

# MUTINY ON THE HMS BOUNTY

*by William Bligh*

An Adaptation via Thinking Processes Affording  
Joy in Learning and Logical Analysis

an *auto*SOCRATIC QUICK-START publication

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**Center for**  
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*Captain William Bligh*  
*His Background*



# Bligh's Upbringing

William Bligh was born in Plymouth, England, in 1754, and was around "the sea" his entire life.

At 16, Bligh was in the British navy, and at 22, he became a sailing master under Captain James Cook.

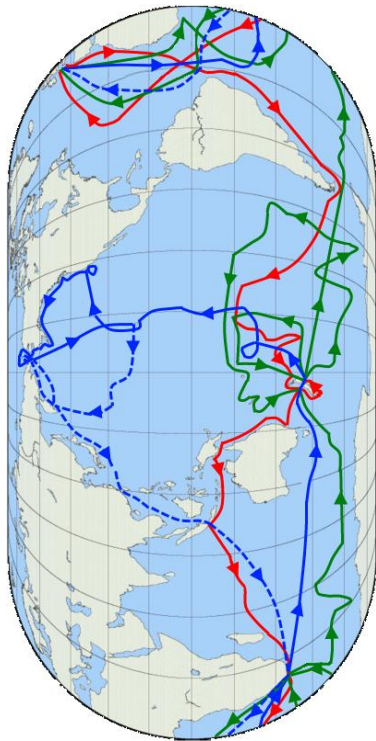
Bligh was around "the best" in the water at an early age.

Cook was trying to map the South Pacific, partially to find an inland route for the fur trade in NW America.

Bligh had a great knowledge of the South Pacific.

# Captain Cook

(In Blue --- His Third Trip in the Pacific)



# Tahiti and Breadfruit

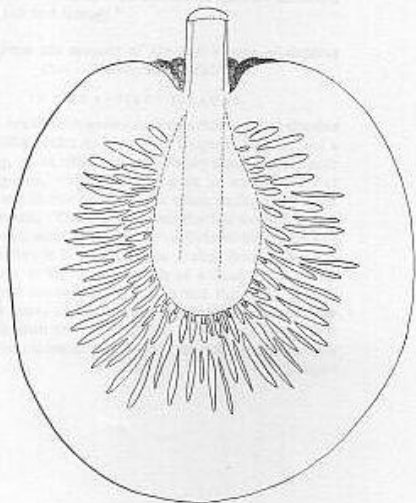
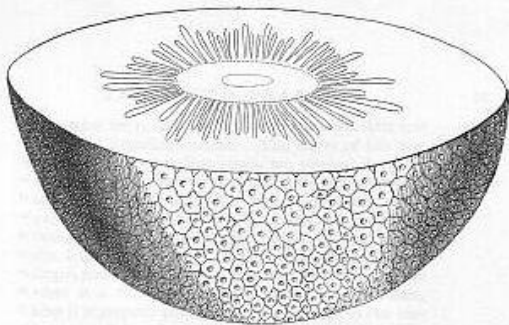
The English were looking for a cheap food to feed slaves in the British West Indies (Caribbean).

In Captain Cook's explorations, Tahiti (Otaheite) was found to have breadfruit plants.

The English wanted to transplant Tahiti breadfruit plants in the West Indies.

After the Revolutionary War, Bligh was given command of the Bounty, a merchant ship, to make the trip.

The voyage of the Bounty ensued.



