcher Christian**

**WM. BLIGH CAN BE TRACED ONLY
TO JOHN BLIGH, WHO DIED c. 1597**

ALL THE FICTION IS BASED ON TRUTH



H.M.S.
BOUNTY

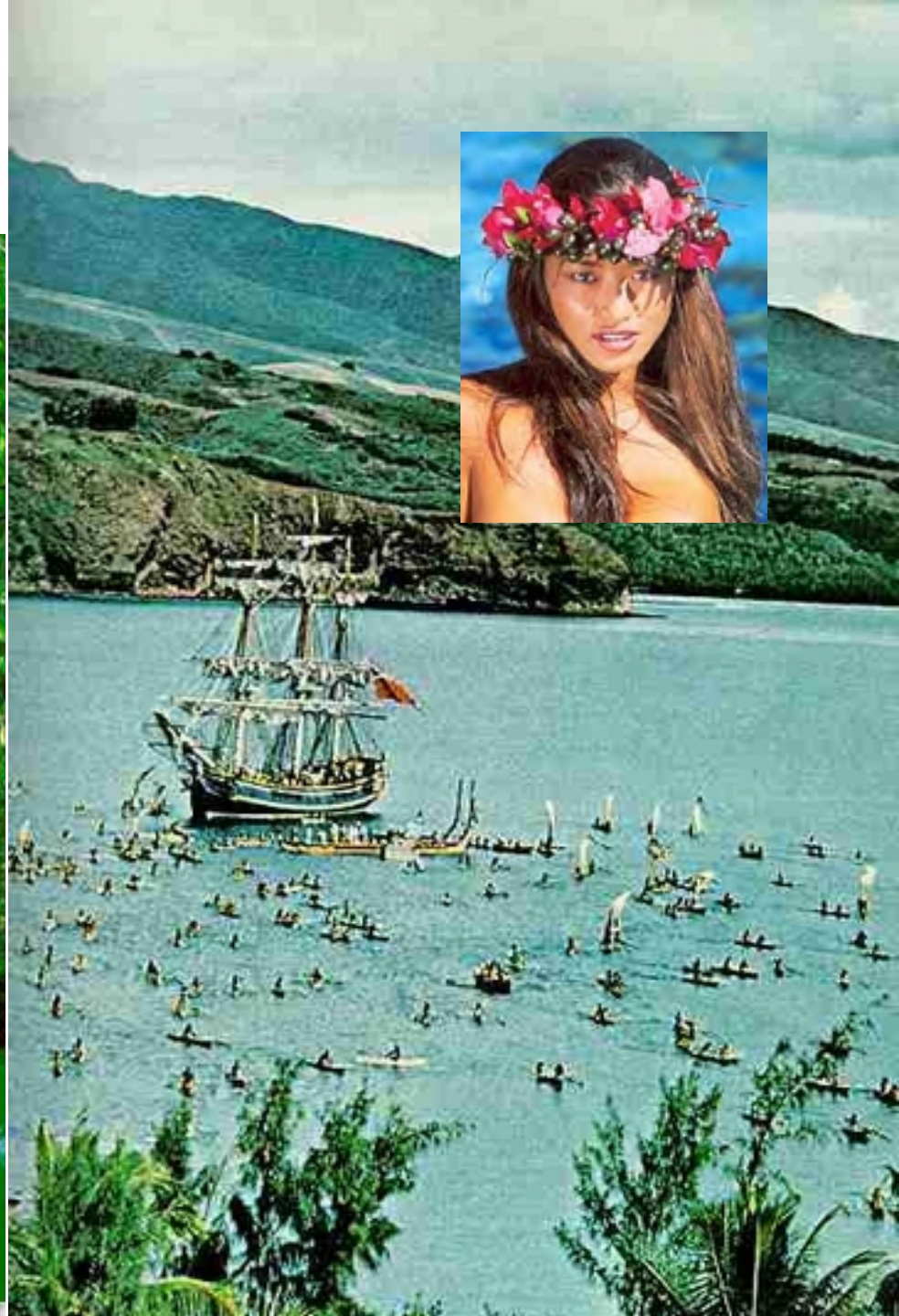
*Viz. M^r. Smith, M^r. Sumner and M^r. Quintal. - M^r. Christian had a
Cutlass in his hand, the others had Musquets and Bayonets. - I was forced on*

April 28, 1789:

‘Just before Sunrise Mr. Christian and the Master at Arms . . . came into my cabin while I was fast asleep, and seizing me tyed my hands with a Cord & threatened instant death if I made the least noise. I however called sufficiently loud to alarm the Officers, who found themselves equally secured by centinels at their doors . . . **Mr. Christian had a Cutlass in his hand, the others had Musquets & Bayonets.** I was forced on deck in my Shirt in torture with a severe bandage round my wrists behind my back, where I found no man to rescue me. . .



