

SEA TURTLES- PITCAIRN

G.H. BALAZS



GDH:FAP
P6159

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OF PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE
AND OENO ISLANDS

C/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland
New Zealand

Mr George Balazs
Hawaii Institute of Marine
Biology
University of Hawaii
P O Box 1346
Coconut Island, Kaneohe
Hawaii 96744
USA

17 August 1983

Dear Mr Balazs

Many thanks for your February note and accompanying newspaper cutting.

Since last we corresponded further information about turtles has been received from Pitcairn and I offer the following up-date:

Trent Christian, Steve's son, is keeping a record of sightings for twelve months (commencing October/November 1982). He has been asked to note the location of each sighting, comment on the turtle's activity when seen and, if possible, to identify the species.

According to our advice no one has discovered a turtle nesting site on Oeno but possibly the timing of the Pitcairners' visits (usually November - January) does not coincide with the egg-laying or hatching season.

...
To help positively identify the species captured at Pitcairn (and Oeno) I enclose a set of ten photographs taken by Steve Christian. Shell length is recorded on the back of each print together with the name of the owner. If the shell is being displayed by someone other than the owner their name is given in parentheses.

When we receive the record of sightings a copy will be forwarded to you. In the meantime we would appreciate any comment on identification of the shells shown in the photographs.

Many thanks for your help and continued interest.

Yours sincerely
Garth Hurrey
G. D. Hurrey



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Mr George Balazs
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P O Box 1346
Coconut Island, Koneohe
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7 September 1984

Dear Mr Balazs

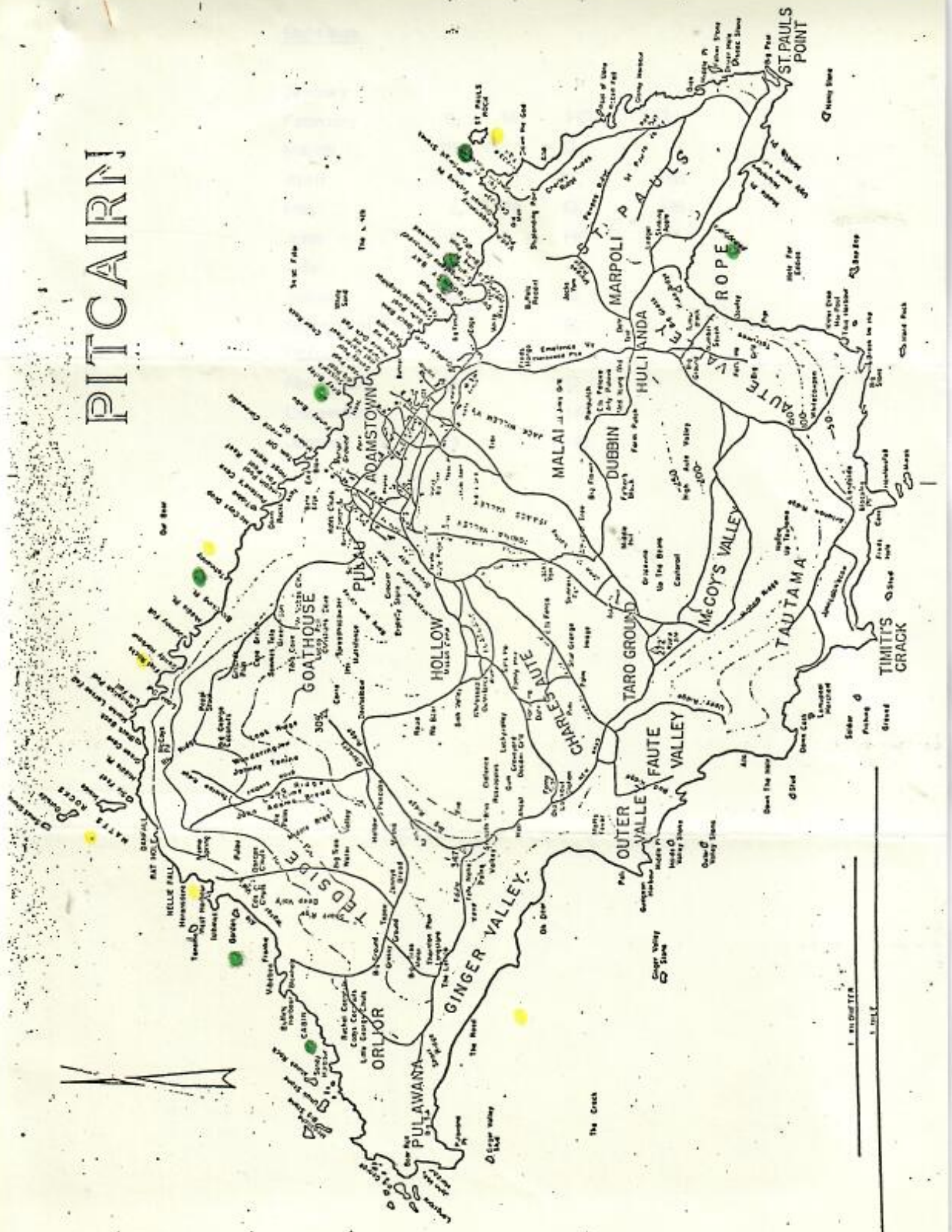
Trent Christian has now sent to us his list of turtle sightings for the year ending 31 January 1984.

... This information will now be used as a basis for a stamp issue we hope to release in 1986. A copy of the dates and positions of sightings is enclosed for your information.

Yours sincerely
G D Harraway
G D Harraway

enc.

PITCAIRN

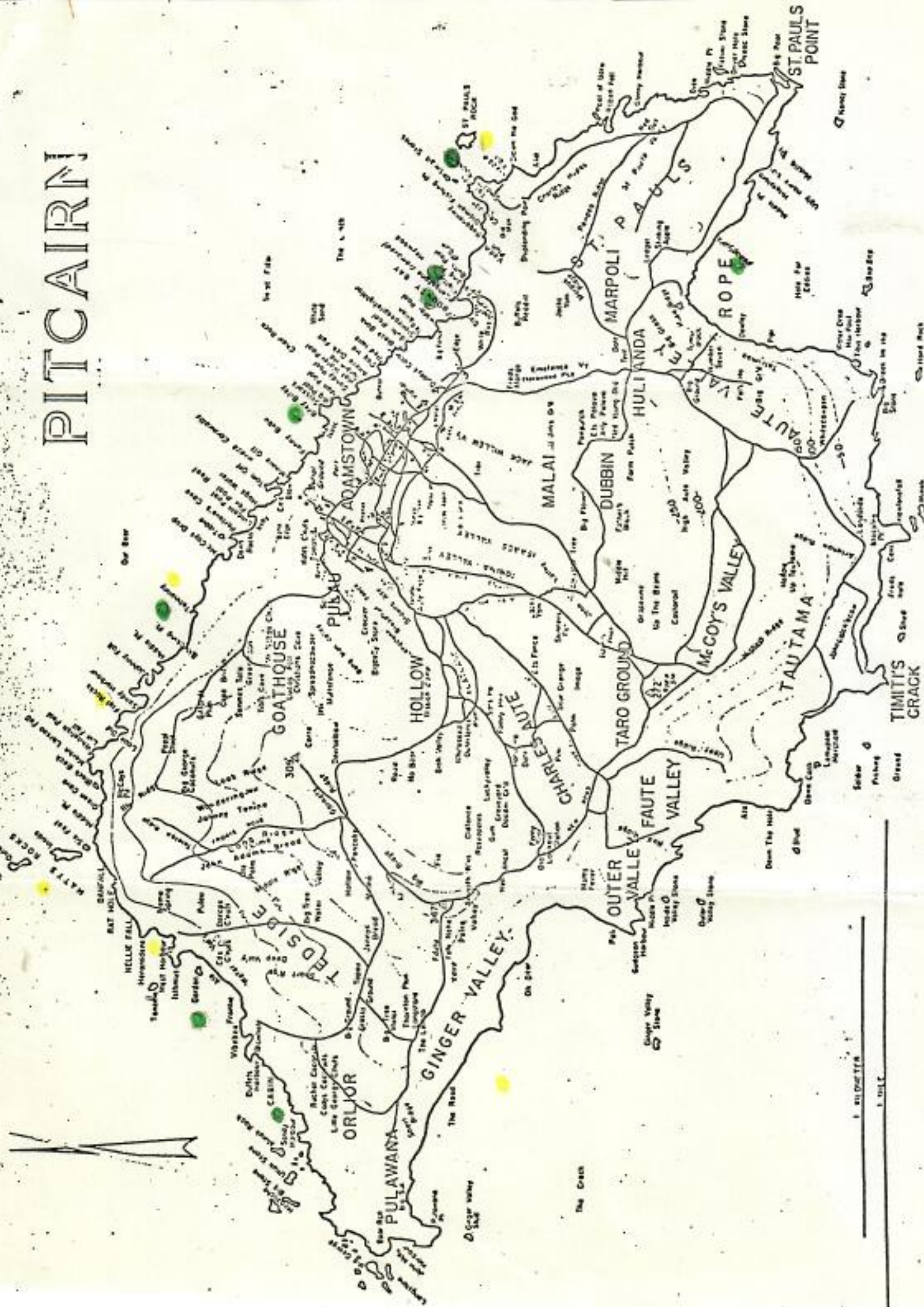


1/4 MILE

Sightings

January				
February	8,	16	HB,	G
March	20		G	
April	4,	11	G,	HB
May	2,	14	G,	HB
June	6		HB	
July				
August	30		G	
September	8		G	
October	13		G	
November	28		G	
December	9		HB	
January	23		HB	

PITCAIRN



Sightings

January				
February	8,	16	HB,	G
March	20		G	
April	4,	11	G,	HB
May	2,	14	G,	HB
June	6		HB	
July				
August	30		G	
September	8		G	
October	13		G	
November	28		G	
December	9		HB	
January	23		HB	

A Piece of Paradise

By Estes Thompson
Associated Press



'Smiley' Ratliff: 'I'm chopped up pretty bad, and want to get away from civilization.'

TAZEWELL, Va.—He lives alone with two German shepherds and a cat named Tom in a mountaintop mansion near the hamlets of Frog Level and Liberty.

A.M. "Smiley" Ratliff, is a farm boy who made good, a man who made a fortune mining coal in southwest Virginia, an area he now travels in a black Rolls-Royce.

But at age 57, Ratliff is looking for a new frontier. He believes he's found it on an uninhabited South Pacific island.

Ratliff is offering \$800,000 to the 54 residents of Pitcairn Island, a British colony first settled by mutineers from the H.M.S. *Bounty* in 1790. In return, he hopes the British government will grant him permission to establish a home on Henderson Island, 100 miles northeast of Pitcairn.

"My aim would be just to build a house there," Ratliff said as he showed slides of the island in his living room. "I guess maybe I would be a pioneer."