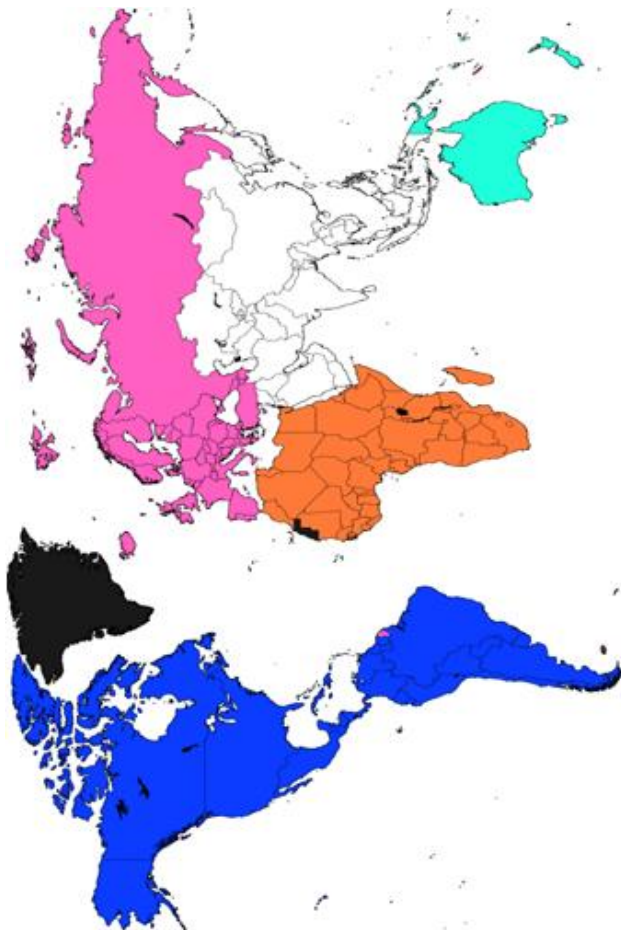
*Sections of the Broad Fruit*

*Robinson*



# **HMS Bounty** **(His Majesty's Ship)**





A  
V O Y A G E  
TO THE  
S O U T H S E A,  
UNDERTAKEN BY COMMAND OF  
H I S M A J E S T Y,

FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
CONVEYING THE BREAD-FRUIT TREE  
TO THE WEST INDIES,  
*IN HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP THE BOUNTY,*  
COMMANDED BY  
LIEUTENANT *WILLIAM BLIGH.*

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
MUTINY ON BOARD THE SAID SHIP,  
AND THE  
SUBSEQUENT VOYAGE of Part of the CREW, in the SHIP'S BOAT,  
From TOFOA, one of the FRIENDLY ISLANDS,  
TO TIMOR, a DUTCH SETTLEMENT in the East Indies.  
THE WHOLE ILLUSTRATED WITH CHARTS, &c.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR GEORGE NICOL, BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY, PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.XCII.

# The Nature of the Crew

A ship's crew consisted mainly of men who were hiding from the law or riffraff kidnapped off the streets.

The ship's captain must keep order aboard ship at sea, sometimes for years at a time.

Flogging was the "usual means" of inflicting punishment for bad behavior.

Men of this sort weren't use to much discipline.

What seems "Cruel and Unusual" punishment to us wasn't so at the time.

# Fletcher Christian

At 18, Christian was promoted from a midshipman to master's mate.

Fletcher Christian twice had sailed with William Bligh (to Jamaica).

Fletcher was an accomplished master's mate and familiar with Bligh.

Bligh appointed Christian master's mate on the Bounty, but promoted him to acting lieutenant enroute.

Bligh thought highly of Christian.

## Fletcher Christian



# The Scheduled Route

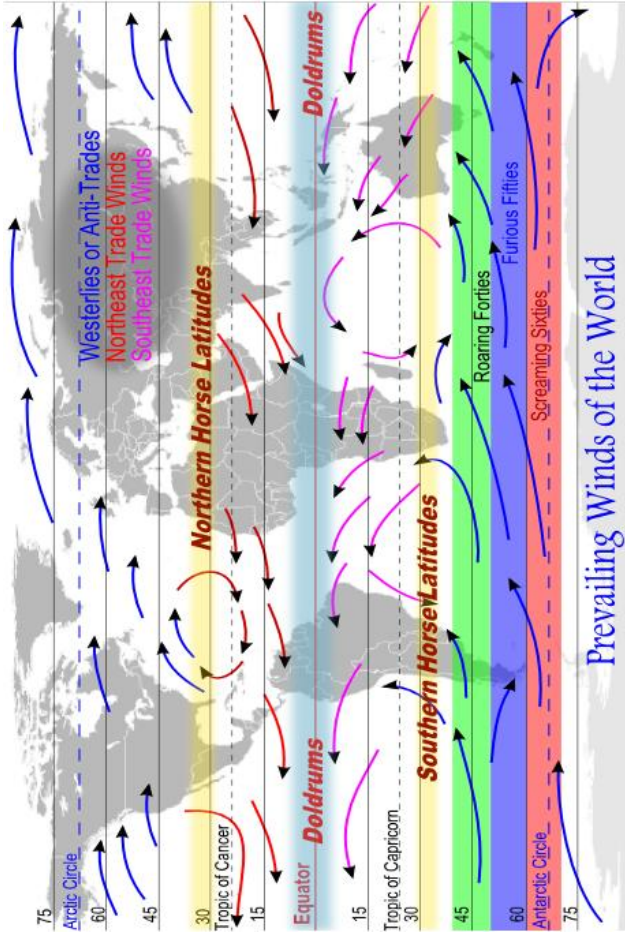
The route took the Bounty south from England to the tip of South America.