TAHITIAN PARADISE = *BOUNTY* MUTINY?



3 MUTINEERS WERE HUNG IN ENGLAND, WHILE *BOUNTY* BURNED AT PITCAIRN

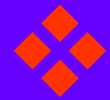


THE MUTINY AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRAGEDIES RAISE MANY QUESTIONS

- ❖ When is violent resistance to unjust authority warranted?
- ❖ How is national sovereignty established?
- ❖ When is it reasonable for a powerful culture to impose its values on a less powerful one?



- ❖ How would we act if we were part of this story?



SETTLING PITCAIRN

***BOUNTY* BAY HOLDS THE SUNKEN REMAINS OF THE SHIP**



JON CARPENTER

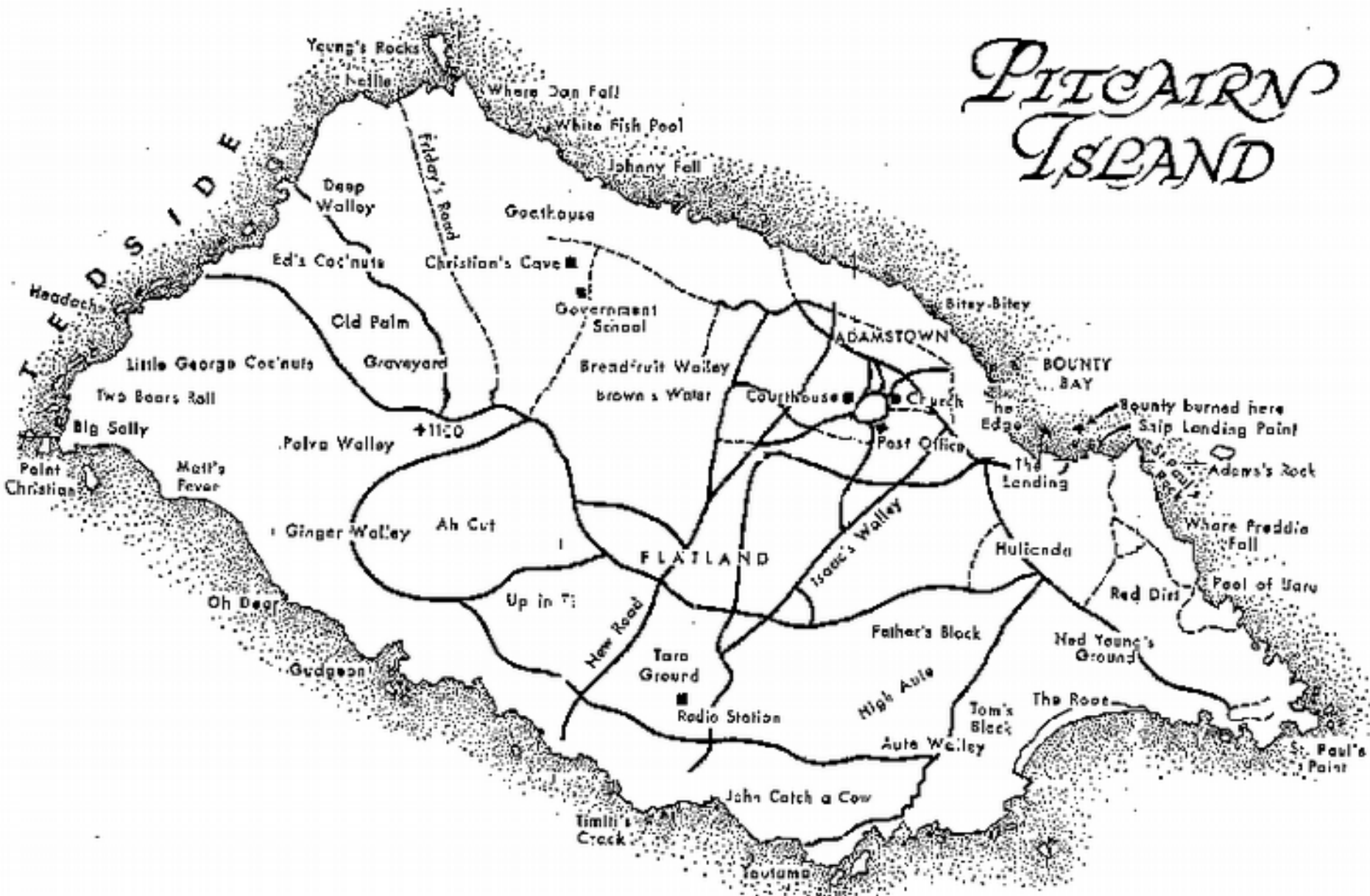


JON CARPENTER



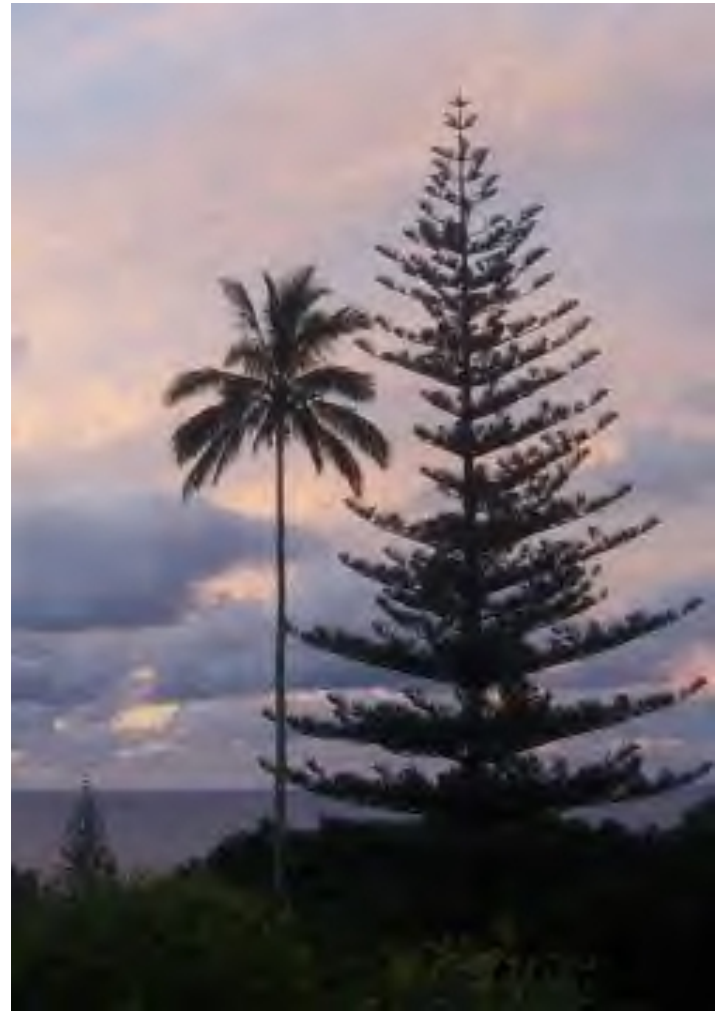
JON CARPENTER

TINY PITCAIRN IS ONLY 2.5 MILES LONG



SETTLING THE ISLAND WAS A DISASTER

