

- Sanders, Roy (1953) *Our Island Being a Study of Pitcairn Community in Transition*. MA thesis, Auckland University, Auckland.
- Seamon, David (1979) *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest, and Encounter*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Shapiro, Harry L. (1929) *Descendants of the Mutineers of the Bounty: Memoirs of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum*. Honolulu: Museum of Hawaii.
- Sims, Martha & Martine Stephens (2005) *Living Folklore An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.

*

*

*

The Women of the *Bounty*

Everett L. Parker

In September 1789, after the mutiny and while staying briefly on Tahiti, Fletcher Christian became concerned that some of his men were ready to rebel against him. Spurred also by fear of discovery and arrest from Britain, he made a hurried departure. He and eight members of the HMAV *Bounty* crew sailed from Tahiti with six Polynesian men, 12 Polynesian women and a baby girl. Searching for a new home took four months until uncharted Pitcairn was sighted on January 15, 1790.

A decision was made on January 23 to burn the *Bounty* and the fate of all to remain on the island was sealed. The women consorts soon adopted a survival mode by growing crops, fishing, making tapa for warmth and clothing and ensuring Tahitian culture remained an integral part of Pitcairn's identity through music and dance. Pauline Reynolds, in her *Textile History* article, writes how the production of tapa and gifting 'reveals information regarding their social, ritual and innovative activities, and their contribution to the *Bounty*/Pitcairn story.' This activity was exclusively a female role but one that gave them a degree of power, status and prestige (depending on the fineness of the cloth). It also provided an outlet for their creative talents and helped bind social relationships. In addition to clothing the community, the tapa made by the *Bounty* women also made fine tapa for traditional gifting to seafaring visitors. This gave the women an important role in Pitcairn daily life. Reynolds added:

The making and felting of cloth by the women of the Pitcairn community was symbolic of the binding and weaving of relationships, particularly amongst the women and their children.

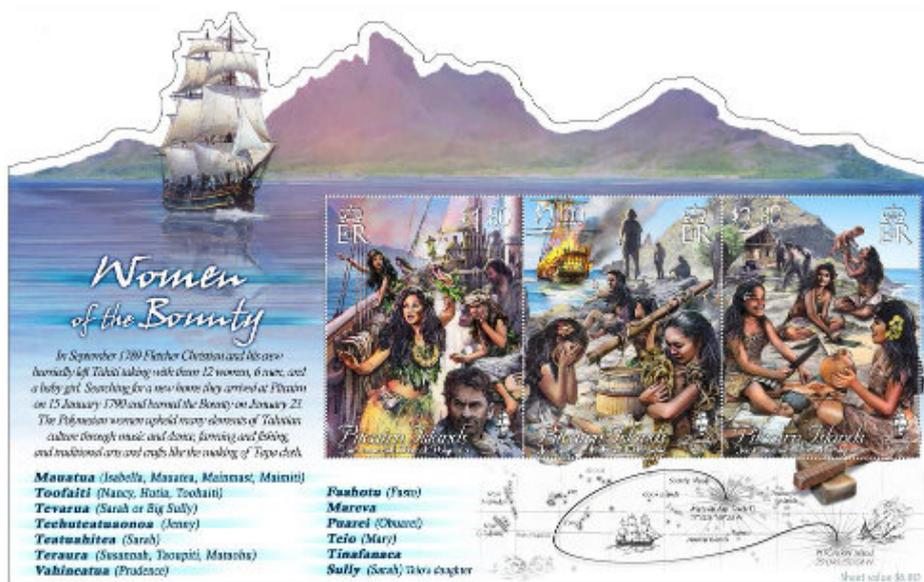


Figure 1. 'Women of the Bounty' stamps from the Pitcairn Islands.

Their innovative designs and experimentation led to unique Pitcairn tapa cloths which are different to those from Tahiti (French Polynesia) and very recognizable today. The stamps were designed by Lucas Kukler of Bangkok, Thailand, and printed in offset lithography by Southern Colour Print of Dunedin, New Zealand. The paper is Tullis Russell 106gsm. red phosphor stamp paper and the perforation is 13.33 x 13.60.

*

*

References

Reynolds, Pauline. 'Tapa Cloths and Beaters: Tradition, Innovation and the Agency of the *Bounty* Women in Shaping a New Culture on Pitcairn Island from 1790 to 1850.' *Textile History* 47.2 (2016): 190-207. DOI: 10.1080/00404969.2016.1211435

*

*

*