Ratliff visited Henderson and Pitcairn, about halfway between New

1 FEB 19

in the Middle of the Pacific

Zealand and Panama, about two years ago in a chartered, 60-foot sailboat.

"You see," he said, spitting tobacco juice into an empty yogurt cup, "we want to get as far away as possible and still be close enough that normal aircraft and stuff can operate. This is the perfect place."

Ratliff hopes the British government will approve his offer so he can leave the United States in less than a year. He said he is offering the aid "with no strings attached, to help the people, just to go to their aid."

Ratliff's ideas for helping the islanders, who would be his closest neighbors, include building concrete block houses to replace their termite-ridden wooden homes and constructing an airfield on Pitcairn so the islanders would have easier access to medical care on Tahiti, 1,200 miles away.

Henderson Island would be the site of a larger airstrip that could handle a Cessna 208 cargo plane.

Ratliff said the real work of clearing away the subtropical undergrowth that covers Henderson would begin once he lands with his party of about 15 employees.

He plans to return regularly to Virginia to tend to business interests, which include a motel, shopping centers, 5,000 head of cattle and 20,000 acres of land in Tazewell and surrounding counties, but eventually wants to retire to the island and die there.

"I'm trying to sell out of most of my businesses," he said. "It was a lot of fun to work 20 hours a day, but even if you're made out of steel it wears you out. I'm chopped up pretty bad and want to get away from civilization."

Then, there's promise of renewal of his spirit through physical labor.

"To me, the most beautiful word in the English language is work," Ratliff said. "You're measured by the job you did on this Earth. Michelangelo wasn't measured by the rounds of golf he played."

A sense of adventure also draws Ratliff to South Pacific. He said people have warned him there's no water on the island, but he's confident there is sufficient rainfall to fill storage cisterns. What about power? Ratliff said he can take along generators, but also is exploring the use of solar power.

Asked how much the venture will cost, Ratliff hedges, saying "This is something we don't know." But the cost will include a small ship, a landing craft, supplies, a tractor and other equipment.

Ratliff also is fond of the residents of Pitcairn Island, most descendants of the *Bounty* crew—including mutiny leader Fletcher Christian—and Tahitian women.

The islanders are "the kindest people you ever saw," Ratliff said. "They remind me of Virginians 50 years ago. The evils of civilization have not penetrated the area or the people."

Proud of his English heritage, Ratliff, who is divorced, has a painting of Sir Francis Ratlyffe, an eighth great-grandfather, hanging beside his own portrait and those of his daughters on the sweeping staircase of his home.

Neighbors and associates who have heard of Ratliff's plans talk about him establishing a paradise, but he denies that.

"I don't want to build a paradise," Ratliff said. "What would I do in paradise? I'm a warrior. They said it can't be done, but I want to show the world it can."

Dancer Touring Colorado

Anne Masunaga, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Isao Masunaga of 2308 Mamane Place, is a member of the 1983 Colorado Dance Caravan of the University of Colorado at Boulder touring that state to introduce dance to grade and high school students by performing and teaching beginning modern dance.

American Offers Aid to Pitcairn

London Daily Telegraph

LONDON — An American businessman has offered to supply lavish aid to the tiny island colony of Pitcairn in the South Pacific if the British government allows him to establish his home on an uninhabited coral atoll nearby.

His application for residency is being studied by the Foreign Office and is likely to be granted if the Pitcairn islanders agree.

A.M. Ratliff of Grundy, Va., has offered to build an airstrip and to supply more than \$800,000 in aid for the 40 residents of the islands, who are descended from the men on Capt. Bligh's ship, HMS Bounty, who mutinied nearly 200 years ago.

Granting the request could create a precedent for similar concessions in other remote British dependencies, the last remnants of the British Empire. Officials say Britain would not sell any land to Ratliff but might allow him to build a home and live on the atoll if his offer is accepted.

Ratliff's surprising proposition raised the eyebrows on the South Pacific desk at the Foreign Office but is now being examined and investigated carefully.

A Different Sort of Bounty

By Lois Taylor
Star-Bulletin Writer

WILLIAM Glynn Christian was 41 on Monday, having completed the most eventful year in his life. "It really does all begin at 40," said the sixth-generation descendant of Fletcher Christian who led the mutiny against Capt. William Bligh of H.M.S. *Bounty*.

In the past 12 months he has had three books published, was hired by British Broadcasting Corp. to do a morning television show on food and has established a fund to help the 44 descendants of Fletcher Christian still living on Pitcairn Island.

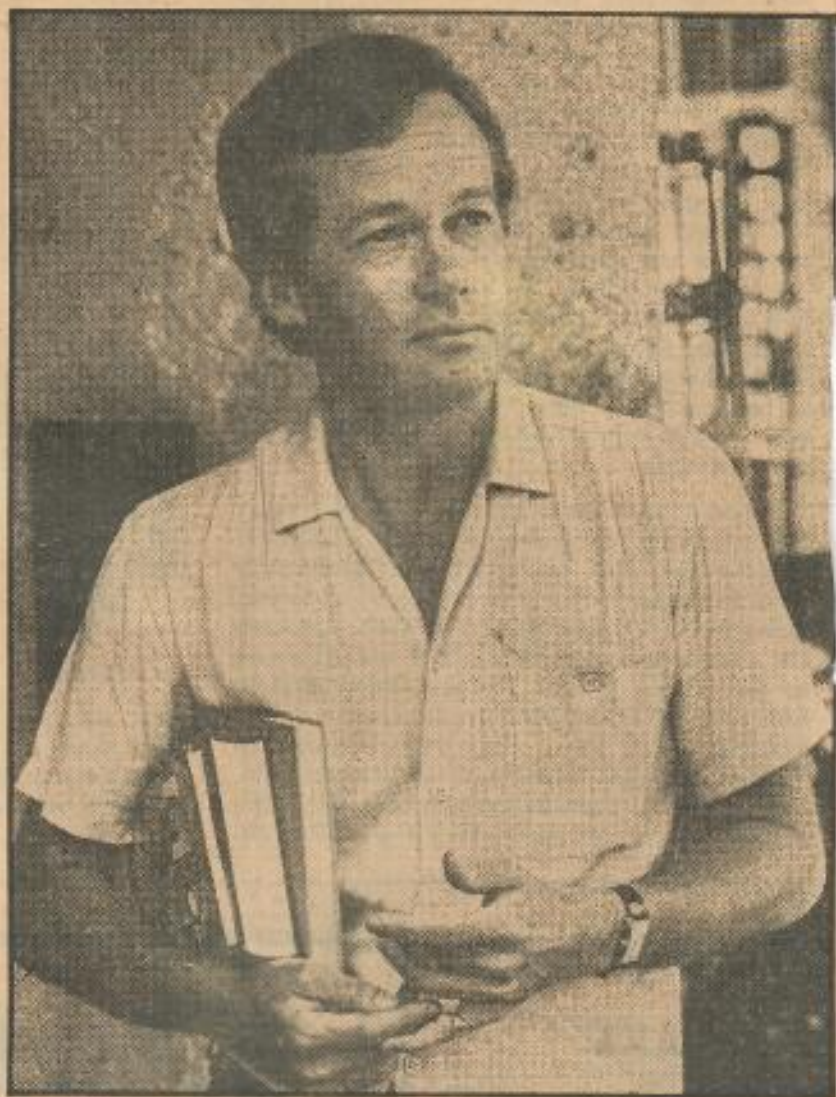
Christian, who had been visiting in New Zealand, stopped in Honolulu to pick up a quick tan before his appearance yesterday on the "Today" show in New York. "Tan and thin, that's what you need for television," said the slightly built Christian, who is called by his middle name. "On BBC, they refer to me as 'The half-sized Julia Child.'"

"Traditionally, all male descendants of Fletcher Christian are called by their second names since so many of them have William or Thomas as a first name. For 600 years, the oldest son in the family is named William."

Christian's three books concern his favorite topics, food and family. "A Fragile Paradise," he said, is the first biography ever published of Fletcher Christian and is at the same time a history of the 18th-century British Navy and 18th-century Tahiti.

"The Delicatessen Food Handbook" is pretty much what it sounds like—a way to prepare interesting meals quickly from the cardboard take-out cartons of a good delicatessen. Christian has a vested interest in the subject as owner of Mr. Christian's, a classy deli on London's Portobello Road.

"I had been a travel writer for 10 years, writing brochures for travel agencies. I discovered that if I wrote about the food of a country, the article was a success. I got into the deli business to give myself a



Glynn Christian's three books concern his favorite topics, food and family—he is a sixth-generation descendant of Fletcher Christian, who led the mutiny against Capt. Bligh.—Star-Bulletin photo by John Titchen.

breather from writing, a small income to make me somewhat independent—to be able to choose what I wanted to do.

"I think of the delicatessen book as a bedside book, for all those people who say that they read cookbooks like novels. It

has thousands of ideas but no real recipes," he said.

The third book is based on his enormously popular television specials for BBC, programs that promote the use of fresh produce and food products not yet established in the British cuisine. It is a paperback titled "Get Fresh with Glynn Christian."

In it, Christian makes an impassioned plea for a good tomato. "I wish to help convince the great British palate that it has been misled by tomatoes—those orange orbs sold 'rock hard and proud of it' are not tomatoes at all. Real tomatoes are red, rugged, solid-fleshed and

for This Mr. Christian

bursting with a sweetness and flavor that is exciting and rewarding. (While) they are accepted as the basic tomato in this country I shall push more and more the use of tinned tomatoes, simply so you know what tomatoes *should* taste like."

He maintains that European cooks use more imagination than American cooks, simply because of the different way cookbooks are written on the two continents. "There's none of this 'One Million Ways with Hamburger' over there. The problem with the American magazine's approach to cooking is that you see menus rather than recipes. That destroys imagination.

"A recipe is not the blueprint for building a battleship where every detail has to be followed to the dot. You need to have leeway. If you are told every move to make, you will never develop your own taste.

"I am anti-home-economists. They take all the fun out of cooking. They are generally women who are good at passing exams rather than cooks who are good at passing exams.

"The secret," says Christian, "is that cooking is a minority interest while eating is a universal interest. The success of my television appearances, I think, has been based on that. I don't just give recipes, I talk about anything that has to do with food, with eating. This includes gadgets, the political aspects of food like the failure of a wheat crop, even how to order a meal in an Indian restaurant.

"I do prepare recipes, though, and they aren't always a success. The show is done live, so if the chicken pie burns, there you are. In fact, someone stopped me recently and said, 'Aren't you Glynn Christian, the one who makes mistakes?'"

Mistakes, Christian has discovered, are a common denominator among cooks. "I recall entertaining the food people from several of the biggest publications in London. Everybody sat around, not talking much. The main course after the appetizer was to be a

roast with vegetables, and when I went back into the kitchen to serve the roast, I discovered that I hadn't even cleaned the veggies. There they were just as they came from the market.