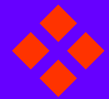
- Fletcher Christian divided the island among the English mutineers
- The Tahitian men mutinied
- The women mutinied
- Drink was discovered
 - “Oh Dear”
- Within 10 years, only one adult man left alive



JOHN ADAMS WAS THE SOLE MUTINY SURVIVOR & BECAME THE ISLAND PATRIARCH



1764-1829



THE DEMAGOGUE

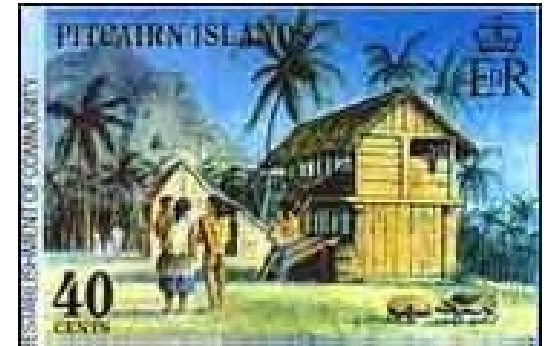
**SOME STRANGE PEOPLE HAVE
COME ASHORE IN PITCAIRN...**



**...THE DEMAGOGUE JOSHUA HILL
WAS ONE OF THE WORST**

HILL RULED THE ISLAND 1832 -- 1838

- Claimed to have British authority
- Made himself President of the “Commonwealth” of Pitcairn
- Expelled islanders he disliked
- Severe punishments
- Religious tyrant
- Finally removed by British warship, confirmed he had no sovereign authority