Tahiti is northwest of the tip of South America.

The Bounty must go around the tip of South America (Cape Horn).

The prevailing winds blowing eastward (the "roaring 40s") make rounding Cape Horn a timely maneuver.

Missing the date meant sailing eastward past tip of Africa (Cape Hope) and adding 10,000 miles to the journey.



## Prevailing Winds of the World



# Cape of Good Horn

For a full month, the Bounty attempted to round Cape Horn.

Adverse weather blocked movement west.

Bligh decided to change directions and head east to the Cape of Good Hope in Africa.

The change in directions added approximately 10,000 miles to the journey.

The Bounty reached Tahite after 10 months at sea, on October 26, 1788.

# The Survival of Breadfruit

The Bounty collected and prepared 1,015 breadfruit plants.

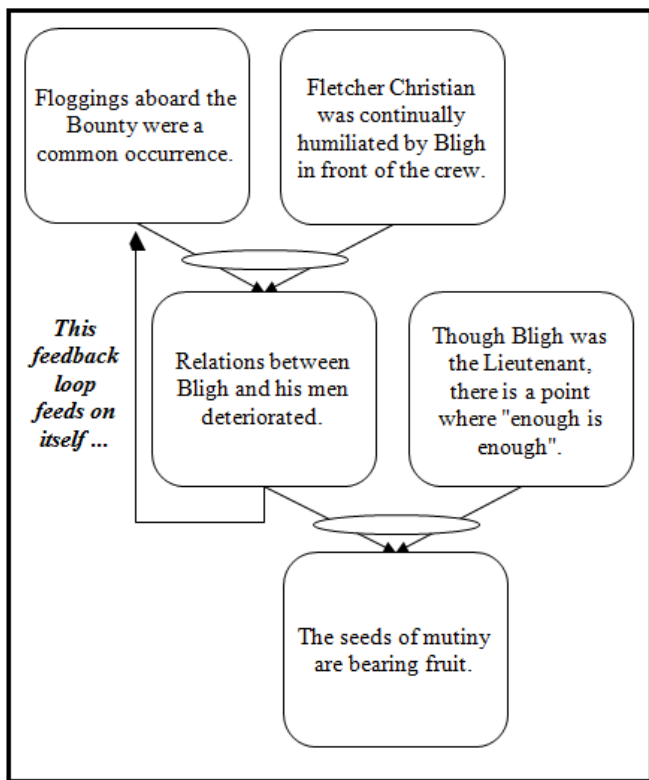
The breadfruit plants had to reach the point of development where they could be safely transported by ship.

The five-month layover in Tahiti was unplanned.

While ashore caring for the plants, the crew became socialized to the customs and culture of the Tahitians.

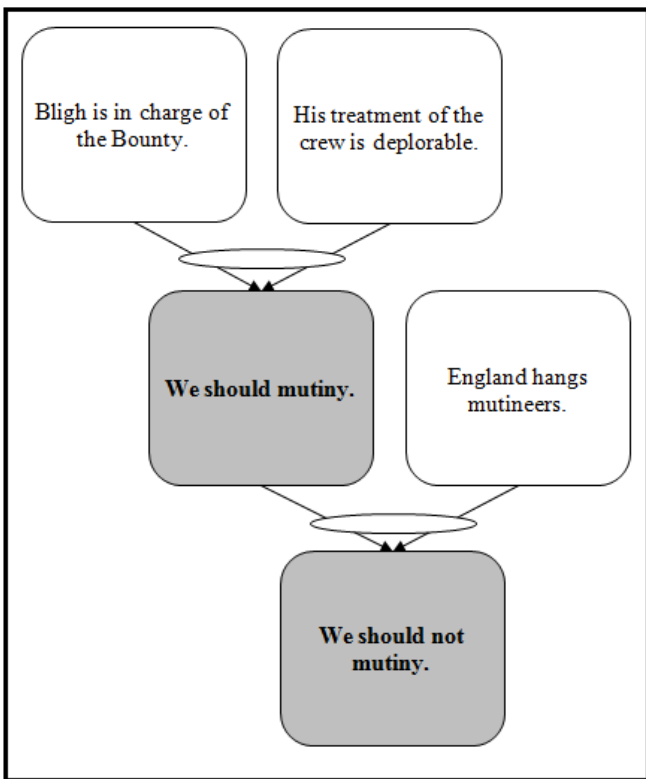
The trip back to England aboard a cramped ship would be especially hard.

# Tensions Grow



# *Four Choices*

# What Should the Crew Do?



# Where Should the Crew Go?

We've had enough,  
and we're going to  
mutiny.