"There was nothing but to go back in there and confess all. The party picked up immediately. Everybody recalled his or her own great blunder, from forgetting to turn on the oven where the chicken was supposed to be roasting to finding the cold soup in the fridge the morning after the big party because you didn't serve it. Oh, things got much better."

Christian's major fascination, though, is not with food but with his ancestor Fletcher Christian. "We forget in the 20th century how things were 200 years ago. In the 18th century, there was no such thing as improving one's social position in life, upward mobility, if you will. You were born into a social position and you made the best of it.

"Fletcher Christian's family had ruled the Isle of Man since well before records began. His future was to rule the island in turn. But his father died when he was 4, and his mother bankrupted the family through poor management. So he went into the navy, the only refuge where he might succeed. In the army, you needed money to buy a commission, but not in the navy."

Following the mutiny and the settlement of the mutineers on Pitcairn, some of the islanders moved to Tahiti or Norfolk Island. "My grandfather was born on Norfolk Island, his grandfather was born on Pitcairn and his grandfather was Fletcher Christian," Glynn Christian said.

"There are now only 44 residents on Pitcairn and only two ships a year call there. They have a 150-year-old sugar crusher to grind the eight or nine tons they grow each year. I hoped that I might find an old one here, in the back of a warehouse, that is operated by hand. They have no electricity.

"The people responsible for Pitcairn aren't doing their jobs. That's why the Falklands were invaded. Unfortunately, nobody is going to invade Pitcairn because it's too small, too far

away.

"I am appealing to everyone who ever made money out of the story, from Marlon Brando down to anybody who sold a short story about the mutiny. After that, I am asking everyone who ever saw the movie or read the book to help. If they each sent 25 cents, I'd have too much money." With this fund, Christian hopes to bring radio communication, electricity and regular delivery of food and other necessities to the little island.

Writing the biography of Fletcher Christian meant two trips around the world doing research, Glynn Christian said. And that's a lot of flying and a lot of airline meals. As a lover of good food, Christian thought he had found the way to avoid the mystery meat in gluey gravy and the chopped pineapple and pickle salad dear to the palates of airline chefs.

"Somebody told me that Kosher food was much better than the usual fare on planes. So I called a British airline in the middle of their busiest season, reserved a ticket and told him I wanted the Kosher dinner. 'What did you say your name was?' he asked. I said 'Christian,' and he replied, 'Knock it off, old sport, I haven't got time for this silliness.'"

Star-Bulletin

Today

Features
Entertainment

Section

E

Honolulu

Thursday, January 6, 1983

Pioneer in Underwater Photography**Diver Recalls Finding Capt. Bligh's Ship**By JOY ASCHENBACH, *National Geographic*

WASHINGTON—Telling of it 25 years later, 5,500 miles from where it happened, the discovery itself seemed legend.

National Geographic photographer Luis Marden surfacing from the bottom of the Pacific off lonely Pitcairn Island clutching the prized bronze nails that signaled his discovery of Captain Bligh's famous ship *Bounty*.

"For six weeks we nearly plowed furrows in the bottom with our chins, but found nothing. The swells of the Pacific crashed against the rocky shore and every seventh wave would knock you off your feet and roll you along the bottom," Marden said, recalling the treacherous 1957 search.

"Then late one afternoon I came unexpectedly on a long sandy trench and could see little squiggles in the white limestone that resembled petrified worms. I thrust my face closer, almost touching the bottom. My heart gave a jump. The squiggles were encrusted sheathing nails—*Bounty* nails, dozens of them. I looked up for my diving partner. I reached up for his hand, pumped it violently, and pointed."

They had found the legendary resting place of the *Bounty*. It had been 167 years since Fletcher Christian and his band of mutineers

set the ship afire to avoid detection on their island refuge. The 18th-Century vessel, whose voyage was the stuff of boyhood dreams, including Marden's, had been en route from Tahiti to Jamaica carrying breadfruit trees.

"That night," Marden recalled, "I polished and buffed a bronze sheathing nail until it shone like gold."

Today he wears two *Bounty* nails as cuff links; in his lapel, a white gardenia that he grew himself. Famed for his pioneering underwater photography, Marden spent 42 years as a National Geographic writer and photographer.

Discovered Two Species

In that time a bright pink Brazilian orchid and an Atlantic Ocean sea flea were named after him—*Epistephium mardeni* and *Dolobrotus mardeni*. He discovered the new species while on assignment.

Diver, sailor, fisherman and pilot, Marden hardly seems to have touched land, except the parts surrounded by water, like Tahiti, Tonga and Fiji. Even officially retired and almost 70, he is sometimes a few thousand feet off the ground flying ultralight planes, piloting one with Red Baron markings over the Potomac River and another over the

path of the Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk.

"It's like riding a bicycle . . . just suspended in space," Marden said of ultralight flights, a subject he will cover in a free-lance article for the *Geographic*. "Fear just doesn't seem to occur to him," a colleague said. He was not deterred by the warning of a Pitcairner as he set out to dive for the *Bounty*: "Man, you gwen be dead as a hatchet."

From the first day he showed up at National Geographic in 1934 with a 35-millimeter camera dangling from his neck, Marden seemed something of a legend. The 35-millimeter was then looked upon as a toy by serious professionals, but the 21-year-old Marden already had written the first book on color photography using the small camera and foresaw its revolutionary impact on photojournalism. It is the standard tool of the trade today.

On his first foreign assignment in 1936, appropriately outfitted with pith helmet and breeches, he explored Maya ruins of the Mexican Yucatan. Most of those early years were spent in the wilds of Central and South America. At first as a joke he signed his letters back to headquarters with "Luis," the Spanish spelling. Before long the recognized byline of the man born



National Geographic

Photographer and sea diver Luis Marden, left, inspects a breadfruit tree in 1960. He was serving

at the time as third mate on the replica ship *Bounty*, in background, built for a motion picture.

"Louis" in Boston would become Luis Marden.

"For my sins," he said, "I spent most of my professional life in the

tropics. I detest too much sun and heat. But that's where coral reefs are—and underwater it is another story."

Marden first took the plunge in Bermuda in 1942, wearing a cumbersome copper helmet supplied

Please see BOUNTY, Page 7

BOUNTY: Diver Recalls His Discovery

Continued from 6th Page

with air from a hand pump on the surface. Then it was love at first sight of the coral reefs in the Caribbean. By 1955 he was diving off Jacques-Yves Cousteau's Calypso into the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, becoming the first human seen by some of the world's most exotic fish. "I seemed to hang suspended in the heart of an enormous liquid sapphire," he wrote of dives among the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean.

Flashbulbs Explode

Despite noisy fish and crude equipment, Marden sent back the most extensive series of underwater color pictures published to that time. When flashbulbs imploded underwater, gashing his hands, he had protective chain mail gloves made. When flashbulbs leaked and misfired, he drafted the ship's surgeon to inject hot wax into the base to waterproof the wires. By Cousteau's count, about 2,500 bulbs were given wax injections.

Although he logged 15,000 miles with Cousteau, Marden got his only case of the bends diving 144 feet into the dark depths of an abandoned ancient Maya well in the Yucatan in 1959.

Boyhood fantasies went beyond the Bounty to tales of an extinct ostrich-like bird that was 10 feet tall, laid the largest eggs known and once inhabited the faraway island of Madagascar. Marden first read about the legendary "aepyornis" in



National Geographic

Luis Marden straps on helmet for a flight in his ultralight plane.

a short story by his favorite author, H. G. Wells.

"I never forgot the story," he said. In 1967 he set out for Madagas-

car to write an article about the island off Africa's east coast—and to find a whole aepyornis egg. He even

Please see BOUNTY, Page 8

BOUNTY

Continued from 7th Page

learned the Madagascar phrase for "egg of the big bird"—everywhere he went he asked for "*atodim borombe*."

His quest took him to a bearded French priest in a pith helmet and white cassock, a lonely seashore strewn with broken egg shells, and finally to a village chief's hut. "First they brought out a basket full of broken shells, but I had a feeling they'd found something else. Then they brought in another basket also covered with napkins. They uncovered it and there before my unbelieving eyes lay a whole aepyornis egg.

"It was more than a foot long, splattered on one side with fresh blood." They had sacrificed a sheep that morning to protect their good fortune against some tragic end.

In between adventures, Marden is off fishing. But even his hobbies are college level. Take bamboo fishing rods, for example.

"Years ago Luis and I made our own rods, using the best bamboo, tonkin cane from southern China," recalled Geographic Board Chairman Melvin M. Payne. "At least 100 to 150 hours of fine, tedious work goes into one rod, but when you're done, you have something unique.

"Well, Luis became an expert on bamboo, consulting the Smithsonian about it, read up on it, discovered that it was the most versatile plant on Earth, and eventually wrote a magazine article about it."

AIRMAIL



MR G. H. Balazs,
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PITCAIRN

Sub-tropical Pacific Island lying almost mid-way between New Zealand and Panama — peopled by the descendants of the mutineers of the H.M.S.V. Bounty.

Discovered 1767. Settlement 1780.
British possession 1839.

First Issue Postage Stamps, Oct., 1943.

From: Steve Christian
Pitcairn Island
S. P. O.



Was Smiley the answer for Pitcairn?

They've been having some stirring times on Pitcairn, according to the Pitcairners' own newspaper, the *Pitcairn Miscellany*, which, humble production as it is, has a much wider circulation than many metropolitan newspapers.

Of course, it's not on doorsteps abroad the morning after publication as Pitcairn has to rely on the odd ship sailing by to get its *Miscellany* to its overseas readers throughout the world — which is why the "stirring events", which occurred in May and June, are only now being reported in PIM.

The first, reported in the May *Miscellany*, was an approach by "American multi-millionaire Smiley Ratliff. Mr Ratliff called at Pitcairn during April last year, in a yacht he had especially chartered to have a look at Henderson Island. He must have liked what he saw, for he is at present conducting negotiations with the Pitcairn Island Administration and the Island Council, which will enable him to live on Henderson. Why he should choose such an inhospitable, remote spot, we don't know."

Miscellany describes the hazards associated with landing and walking on the island, which is uninhabited and serves the Pitcairners as a spot for week-long picnics (it's 168 km ENE of Pitcairn), and as a supplier of wood the islanders use for making souvenirs bought by passers-by. One group of five men (a lighthouse party, says *Miscellany*) attempted in 1948 to reach the northeast point from the northern landing place. They were forced to give up after making only half a mile in five hours during which they suffered cuts and bruises from falls on the sharp coral hidden in the dense undergrowth.

Miscellany continues: "There is also very little fresh water on Henderson. In fact, the human remains which still exist in caves on Henderson today, are thought to be those of survivors of a



shipwreck; and that the primary cause of death was lack of water.

"On the surface, these obstacles appear to be insuperable, but we hear that the greater the challenge, the more determined Mr Ratliff is to overcome it. The last attempt at inhabitation occurred in 1957, when an American named Robert Tomarchio, and his chimpanzee Moko, were landed there from a passing yacht. They lasted only three weeks before being dramatically rescued by a passing ship, and taken to Pitcairn.