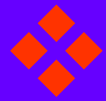


Thursday October Christian

PITCAIRN & HILL INSPIRED AN 1879 MARK TWAIN STORY

- ❖ Leader “hoisted the British flag, held title of Magistrate & Chief Ruler, in subordination to her Majesty the Queen”
- ❖ “This lady is my aunt, and my cousin, my step-sister, my niece, my 4th cousin, my 33rd cousin, my 42nd cousin, my great aunt, my grandmother, my widowed sister in law—and next week she will be my wife!”
- ❖ A lawsuit “over a trespassing chicken was appealed for 20 years, caused uproar”
- ❖ Uproar led to a coup d’etat against English rule by a visiting American, who made himself Emperor
- ❖ But cost of a Pitcairn army, navy & aristocracy was huge, and no aristos wanted to work
- ❖ The nation re-hoisted the British flag





ISLAND LIFE

**THE ISLAND APPEARS DWARFED
BY THE BOW OF M.V. *DISCOVERY***



THE ENTIRE POPULATION FITS IN ONE LONGBOAT



BASIC FACTS

- ❖ Only 47 natives on island
- ❖ Only 4 surnames
- ❖ Only 12 men for longboat; no TV; some email; no drinking/dancing
- ❖ No airstrip, one beach with rope
- ❖ Almost constant heavy seas
- ❖ Hot and humid all the time
- ❖ 15 minute walk maximum
- ❖ Economy based on stamps, crafts, agriculture, fishing and honey
- ❖ 10-15 cruise ships visit, some merchant vessels, no regular service
- ❖ Favorite dish: breadfruit



ISLANDERS ARE STRONG & SELF-RELIANT



**Nadine Christian &
Emily Rose Christian,
born 9/14/03,
first child born on Pitcairn
for 17 years**



**Josh Christian
with his carvings**



Pania Warren

BUT SOME LOOK MUTINOUS



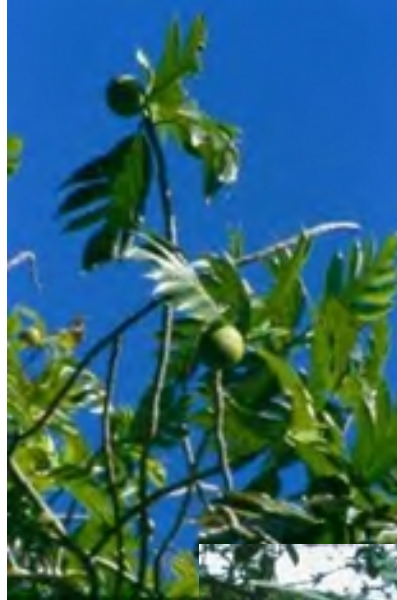
Paul Warren



NORMALLY PEACEFUL PITCAIRN



ISLAND SCENES



ISLANDERS SMILE DESPITE THEIR PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE



Tom Christian
Island Patriarch
6th G-Grandson
of Fletcher



Darlene Christian
and her Bounty
tattoo



EVERYTHING MUST BE BROUGHT FROM THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY



THE TINY JETTY IS THE ISLAND LIFELINE



PITCAIRNESE IS STRANGE

- Odd mixture of Tahitian, archaic English, and British navy terms
- Unintelligible to outsiders
- “Weckle” = food
- “Plum” = banana



- A phrase to the British authorities:
“Fut you ally comey diffy and do daffy?” =
Why do you come here and behave that way?