We are mutinying  
because of Bligh's  
conduct.

**We should return  
to England with  
Bligh in chains.**

England hangs  
mutineers.

**We should not  
return to England.**

# Bligh's Fate

Some of the crew has decided to take control of the ship and return to Tahiti.

The crew are not killers.

**Bligh (and others) should be put on a small boat and left to fend for themselves.**

If Bligh makes it back to England, they all will be confirmed mutineers and sentenced to death.

**The crew should kill William Bligh.**

# The Crew's Choice

Mutiny aboard the Bounty, and Bligh has been put in the launch (small boat).

Crew members know those staying aboard will be considered part of the mutiny, whether they were or not.

**Those not in the mutiny should join Bligh in the launch.**

Being in the launch means certain death, as it will either sink or one will die of dehydration.

**Those not in the mutiny should not join Bligh in the launch.**



*The Story Continues*

# On to Pitcairn

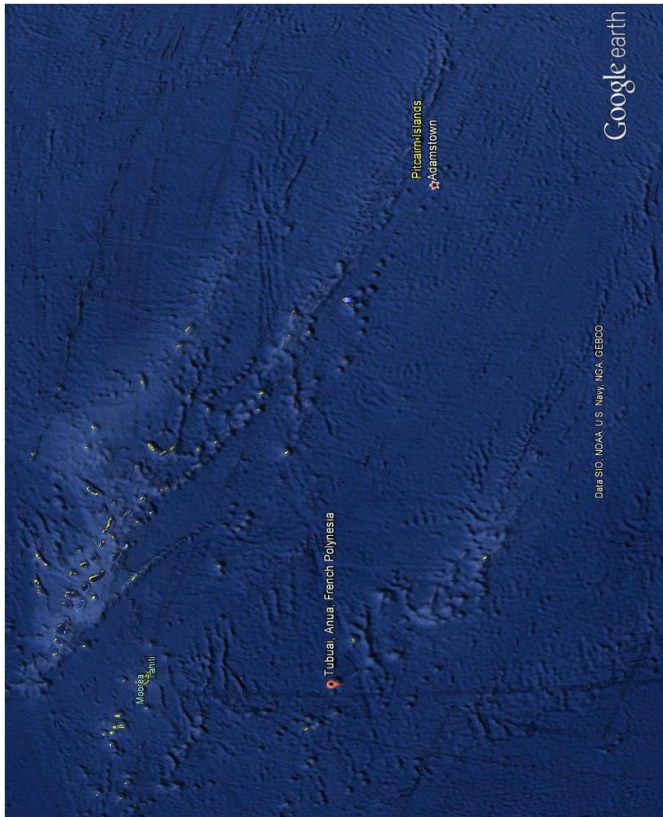
The mutineers tried to settle at the island of Tubuai.

Island natives repeatedly attacked the mutineers.

The mutineers returned to Tahiti.

Twelve of the mutineers and four loyalists to Bligh remained in Tahiti.

The remaining mutineers and Tahitian wives left for Pitcairn.



Hawaiian  
Islands

Tahiti

Pitcairn

Data: SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
Image: U.S. Geological Survey  
US Dept of State Geographer  
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Google earth

# Bligh's Passage

Bligh magnificently maneuvered the small boat to Timor in the Dutch East Indies.

From Timor, Bligh made it back to Britain in March, 1790.

Britain knew of the Mutiny Aboard the Bounty.

England did not take kindly to mutiny.

A second ship, the Pandora, left Britain in November 1790 to find the Bounty.

# The Pandora

The Pandora arrived at Tahiti on November 1790, looking for the mutineers.

Fourteen mutineers remained on Tahiti.

Fourteen mutineers remained on Tahiti were imprisoned aboard the Pandora.

While traveling through the Torres Strait by Australia, the Pandora sank, killing 31 crew and 4 prisoners.

One wonders the cost / risk of pursuing the mutineers.

# Adamstown

Having landed on Pitcairn, the surviving mutineers did not want to be detected by British vessels.

The surviving mutineers did not want anybody on the island to leave.

The Bounty was scuttled (sunk).

The Tahitian's came to revolt against the British mutineers.

By 1808, only John Adams, nine women, and several children still lived.

# Breadfruit on Jamaica

The Bounty's goal was taking breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies as a cheap source of food for the slaves.

Bligh commanded the HMS Providence back to Tahiti in 1791 to complete the mission.

The HMS Providence transported breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies.

Slaves on Jamaica in the West Indies refused to eat the breadfruit.

The purpose of both expeditions was a failure.