"Henderson is also a natural bird sanctuary, and 13 species of birds have been observed there including four species of land birds, of which two are believed to be unique to the island. These are the flightless rail (Henderson Chicken) and a green fruit pigeon. Conservation groups are already seeking assurances that

The Hill of Difficulty, the name given to the steep track from the Pitcairn Island landing up to Adamstown where the Pitcairners live. It's the only doorway to Pitcairn, and the houses at the top of the picture mark the outskirts of Adamstown. — Picture from *The Bounty Experiment*.

these birds and their habitat will be protected, should the island become inhabited.

"If the scheme goes ahead, the people of Pitcairn stand to gain a great deal. Mr Ratliff is willing to pay one million dollars to be spent to aid the lot of the islanders, although it is not clear if the money is to go to the Pitcairn Island Administration in Auckland, or to the Glynn Christian fund. A large airstrip will be built on Henderson with links with Tahiti, and a smaller airstrip would be built on Pitcairn. This

would mean more regular mail services, it would provide an outlet for emergency medical evacuation, and perhaps a small tourist industry could be established. Who would pay the costs for such a service is not yet clear.

"Mr Ratliff also has his eye on a small ship, which he plans to purchase to bring heavy supplies to Henderson and Pitcairn. This ship would work from the ports of San Diego, Papeete and Auckland. Pitcairn housing could also be helped, for Mr Ratliff proposes to bring a team with machinery, capable of building sound, block, houses.

"We on Pitcairn are cautiously optimistic that this scheme can be carried out, and the tremendous problems — such as landing heavy machinery on Henderson, can be overcome. But as always on Pitcairn, we will only really believe it's happening, when we see the 'whites of the eyes' of Mr Ratliff and his party on Henderson."

Then follows a graphic account of a brave rescue from a rough sea. As surnames are seldom used on Pitcairn, the name of the woman who fell from a rock while fishing, conveys to us outsiders, no information on her identity, other than that she is called Vula. Incidentally, the name doesn't occur in the census list PIM printed in the June issue (p25).

But we do know the brave rescuer, whose name did appear in the list. She is Dobrie Christian, who raised the alarm and then dived into the water. Dobrie had to support the injured Vula, who had a broken wrist, for 30 minutes about 40 metres from shore until the boat arrived. (British Royal Lifesaving Society please note!)

There's also the fishing report for the month. The Pitcairners mention it in passing, but it would cause consternation anywhere else — that's if they really mean what they printed.

"This month has been a good one," reports *Miscellany*. "Rock fishing brought in seven crabs, while boat fishing brought in 3467 fish, including three whales and a sea serpent. Those fishing off the icebergs bagged three seals and a walrus."

August 24, 1982

Mr. G. D. Harraway
Office of the Governor of Pitcairn,
Ducie, Henderson and Oeno Islands
c/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

Dear Mr. Harraway:

Many thanks for your encouraging letter of 10 August 1982 concerning a sea turtle stamp issue for Pitcairn. Please count on me to help you with this project in whatever way that is possible and appropriate.

I look forward to learning of the information you receive back from the Government Adviser living on Pitcairn. It is my understanding that turtles nest during the "summer" months on Oeno, but certainly more details are needed. I have also heard that several homes on Pitcairn have turtle shells as decoration. If you can obtain photos and approximate total lengths of these shells for me, I can tell you the species, and possibly other important information. A small pocket camera is all that would be needed for this purpose. Photos taken of nesting sites and turtles at Oeno (or elsewhere within the group) would of course also be valuable.

If justified, a sequential strip showing the cycle of breeding would indeed make an attractive stamp presentation. To my knowledge, this has not previously been done by other countries.

I look forward to hearing from you again.

Best regards,

GEORGE H. BALAZS
Assistant Marine Biologist

GHB:ec



GDH:FAP
P6116

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OF PITCAIRN, DUCIE, HENDERSON
AND OENO ISLANDS

C/o British Consulate-General
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Auckland
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10 August 1982

Mr George H Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist
University of Hawaii
P O Box 1346
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Hawaii 96744
U.S.A.

Dear Mr Balazs,

Thank you for your letter of 20 July in which you suggest sea turtles would make an interesting theme for a stamp issue - a view, incidentally, which I share.

Our forward programme is arranged to the middle of 1985 and includes a new definitive set featuring fish which will be released during the third quarter of 1984. It would be desirable, I think, to separate two 'aquatic' issues such as fish and turtles by at least twelve months, in which case we would possibly look to issue turtles no earlier than late 1985 or early 1986.

The excellent poster you kindly sent will be forwarded to the Government Adviser on Pitcairn with a request that it be prominently displayed so that if turtles other than Loggerheads are sighted they may be identified. If someone can be interested in doing it we shall ask for a twelve month record of sightings to be kept.

If more than one species is identified it will allow us to widen the scope of the stamp designs. If on the other hand, the loggerhead is found to be the only species to inhabit Pitcairn waters we could make quite an interesting issue by showing, sequentially in a se tenant strip, the female digging a nest and laying the eggs, the hatching process and return to the sea, adolescent growth and adulthood. Such a treatment of the subject would depend on whether the turtles do, in fact, breed on one of other of the islands in the group. Do you have any knowledge of this?

Although it will take some years for this proposal to come to fruition we need to gather what information we can over the next twelve months or so. The design and production process for a stamp issue usually takes about two years.

Yours sincerely,

G D Harraway

G D Harraway

June 4, 1980

Mr. Steve Christian
Pitcairn Island
South Pacific Ocean

Dear Mr. Christian:

Mr. Robert Gillett, Fisheries Research Scientist with the South Pacific Commission, has suggested that I write to you concerning my interests in sea turtles found in the vicinity of Pitcairn. It is my understanding that the people of your island only encounter turtles when they visit Oeno. I would like to learn what species of sea turtles are present, and if nesting (egg laying) takes place. Also, how many turtles would be seen during a visit? Are turtles found at this location during all months of the year? Has a tag ever been found on turtles that have been captured? Any information that you can provide on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

If I can be of any assistance to you here in Hawaii, please let me know.

Best regards. I look forward to hearing from you when your mail service permits.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist
and Deputy Chairman
IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Group

mk
enclosures



GDH:FAP
P6116

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OF PITCAIRN, DUCIE, HENDERSON
AND OENO ISLANDS
C/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland
New Zealand

6 September 1982

Mr George H Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist
Hawaii Institute of Marine
Biology
University of Hawaii
P O Box 1346
Coconut Island, Kaneohe.
HAWAII U.S.A. 96744

Dear Mr Balazs,

In response to your letter of 24 August, for which I thank you, I have written to the Government Adviser on Pitcairn asking him to try and obtain black and white prints (and measurements) of any turtle shells being used for decorative purposes on the island.

He has also been asked to see whether he can locate photographs of nesting sites and turtles on Oeno.

Mail to and from Pitcairn being what it is I do not expect a response for at least four months, possibly longer.

Yours sincerely,

G D Harraway

May 16th 1981.

Dear Mr Balazs,

We did receive your letters and information on the sea turtles, and I apologize for being so late in answering it.

Your suggestions have been put before the Island Council and they decided that you get in touch with the Head Office,

address as follows:- Commissioner for Fisheries,
British Consulate General,
Private Bag,
Auckland, N.Z.

As for the turtles, the loggerhead turtle is the only one known here.

We don't know anything about its nesting as no one has taken any interest in turtles.

We visit Oeno Island in the summer months and its type is the same that is found here.

Should we ever find anything different or anything that would be of help to you, we will let you know.

All the best and will look forward for a new turtle issue.

yours faithfully.

Steve Christian.

CABLE ADDRESS :

" SOUTH PACOM " NOUMEA

TELEPHONE : 26.20.00

TELEX : SOPACOM 139 NM

ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE :

" SOUTH PACOM " NOUMEA

TELEPHONE : 26.20.00

TELEX : SOPACOM 139 NM

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

POST BOX D 5
NOUMEA CEDEX
NEW CALEDONIA

In reply, please quote INF 3/12

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL



COMMISSION DU PACIFIQUE SUD

BOITE POSTALE D 5
NOUMEA CEDEX
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE

24 March 1980

Mr George Balazs,
c/o Mr R.S. Shomura,
Director,
Honolulu Laboratory,
National Marine Fisheries Service,
P.O. Box 3830,
HONOLULU, Hawaii, 96812,
United States of America.

Dear George,

At the Turtle Meeting in December in Noumea, you were interested in turtles around Pitcairn Island. I visited the island during February and made some inquiries on your behalf. I noticed a few turtle shells in various homes (species unknown). It seems that the Pitcairners only encounter turtles on Oeno Island, about 60 miles to the north. This small atoll has two small sand islands and turtles are hunted at a favourite spot in deep water adjacent to one of these islets.

If you require further information, you should contact Steve Christian, Pitcairn Island, South Pacific. Steve has collected fish samples for Jack Randall and is quite helpful.

I hope that this information is of value to you.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Gillett
Fisheries Research Scientist

Next? eggs?
Species?
Numbers?
Size?

Bounty Mutineer's

By Bob Sansevere

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A seventh-generation descendant of a sailor who mutinied on the HMS Bounty is hitching a ride by ship back to the tiny island where time has made few inroads since eight rebellious Englishmen settled there.

There are no television sets, no doctors and only one working automobile on Pitcairn Island, where Brian Young, 28, and his family will be dropped by the tanker *Stolt Integrity* in August.

As he sat in the Liberian tanker docked for a brief stop en route from Rotterdam, Young used a table top as a makeshift map to point out the tiny volcanic rock in the middle of the South Pacific where English sailors settled after the mutiny on

the *Bounty* on April 28, 1789.

The New York City skyline was framed in a porthole behind Young as he moved an empty can of soda pop to represent New Zealand. An ashtray was Panama. In between was the South Pacific, and smack in the middle was Young's finger, pointing to Pitcairn Island.

Young said more than half of the 50 residents on the 2.5-square-mile British possession are descendants of Edward Young, the *Bounty's* midshipman, or Fletcher Christian, another of the mutineers who settled there in 1790.

Two movies have been made about the *Bounty* crew's revolt against the tyrannical Captain Bligh. Clark Gable played Christian in the 1935 film, and Marlon Brando took the role in a 1963 remake.

Descendant Hitching Ride Home

As he spoke about his island home, Young held an eighth-generation descendant of the midshipman — 5-month-old Annette.

"We're quite cut off from most places," said Young. "We have no drug problems and no vandalism," he said. "If you fell on the ground in civilization, how many people would stop to help? On Pitcairn, everyone would help."

Young met his wife, Kari, 37, of Oslo, Norway, in 1973 while she was touring the island.

When Mrs. Young was eight months pregnant with the couple's first child, Timothy, now 3, a tanker took her to New Zealand, about 3,200 miles away, to

find a doctor. There are none on Pitcairn.