A REPLICA OF HMS *BOUNTY* IS BUILT & BURNED EVERY YEAR



Pitcairners on *Bounty* Day,
Jan. 23, 2004



❖ **SOVEREIGNTY &
THE SEX SCANDAL**

STEVE CHRISTIAN, ISLAND MAYOR, AND 5 OTHERS CONVICTED OF SEX CRIMES RANGING BACK 40 YEARS

- **Steve Christian: 53 years old
3 year sentence for 5 rapes of
girls as young as 12**
- **His son, Randy Christian, 28,
6 years in prison for 4 rapes**
- **Dennis Christian, postmaster,
community service for sexual assaults**
- **Len Brown, 78, 2 years in jail for 2 rapes**
- **His son Dave Brown, community service
for 9 assaults**
- **Terry Young, 42, 5 years for rape & assault**



**Steve
Christian**

ONE OF THE MOST BIZARRE TRIALS IN BRITISH HISTORY

- British delegated jurisdiction to NZ
- All elements of trial imported at huge expense, **population almost doubled**
- Prosecutors brought ashore by accused
- Accused built their own jail for \$5/hr
- All guns on island confiscated
- No accusing women came to the island
satellite link from NZ
- On-island **women supported the accused men**
- Few islanders attended trial
- Viability of the **entire island** could be **threatened** by the verdicts



TWO IRRECONCILABLE VIEWS

- Island is male-dominated hell on Earth where assaults and rapes were common
- Men "hunted in packs"

- Island is a paradise where Tahitian mores encourage love & sex
- Tiny population means that unusual age pairings are necessary



**BRITISH M.O.D. POLICE NOW
CLOSELY CONTROL THE ISLAND**



**DEFENSE IS GOING TO TRY
TO CHANGE THAT BY SHOWING
THAT PITCAIRN IS SOVEREIGN**

CLAIMING THAT PITCAIRN IS NOT BRITISH COULD BE A BIT TRICKY



**THE PITCAIRN FLAG SHOWS *BOUNTY*
ANCHOR & BIBLE, A BREADFRUIT IN A
WHEELBARROW...**



...AND THE UNION JACK

KING GEORGE VI HIMSELF APPROVED THE DESIGN OF SOME PITCAIRN STAMPS



PLA 146095 NEW YORK BUREAU

EVALUATED BY KING GEORGE

WHEN A NEW ISSUE OF STAMPS FOR BRITAIN OR THE CROWN COLONIES IS DECIDED UPON, THE BEST DESIGNS PASSED BY THE FINE ARTS COMMISSION ARE SUBMITTED IN WATERCOLORS, SIZE OF THE FINISHED STAMP, TO KING GEORGE VI. HE SELECTS THE DESIGN AND COLOR HE PREFERENCES, AND PRODUCTION OF THE ISSUE BEGINS. THIS PAGE FROM THE KING'S COLLECTION SHOWS DESIGNS GENERALLY APPROVED IN THE CORONATION ISSUE FOR THE PITCAIRN ISLANDS. A NEW DESIGN HAD TO BE FOUND FOR THE ONE MARKED "NO."

BY CH. EGGAN
CREDIT LINDACAE.)

12/28/44 (Rev.)



BUT DEFENSE PLANS VIGOROUS APPEAL

- ❖ Original discoverer Capt. Carteret of HMS *Swallow* in 1767 **did not** go ashore, **plant a flag**, or build a cairn. “I would have landed upon it, but the surf broke with such violence that it was impossible” (Island was named for the midshipman who first sighted it)
- ❖ The island was “misplaced” by 200 miles
- ❖ Capt. Elliot of HMS *Fly* in 1838 **did not** explicitly **claim** the island in the official Pitcairn Register, as was claimed by prosecution
- ❖ Elliot’s first “constitution” did not explicitly say island was British
- ❖ Burning *Bounty* was a “**Declaration of Independence**”
- ❖ Fallback: islanders not informed on British law
- ❖ Appeal failed to the British Privy Council, thence possibly to the European High Court



THE DEFENSE RELIES ON BLACKSTONE (1765)

- “If an uninhabited country is discovered & planted by **English subjects**, all English laws then in being are immediately in force”
- But “there are many restrictions”: “Only **so much English law as is applicable** to their own situation is carried in...”
- “Subsequent **Acts** of Parliament **apply only when the colony is mentioned...**”



PITCAIRN DISAPPEARS BEYOND THE HORIZON-- WHAT WILL ITS FUTURE HOLD?



**More information:
Pitcairn Islands Study Center
Pacific Union College, CA
<http://library.puc.edu/pitcairn>**

THANKS!

