The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H.M.S. Bounty: Its Cause and Consequences
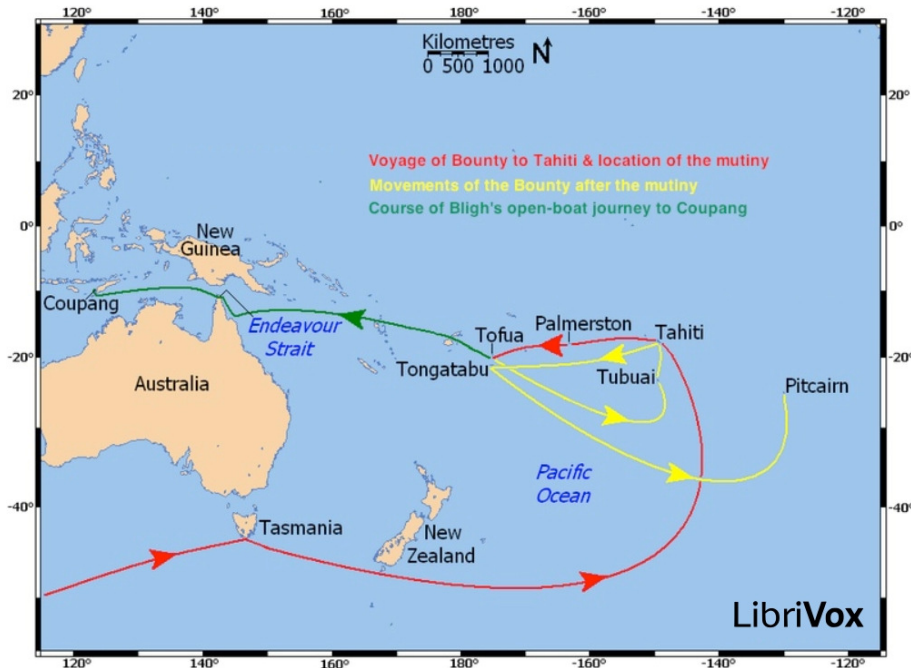

Sir John Barrow

The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H.M.S. Bounty: Its Cause and Consequences
by Sir John Barrow (1764-1848)

The mutiny on the Bounty occurred aboard a British Royal Navy ship on 28 April 1789. The mutiny was led by Fletcher Christian against the commanding officer, William Bligh.

On 4 April 1789, after five months in Tahiti, the Bounty set sail with its breadfruit cargo. On 28 April 1789, some 1,300 miles west of Tahiti, near Tonga, mutiny broke out. From all accounts, Fletcher Christian and several of his followers entered Bligh's cabin, which he always left unlocked, awakened him, and pushed him on deck wearing only his nightshirt, where he was guarded by Christian holding a bayonet. When Bligh entreated with Christian to be reasonable, Christian would only reply, "I am in hell, I am in hell!"

The mutineers ordered Bligh, the ship's master, two midshipmen, the surgeon's mate, and the ship's clerk into Bounty's launch. Several more men voluntarily joined Bligh rather than remaining aboard, as they knew that those who remained on board would be considered de facto mutineers under the Articles of War.

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