The couple left again in September so their second child could be born under a physician's care too.

Mrs. Young also wanted to confer with her Norwegian publishers about "The Last Mutineer," a book she wrote on the history of the island and its inhabitants.

She arranged for a Norwegian tanker that passed by the island to give her, her husband and Timothy a lift to Germany. They took a ferry from there to Oslo, where her relatives live.

It was not easy for the Youngs, who earn about \$40 a week on the island, to get back home. Air

fare to New Zealand and passage on a ship from there to the island would cost \$8,000, they said.

Young is an electrician and makes wood carvings, including models of the Bounty, for a mail-order company. Mrs. Young was a road maintenance worker but lost her job because she's been away so long.

The Youngs contacted two British shipping lines and the Norwegian company that took them off the island. Finally Stolt-Nielsen Inc., a chemical shipping line based in Greenwich, Conn., agreed to give them free passage on the Stolt Integrity, which was scheduled to pass near Pitcairn Island.

"We'll take them about three-quarters of a mile off the island and islanders will pick them up in longboats," said the ship's captain, Giancarlo Bargaroli. "Personally, I wouldn't want to stay on that island. It's just a rock. There are problems with mites and mosquitoes."

"There are drawbacks, like the mosquitoes," said Mrs. Young. "When you run out of flour, it means there's no bread for your children. But if someone else has it, you all share it."

"You have to plan a grocery bill for six or seven months," Young said. "There are problems. But it's my home. There's no place like home."



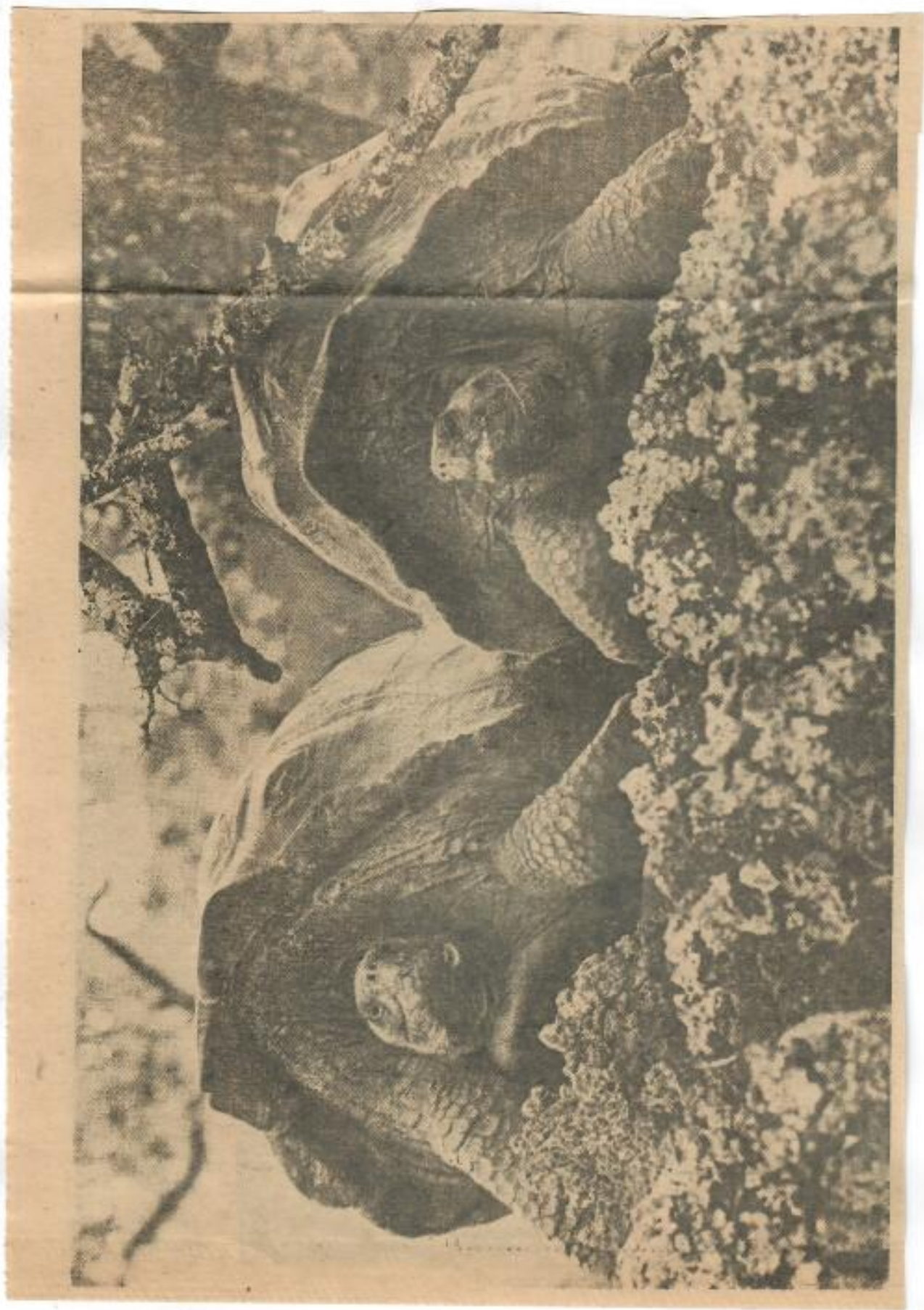
GOING HOME—Brian Young and his wife Kari hold their children, Timothy 3, and Annette, 5 months, on board the tanker Stolt Integrity at Port Newark, N.J., last week. The Youngs have been offered passage to their homeland, Pitcairn Island, from which they've been stranded since traveling to Norway last September. —AP Photo.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Wednesday, July 14, 1982 Honolulu

Section

F



Giant tortoises: the toothless elder statesmen of Galapagos. This and more, is yours for the asking.

Francisco Bay itself and up the Sacramento River Delta.

The Sacramento cruise (figure on about \$450 a week per person) features picnics on Angel Island, dining in Tiburon and sailing beneath the Golden Gate with San Francisco silhouetted in the flashing neon.

To date, Ocean Voyages' most unusual request came from the great-great-great-great-grandson of Fletcher Christian of the H.M.S. Bounty, Glynn Christian.

Christian, 38, retraced his rebellious ancestor's journey to Tahiti, Tubuai and Pitcairn where Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers put ashore.

Glynn Christian — he flew from Britain to Sausalito to meet Mary Crowley — intends to write a book titled: "Whatever Became of Fletcher Christian?"

Mary Crowley and Ocean Voyages get requests from lovers, the idea being to sail off to some romantic destination in the South Seas or Hawaii. Some couples choose Bora Bora. Others choose Hawaii. Particularly Maui.

Just recently, a couple from Chicago spent \$2,500 for a one-week cruise through the Hawaiian Islands following their marriage ceremony and a champagne brunch attended by friends at Lahaina.

In another ceremony, tears fell as an island lad and his wahine sang "The Hawaiian Wedding Song." Just like in the movies, the newlyweds returned to their dream boat to set sail into the sunset.

Cut. Drop anchor. It's bedtime. Note: For details on boat rentals, write to Ocean Voyages, 1709 Bridge-way, Sausalito, Calif. 94965 or telephone (415) 332-4681 or 332-2613.



GDH:FAP
P6116

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OF PITCAIRN, DUCIE, HENDERSON
AND OENO ISLANDS
C/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland
New Zealand

21 February 1983

Mr George Balazs
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Hawaii Institute of Marine
Biology
P O Box 1346,
Coconut Island, Kaneohe,
Hawaii 96744
U.S.A.

Dear Mr Balazs

Thank you for forwarding to me under cover of your letter of 4 February the newspaper article on Mr Ratliff. It was read with great interest.

... To keep you informed about developments in the Turtle stamp issue I enclose a copy of the latest letter we have on the subject from Pitcairn.

Yours sincerely
G D Harraway

G D Harraway

enc,

YOUR REFERENCE
PLEASE QUOTE



PITCAIRN ISLAND GOVERNMENT
20 November 1982

The Commissioner for Pitcairn Islands
British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland

26116

Dear Sir

Pg 814

There is quite a lot of interest in the idea of a stamp issue in the future, based on 'turtles', as suggested in your letter number 39.

George Balazs had already sent a poster of sea turtles here, and this has been on display at the Engineers shed, where all the men have been working on the boat.

The sighting of loggerheads has been confirmed, and it is also thought the hawksbill is present.

Trent Christian has volunteered to record turtle sightings, and I have provided him with a ruled sheet for this purpose.

I have also asked Steve for a b & w film to photograph existing shells, and I will forward these when completed.

It appears that no one has discovered a turtle nesting site on Oeno, although they are certainly present in the lagoon.

Yours sincerely

PITCAIRN ISLAND ADMINISTRATION
C/O BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
PRIVATE BAG,
AUCKLAND,
NEW ZEALAND.

September 14, 1984

F/SWC2:GHB

Mr. G. D. Harraway
Office of the Governor of Pitcairn,
Henderson, Ducie, and Oeno Islands
c/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland, New Zealand

Dear Mr. Harraway:

It was good to hear from you again and receive the latest data on sea turtles sighted around Pitcairn Island. I was also delighted to learn that a stamp issue featuring Pitcairn's turtles will appear in 1986. Thank you for making me aware of this information, which I will pass along to other researchers and stamp collectors.

As a contribution to Pitcairn's library and school, I have enclosed several recent publications dealing with sea turtles. I look forward to receiving copies of any future turtle observations that may be submitted to your office. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Wildlife Biologist

Enclosure

cc: Balazs ✓
HL

Brief Summary of Knowledge on Sea Turtles of Pitcairn and Oeno

September 1984

G.H. Balazs

1. Two species are known to occur in adjacent waters, the green turtle, Chelonia mydas, and the Hawksbill, Eretmochelys imbricata.
2. The loggerhead, Caretta caretta, was previously thought to be present, but has not been confirmed though coastal sightings or photographs of dried shells.
3. Evidence of nesting has not been found at Oeno, even though the islanders visit this site each year during November-January when breeding would be expected to occur in southern latitudes.
4. There seems to be no traditional/historical evidence among the islanders of turtles ever having nested in the past on Oeno (or Pitcairn). ie gathering of eggs, raising of baby turtles for pets, hunting turtles while the male and female are copulating and easy to catch)
5. Turtles appear to be the most abundant/concentrated in a deep area of the Oeno lagoon where large adult-sized green turtles are sometimes captured (for food?).

3 October 1984

Ms. G.D. Harraway
Office of the Governors of Pitcairn

Dear Ms. Harraway -

Thank you for your quick reply to my recent correspondence. I look forward to hearing eventually from Mr. Salt.

I should have asked one other question on the "turtle traditions" of the Pitcairn people. This also relates to the island's postage stamps. A few years ago, a stamp was issued showing a carved wooden turtle as Pitcairn handicraft. I have even seen such carvings at a specialty shop here in Honolulu. Were these carvings made to represent sea turtles? Or possibly are there land turtles on Pitcairn, brought as pets, that served as a basis for the carvings? I'm sorry that I didn't bring up this interesting point in my last letter.

Wishing you best regards,

Sincerely,
George Balazs

Coined word
Turtles?



GDH:FAP
O333B
P6159

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OF PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE
AND OENO ISLANDS
C/o British Consulate-General
Private Bag
Auckland
New Zealand

Mr George Balazs
Marine Mammals and Endangered
Species Programme
National Marine Fisheries Service
P O Box 3830
Honolulu
Hawaii 96812
U.S.A.

28 September 1984

Dear Mr Balazs

Thank you for your letters of 14 September which accompanied the publications for the Pitcairn Island School. These will be forwarded to Leon Salt the Education Officer in the next mail. Although this may be some time away I know Leon would want me to thank you on his behalf for your thoughtfulness in sending the material.

Under separate cover I am sending to you a copy of the booklet "A Guide to Pitcairn" together with a set of postcards. I trust this will fulfil your request for background information.

I am not qualified to provide a definitive reply on your questions about the eating of turtle meat on Pitcairn and whether turtles are taken primarily as a source of food rather than for their shells. I shall restrict my comments to saying I have seen turtle meat being eaten there and I have seen people refuse to eat it on religious grounds. Leon Salt may possibly be able to help further on these points.

As the designs for the stamp issue proceed I shall keep you informed.

Yours sincerely
Carth Harraway
G D Harraway

cc Education Officer

Brief Summary of Knowledge on Sea Turtles of Pitcairn and Oeno

September 1984

G.H. Balazs

1. Two species are known to occur in adjacent waters, the green turtle, Chelonia mydas, and the Hawksbill, Eretmochelys imbricata.
2. The loggerhead, Caretta caretta, was previously thought to be present, but has not been confirmed through coastal sightings or photographs of dried shells. *through*
3. Evidence of nesting has not been found at Oeno, even though the islanders visit this site ~~each year~~ during November-January when breeding would be expected to occur in southern latitudes. *most years*
4. There seems to be no traditional/historical evidence among the islanders of turtles ever having nested in the past on Oeno (or Pitcairn). ie gathering of eggs, raising of baby turtles for pets, hunting turtles while the male and female are copulating and easy to catch)
5. Turtles appear to be the most abundant/concentrated in a deep area of the Oeno lagoon where large adult-sized green turtles are sometimes captured (for food?).

Mr. Harraway - The above is for your comment and/or corrections -

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
HONOLULU LABORATORY
P. O. BOX 3830
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96812



F11

Table 2. Recaptures of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) tagged on Scilly Island, Society Islands, French Polynesia

Number	Sex	Carapace length	Tagging date	Recapture date	Location of recapture
18	F	101 cm	30 Apr. 1972	9 Aug. 1972	Vavau Is., Tonga
26	F	102 cm	30 Apr. 1972	26 Jul. 1972	Rabi, Fiji
39	F	93 cm	30 Apr. 1972	14 Sept. 1973	Maskeline Is. (New Hebrides)
103	F	99 cm	5 Dec. 1972	15 Jan. 1975	New Caledonia
138	F	88 cm	5 Dec. 1972	Jul. 1974	Malekula, New Hebrides
151	F	86 cm	5 Dec. 1972	15 May 1975	Baie de Gomen, New Caledonia
173	F	98 cm	5 Dec. 1972	Oct. 1973	Anatom, New Hebrides
180	M	103 cm	5 Dec. 1972	3 Oct. 1974	Kandavu Is., Fiji
181	F	102 cm	5 Dec. 1972	15 Oct. 1974	Kandavu Is., Fiji
1330	M	102 cm	5 Dec. 1972	1 Aug. 1974	Druadrua Is., Fiji

lease. They were fed on green plants during captivity and released in the lagoon.

The recapture of 2 male turtles at great distances is very interesting. These and D. Green's recaptures of male Galapagos green turtles in mainland South America are the only recorded instances of long-distance migrations by male turtles.

Similarly, the reports of a male and female, released on the same day and in the same place, and recaptured almost 2 years later within a few days of each other at Kandavu Island, Fiji, is of great interest, although no definitive interpretation can be given at this time.

Tuamotu Archipelago

The scattered literature suggests that green turtles occur throughout the Tuamotu Archipelago. Beaglehole and Beaglehole (1938) reported on green turtles at Pukapuka Island (not to be confused with Pukapuka Island in the Cook Islands). The turtles there are commonly taken on the beaches or are seized in the lagoon by swimmers, who tie a rope around a foreflipper and pull the turtle ashore. At Pukapuka, a turtle is considered the property of the entire community, as is common in many unspoiled Pacific Island cultures, and a public feast is held when a turtle is brought ashore. One native offered the Beagleholes the observation that "it is only in recent times, since people have taken eggs of turtles from the nest, that turtles have been dying out," although in many other areas of the Pacific the eggs are sought even more assiduously than the turtle itself, and apparently always have been.

More recent information from Manihi atoll, also in the Tuamotus, by Hirth (1971), suggests that a fairly sophisticated turtle-ranching program has been developed by local people. Turtle eggs are collected and hatched, and the young turtles are raised in village kraals for later consumption. The turtles, fed on coconut meat and fish, reach a length of 50 to 71 cm in

3 to 3.5 years—a much more rapid rate of growth than seems to operate in the wild.

Very few data are available on turtles in other parts of French Polynesia. Turtles are apparently rare in the Marquesas, where capture of a turtle is now so infrequent that it is considered a special occasion. The Marquesas, Austral, and Gambier Islands all have rocky coasts with very few beaches, and turtle stocks appear to be very limited, although a hawksbill was reported from the southern Marquesas in 1978, and another in 1979.

Pitcairn and Henderson Islands

There is no information available to me on turtles in these islands; certainly there is no evidence that occurrence of turtles around these islands is anything more than sporadic.

Easter Island

The only available information on the turtles of Easter Island of which I am aware is the following paragraph in Harrisson (1971):

The hitherto neglected marine turtles around Easter Island may turn out to be of special importance. Some remarkably detailed petroglyphs, carapaces retained as heirlooms, and discussion with informants suggest that at least three species, possibly four, visit the beaches and sheltered bays, for food and/or nesting. Wonderfully well-made stone towers were erected along sections of the coastline and are still called 'turtle towers'—though they have not been used in living memory. Again there are strong indications that in the past turtles were not indiscriminately slaughtered but respected, but those sanctions have not operated since the island went Catholic in the last century. Turtle visitors are now much more scarce and irregular.

Tom Harrisson did not mention the species he iden-



PEOPLE OF PITCAIRN

When the *Bounty* Mutineers Chose Their
Refuge, They Looked for an Island
Isolated and Inaccessible

Text & Photography
by Janet Kinnane



HERE IS NO HARBOR or airstrip on Pitcairn.

You can reach the island, the refuge for the mutineers from the *Bounty*, only by a small boat, and the most vigilant crew can easily miss this mere dot in the South Pacific.

My first visit to Pitcairn was in 1980, just after Labor Day. I was one of three crew members aboard *Sintram*, a forty-foot yawl, which I joined on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) for one leg of its circumnavigation. Captain Bill Truesdale had canceled our structured Swedish watch to honor the holiday as long as we "informally" took turns standing watch. The break from routine was welcome. When I woke before sunrise on 2 September, judging it my turn, I found the autopilot operating but the crew all asleep, and I saw that the last log entry had been at midnight. We must have passed tiny Pitcairn during the night. I woke Bill who estimated that we were northwest of the island and we tacked back.

As dawn gave way to daylight, I spotted what looked like the outline of an island dead ahead. Bill's trained eye confirmed it. Land ho! After twelve long days at sea we would soon land at Pitcairn, and Bill opened some Panama beer for the jubilant celebration that always comes with the sight of land. We rapidly forgot our recklessness of the night before, clearly a sign we were in need of landfall.

From a faint interruption of the horizon, Pitcairn grew to reveal awesome cliffs of greenery, red clay, and lichen-covered rocks rising 1,000 feet to form a dramatic contrast with the surrounding sea. It was the inviting character of this remote outpost that so appealed to Fletcher Christian. The sun cast shadows that accentuated the angular patterns in the landscape. A diesel-powered longboat full of Pitcairners, men and women, greeted us as we neared the shore and guided *Sintram* to a sound but exposed anchorage in Bounty Bay. Other islanders gathered round to greet us as we landed. One elderly man in a red plaid shirt and well-worn khaki trousers tossed me a mandarin orange and proudly declared, "I am Andrew Young, fifth generation Fletcher Christian."

Here I was, standing on Pitcairn at last—a mere volcanic rock, one mile by two, a dot on the west Pacific designated by its coordinates: latitude $25^{\circ}04'$ south, longitude $130^{\circ}06'$ west. Perhaps the most famous island culture in the world. Pitcairn's heritage intrigues people everywhere. Outsiders attracted by the island's dramatic and unique origins, however, often remain unaware of the plight of present-day inhabitants.

The community arose out of the well-known conflict aboard the H.M.S. *Bounty* almost 200 years ago. Once the *Bounty* was



Remote Pitcairn Island, situated halfway between South America and New Zealand, is home to a handful of Anglo-Tahitians who are descendants of the crew who took part in the famous *Bounty* mutiny almost 200 years ago. Opposite: Inhospitable rocks and a surging sea at the island's most easterly point contrast with a welcome sign above the community-owned and built landing site. Top: Octogenarian Andrew Young, who claims lineage back five generations to *Bounty* mutineer Fletcher Christian, feeds chickens at his hilltop farm. Bottom: Warren Christian helps with the task of gathering pandanus leaves, which are used for roof thatching.

destroyed on the rocks of the northeast coast of the island in 1790, the twenty-seven original settlers, nine mutineers, twelve Tahitian women, and six Tahitian men, lived eighteen years in complete isolation. When Captain Mayhew Folger of the American sailing vessel *Topaz* discovered the community in February 1808, John Adams was the only surviving mutineer. There is no way of knowing how much Adams may have edited the truth for his own protection or how much might have been lost to memory. The many accounts of the early settlement, told by maritime historians and fiction writers alike, are only suppositions from pieced-together fragments of oral history passed down through generations of Pitcairners. But it is universally accepted that the island's early years were marred by violence, murder, and tragedy.

Each Pitcairner has a version of the island's history, though they tend to rely on an account written by a native islander, Rosalind Young, whose book *Mutiny on the Bounty and Story of Pitcairn Island*, was published in 1894. The islanders are proud of their unusual heritage and quick to boast of direct lineage to Fletcher Christian, the leader of the mutiny in April 1789, but many of them look with slightly cynical eyes at all the intense interest in their past. After all, they have to live in the present.

Pitcairn Islanders appear characteristic of the isolated island that they inhabit—vigorous, sturdy, resilient, and beautiful. The Anglo-Tahitian descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers still bear their ancestors' names—Christian, Young, and Brown—as well as the names of later shipwrecked settlers—Warren and Clark. Britain's smallest colony, Pitcairn is one of the world's most remote communities, situated halfway between South America and New Zealand and over 1,300 miles southeast of Tahiti. Self-sufficiency is the way of life for the fifty-three islanders. Population has declined by 50 percent in the past ten years, and the remaining inhabitants, mostly over age fifty, worry, despite their cheerful nature, about the ability to survive without the young Pitcairners who are emigrating in search of a more modern life.

As part of a crew all younger than twenty-four, I noticed an obvious absence of my contemporaries among the islanders. This age gap, from fifteen to thirty, challenges the future of Pitcairn. It reduces the pool of healthy strong bodies needed for the arduous task of unloading supply ships and handling the longboats in the open ocean, and diminishes almost to zero the number of marriageable and procreative Pitcairners. Many in that age group have discovered

MARINE IMAGES

BY FRANK J. MYHRE

GARDEN DELIGHTS



YELLOW SPONGES



FREEDOM



GREY CORAL

ALL PHOTOS 11" x 14"
FRAMED IN METAL
16" x 20" \$100.00
MATED ONLY
16" x 20" \$60.00

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P.O. BOX 1363
LAFAYETTE, CA 94549
(415) 935-8322

ALLOW 4 TO 6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY



Another perspective of the island's landing site, Bounty Bay.

more prosperous opportunities in New Zealand and never return home.

PITCAIRN'S MEAGER ECONOMY has always been influenced by the sea traffic calling at Bounty Bay. In the mid-nineteenth century American whaling ships came frequently to barter for provisions. A few years later came British men-of-war. Mission ships at the turn of the century brought charity and Seventh-Day Adventists who succeeded in converting the entire population.

After the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, cargo vessels and passenger liners stopped at Pitcairn on voyages between the Americas and New Zealand or Australia. Ocean liners full of customers eager to buy island handicrafts created a money economy. Pitcairners, for the first time, could save money and use it for passage off the island; many did. Woodcarving and basket-weaving, the crafts on Pitcairn, are still the chief source of private income for islanders, even though the steady flow of large passenger ships has all but vanished. Current traffic to Pitcairn includes ten to twenty private yachts annually and a growing number of expeditions—ethnographers and archaeologists from France, film crews from Australia and photographers from the United States.

Prior to our arrival, *Taiyo*, a square-rigged brigantine, had brought an expedition from San Francisco, with the aim of finding Fletcher Christian's grave. Steve

Christian, Andrew's grandson, told of the expedition's abortive search for his ancestor's bones. To humor them Andrew had planted a goat's jawbones in Christian's Cave.

In addition to his mutineer ancestry, Andrew also maintains American lineage from his maternal grandfather, Samuel Warren, a sailor from Providence, Rhode Island, who settled on the island in the middle of the nineteenth century.

At eighty-four, Andrew claims his "good old days for going around the island are finished." However, it was a challenge to match his pace as we hiked up and down the precipitous hills. With the aid of a walking stick and a straw hat to protect his head from the bright sun, Andrew toured me around the island home he loves. He described the processes of drying bananas, cooking pumpkin vines, and making syrup from Ti roots. He showed me how to rap a coconut for the tasty white meat.

He told me how the men put salt on the trails to lure the goats that roam wild into a valley where they are trapped and killed for holiday feasts. The goats, he said, are a nuisance because they crop the vegetation too close and cause erosion. The island has no pigs or cows; besides the goats and a few domestic dogs, chickens and turkeys are the only animals raised on Pitcairn today.

During our walk Andrew dared me to climb a small Australian coral tree which he called a monkey's puzzle tree. I accepted,

only to be quickly defeated by numerous tiny thorns that made it impossible. Andrew was quite pleased with himself. I wondered how many other visitors had preceded me.

Andrew keeps in shape by rowing the five miles around the island and carting his wheelbarrow up and down the dirt footpaths. He recalls that on holidays, when he was younger, "I was coxswain in rowing competitions. My boat won in the good old days." He lives alone in a house built of indigenous wood on a twenty-five-dollar monthly pension. Although he calls himself a hermit, Andrew is extremely gregarious and a frequent visitor to his daughter Dobrey's bustling household. Of Andrew's four children, Dobrey is the only one living on Pitcairn today.

Hers is the first residence encountered after climbing the infamous "Hill of Difficulty" from the landing at Bounty Bay. We were scooped into Dobrey's home as though we were family and treated to a hot bath and "tea", which is no less than a feast: several fish dishes, chicken, eggs, bananas, salad, potatoes, yams, green beans, home-baked bread, and "sawdust", the local name for coffee. At the large table sat four generations of Pitcairners: Andrew, Dobrey, her husband Ivan, their son Steve and his wife Olive, and their children Trent, Randy, Sean, and Tanya.

Ivan, a reserved and quiet man, is the island magistrate, in charge of immigrations among other things. He enjoys keeping visitors, eager for their passport stamp, guessing. Casually, he tells them, "If you want your passport stamped, give it to me, I should get to it tomorrow." Steve is the antithesis of his father in both personality and physique, having a darker Polynesian complexion and a larger build. He is in charge of the generator and the landing, as well as being the local dentist. Steve and Olive are one of four young families who have decided to stay on Pitcairn in spite of the attractions that lure their contemporaries away.

The Christians divide the cooking between their electric stove and an open stone oven in a room off the kitchen. Olive told me that it takes nearly three years of frugal saving to purchase and transport a new appliance from New Zealand, the chief expense being shipping. There are five electric stoves and a few refrigerators on the island, and now most homes have freezers which reduce the dependence on frequent supply deliveries. Steve runs the public generator which supplies electricity from 6:00 A.M. until 11:00 P.M. Even though a few families have privately owned generators, the expense of imported oil limits their use. People

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just avoid opening their freezers when the power is off and trust the insulation to keep their food frozen.

The administrative headquarters, 3,000 miles away in Auckland, New Zealand, arranges for transportation of supplies and for medical emergencies. An American nurse, the wife of the Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, runs a dispensary. There has never been a resident doctor, so islanders must leave the island for serious ailments. Last year Andrew took passage on a supply ship to New Zealand to have a head injury treated. In December 1980, Jay Warren was brought 300 miles to Mangareva, the nearest inhabited island, on an Australian yacht, then flown 1,000 miles to Tahiti for an emergency hernia operation. Jay spent Christmas in a hospital room in Tahiti, his first trip off Pitcairn.

There are no regularly scheduled supply ships. Fewer cargo ships now travel the Panama-New Zealand sea route, so for the past few years Pitcairn has had to rely on the courtesy of Norwegian sea captains to deliver such necessary provisions as fuel, flour, fishing line, and medicine. These ships arrive three or four times a year, sometimes as much as nine months apart. As of February this year, no supply ship had visited since

September 1982. Mail delivery is also irregular because it, too, depends on the fluky schedule of passing ships. During my visit, two Pitcairners, Len and Thelma Brown, were in New Zealand waiting for passage home on the next supply ship.

THE DAY a supply ship does arrive is a major island holiday. A long ring on the battery-operated one-party line telephone signals a ship's arrival and calls all hands to the landing place for unloading. Amid much excitement the longboats are hauled out of the storage sheds. The islanders make several trips between the cargo vessel and shore, glad for the relief from ordinary activities. They are convinced the seas pick up every "Ship Day" to make their work more challenging—and even more memorable.

On other days, islanders occupy themselves with fishing, farming, handicrafts, and, of course, each other's company. The sea and land both are fertile and provide a good diet: in one afternoon Olive caught sixty-six fish from the rocks. Often the islanders take the longboats out deep-sea fishing for wahoo and tuna, two favorites. They also fish for shark, less to eat than for the teeth to lend authenticity to their carvings. A lot of sharks, they say, can be found around

Oeno Island, an uninhabited atoll with sandy beaches seventy-five miles northwest. Oeno is their holiday retreat, their change of scene. Every year they pack up the boats and cross the open sea to camp and relax for a week or two. They combine work with their vacation by collecting seashells and pandanus palms, in addition to the shark's teeth they manage to get, for use in their crafts.

Many islanders will readily deny being good sailors, claiming that seasickness usually overcomes them on the passage to Oeno—not surprising, considering that there is no sheltered water around on which to gradually develop sea legs. They are landlubbers who live with the sea, not on it.

The Pitcairn Islands also include Henderson and Ducie islands, both uninhabited, lying 105 miles northeast and 190 miles east of Pitcairn respectively. Henderson offers a good supply of miro wood, a dark, fine-grained hardwood used for carving.

Although lobster can be fished off Pitcairn, most islanders do not eat it, since Adventists abstain from shellfish and pork, as well as alcohol and tobacco. Only one islander, Morris Warren, smokes cigarettes. Morris is interested in visitors for the tobacco they may have. Once that business is over, so is his friendship with a stranger. When I

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met Morris, he was barefoot and bearded, wearing an overcoat and cap, and carrying a broken hoe. "Do ya have a cigarette?" was his greeting, followed by, "When's ya ship leaving?"

When fishing is impossible, the islanders turn to their garden plots. The subtropical climate of Pitcairn supports a wide variety of tropical and temperate vegetation. Give seeds to a Pitcairner and he will attempt to grow them—and usually succeeds. Generally Pitcairn is an "early to bed, early to rise" community, but when strangers visit, they welcome the chance to literally burn the midnight oil. One evening around the Christians' large dining room table, lit by the moon and a kerosene lamp, our crew exchanged sea stories with some of the islanders. Steve was pleased to have a new audience for his tales of shark hunting and his more dangerous dives. Steve is one of the few islanders who has scuba gear and explores beneath the surface of the ocean that is all around. He got his wetsuit in a trade with a passing boat—each islander has his "shopping list" ready for when a vessel arrives. He managed to get a full suit in exchange for one of his shark carvings and a hat that his mother wove.

Other nighttime entertainment includes a twice-weekly screening of a "picture" rented from New Zealand and changed only as often as the irregular mail schedule will allow. One night I saw *Mrs. Brown You've Got a Lovely Daughter* for forty-five cents while a chorus of children recited the lines in unison with the movie.

Pitcairn taxes are paid in kind, not with money. Men from sixteen to sixty years of age must contribute to public works, maintaining the roads and government buildings for an hourly wage of fifty-nine cents. The works program is administered by Steve Christian, who makes assignments according to the requirements of the particular job and the skills of the available workers. The system functions much like a grounds crew on a campus or estate. Everyone is something of a jack-of-all-trades, and no one gets stuck doing the same job all the time.

Public works is naturally not popular, although there are a few coveted positions in the post office. Pitcairn Island stamps, issued since 1940, are the island's main export and chief source of revenue. Philatelists keep Pitcairn solvent. The post office jobs are awarded something like political plums: over the years some families have developed more influence in the community than others, although the ways in which this influence is exercised are generally too subtle for the casual visitor to appreciate.

To build up a private cash reserve, men

make carvings in the shapes of fish, sharks, birds, turtles, and the *Bounty*, while the women weave dried pandanus palms into baskets and curios. The seven children spend the day in school under the tutelage of a teacher from New Zealand and at night help out in the crafts enterprise by sanding carvings or collecting leaves. The cash thus earned goes to buy food and medicine at the island stores or to order goods from the outside. Some years ago a ship dropped off a copy of the Sears, Roebuck catalog, and now the islanders order most of their clothes from this long-time fixture of out-of-the-way living, which Sears religiously updates.

ADAMSTOWN, where most of the houses and community buildings are located, offers an in-island sanctuary high above the restless sea. Lovely houses are built of wood with corrugated iron roofs. Large cisterns beside the homes collect rain water from the roofs, since there is no stream on Pitcairn. In earlier days, Andrew says, dried pandanus leaves were used to thatch a roof in the Polynesian style. The bark of pandanus trees is still used as gutters for collecting water off roofs.

Andrew pointed out the homes of the island families and many abandoned houses, too, as we meandered through Adamstown. There is an unspoken respect for property. The land, initially divided among the mutineers (and not the Tahitians who came with them), is passed on to the children in each family, prohibiting strangers from ownership. The land divisions are precarious because of all the intermarriage over generations. Certain land is public, and a red *P* distinguishes community trees from private ones. Andrew picked two large yellow grapefruits from a roadside tree and handed me one, warning me of island law, "We can pick and eat fruit from any tree while walking, but we can't collect it."

There is no shortage of fruit trees along the dirt roads and footpaths to quench a hiker's thirst, but I wasn't always sure what I was being offered. "Did I want a jack-fruit?" "Don't eat that, that's stinking-apple." The former was delicious: that's the island term for papaya. The latter is the smelly, bitter fruit of the roseapple, good only for jellies and such. "White stuff" is what they call thistle even though it's green, because they pick it before it flowers, cook it in water and syrup, and serve it in coconut milk, making a whitish concoction. Other plants and fish are called by their Tahitian name or a derivative of it. The islanders speak English to visitors, but among themselves they use a unique blend of Tahitian, English, and local idioms and contractions. For example, they will ask

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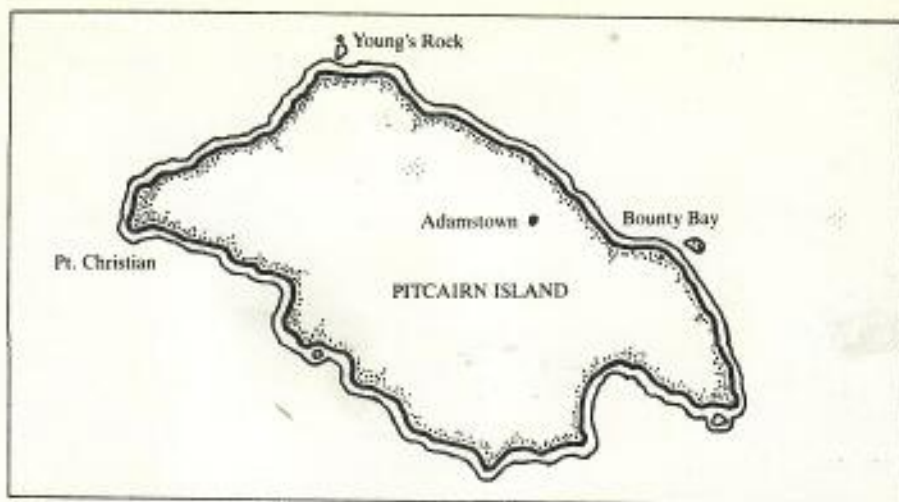
a returning hiker, "But you bin?" for "Whereabouts have you been?", an expression as short as the distance one can walk.

The place names on the islands also carry the stamp of their unusual history. The most obvious ones are Bounty Bay, Adamstown, and Christian's Cave. "Where-Dan-Fell" is a rock from which Dan McCoy fell and broke his back while fishing in 1855. Andrew's grandfather, Simon Young, kept a cow in a field which now bears the name "White-Cow-Pen". Another field where an islander caught a loose cow is referred to as "John-Catch-a-Cow", even though John's identity is no longer known. Timiti, one of the original Tahitian settlers, purportedly hid from Fletcher in the gaps of some rocks on the south side of the island which is now a fertile fishing ground called "Timiti's Crack". And another place is called "John-Fall" after John Mills, son of the mutineer by the same name, who fell and died while collecting bird eggs.

Andrew, who told me countless stories behind local names, also recalled memorable events in his lifetime. While experimenting with lanterns, Andrew was the first islander to make visual communication with a passing ship in 1921. Pitcairn received transmitting and receiving equipment from New Zealand following Andrew's initial efforts, and since 1944 Pitcairn has been a meteorological station with regular communications. Tom Christian, the radio officer today, transmits the weather and other pertinent news from a sophisticated station built in the 1960s by the British government. Tom also operates a ham radio, a link to the rest of the world since ham radio operators are eager to reach an outpost like Pitcairn Island.

The islanders get regular news of the outside world through Tom's radio connections. They like to keep in touch, even though they are generally not very interested in global politics and other goings-on that do not really touch their lives. The story is told that during World War II, Japanese and American ships would stop at the island, asking if the residents had seen any sign of the enemy recently. Both sides received the same answer, a respectful and pragmatic "No".

Tom's monopoly over the island's radio affairs now has competition from Kari Young, a Norwegian ship radio operator who married islander Brian Young. Like Steve and Olive, Kari and Brian have chosen to raise their family on Pitcairn. In December 1982, Tom was named in the Queen's List as Member of the British Empire, for outstanding service. The award was a welcome acknowledgment that the community he



Britain's smallest colony is populated by about fifty Pitcairn Islanders, isolated in the Pacific

some 1,300 miles southeast of Tahiti. Tiny Pitcairn itself is only one by two miles.

lives in is not entirely forgotten.

Andrew also recalled that the islanders felt the shock of the French bomb testing on Mururoa Island, some 500 miles to the northwest of Pitcairn. A French cruiser came to Pitcairn in the early 1970s after one test to check for damage. The French ship was followed by a British ship that assured the islanders the radiation from the nuclear testing had drifted away. The French continue to use Mururoa as a test site and, to date, have not published any study surveying the effects on neighboring islands.

AS IS THE CASE with most visits to Pitcairn, weather dictated the length of my stay, and *Sintran* departed in a tropical storm for French Polynesia. I boarded the ship reluctantly, with little hope of returning. Pitcairners are accustomed to brief friendships with strangers which are rarely renewed, except through letters. However, I had been infected with the warm hospitality of Pitcairn and set my sights on returning one day.

In March of the following year I learned a French yacht sailing to Henderson Island was hiring crew. I did not worry about the prevailing southeasterly tradewinds we would battle, but rather rejoiced at the rare opportunity to revisit Pitcairn. Claude Gasca captains the former racing yacht *Striana*, a sixty-foot ketch, which he now charters from his base in Papeete, Tahiti. I was offered the position and had only one day to convince the French authorities to extend my visa, to sign me off one ship and onto another, and to grant me permission to enter the military port of Hao, where the charter guests would join *Striana*. The bureaucratic runaround in Papeete is a delicate game foreigners must play with the authorities.

Striana kept to her schedule and left Papeete Harbor on 28 March. Eric Germa, a

French sailor, came on as first mate and navigator, and I as second mate, interpreter, and cook. A threatening sky in the northeast warned us to tack and circumnavigate Tahiti by the southwest side. That first morning sky was a foreshadowing of the weather that remained with *Striana* for nearly the entire voyage.

Days blended together as the three of us rotated watch through tropical rains, high seas, and headwinds. *Striana* zigzagged carefully through the central Tuamotu archipelago while we kept an eye out for its low coral atolls. These atolls, a coconut tree high, shimmer in resplendent hues of red coral, turquoise lagoons, and white sands. Yet, their radiance masks treacherous reefs. We passed Anaa, Motu Tunga, Tahanea, Reitoru, Mengonengo, and finally anchored in the lagoon of Hao, where our charter guest, Smiley Ratliff, and his personal pilot, Peter, joined the *Striana*.

Smiley, a large man, taller still in a black cowboy hat and boots, looked more fit to ride a prairie schooner than with us on the *Striana*. The fifty-seven-year-old multimillionaire cattleman from western Virginia was making his first sailing voyage at sea. Smiley claimed he was looking for an island to buy and settle and wanted to look at Henderson. The crew suspected he was in search of a treasure. I convinced Smiley to include a detour to Pitcairn in his itinerary. The nature of this trip was peculiar no matter what its motives. Rarely does anyone, particularly a cattle farmer, charter a yacht for a 3,000-mile roundtrip voyage.

Pitcairners remember the only known previous attempt to live on Henderson Island. In 1957 an American, Robert Tomarchin, who purported to be a treasure hunter, and his pet chimpanzee had to be rescued from Henderson after a brief stay,



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having run out of food and water. They were deposited on Pitcairn where they stayed until another passing ship delivered Tomarching, but not his chimpanzee, to New Zealand. The islanders looked after his pet until they secured it passage to New Zealand some months later.

We reached Henderson after a brief overlay at Mangareva. Henderson sat like a huge log on the horizon, looking quite different from other South Pacific islands. Fifty-foot cliffs rise up on all sides to form an elevated plateau of dense vegetation of pandanus, acacia, and miro. The north side, where we anchored, was graced with a white sand beach bordered by a small forest of coconut trees which the Pitcairners had planted.

Henderson is home to at least thirteen species of birds. Two may be unique to the islands: the Henderson chicken, a flightless rail, and the green fruit pigeon. The surrounding sea is wealthy in fish which grow to a larger size here than in the waters off Pitcairn. I snokeled in the coral crevices and underwater caves off the north side where the friendliness of the fish frightened me but made lunch easy; I was not so friendly.

The two Virginians descended upon Henderson with a shovel and pitchfork to collect dirt samples to test later in the United States. Geographical Survey handbooks list the island as a limestone base, but Smiley discovered the soil to be "one hundred percent better" than he expected. "No one has ever penetrated" the thick growth to search for a water source, he claimed. He did not find water the day we visited, but he was pleased with the island after his brief exploration. It raised so many questions. Is the island for sale? Could one man buy an island? What would the Pitcairners think? Why would Smiley want Henderson?

In strong northeasterly winds and high seas, with a double-reefed mainsail, we reached Pitcairn in a near-record eleven hours, before sunrise the following morning. We sought protection on the west side of the island, making figure eights on the sea until dawn. I was not sure the Pitcairners would remember me. But, when the sky lightened, a cast of Pitcairners in a longboat came out to the *Sriana* and their smiles of recognition and Steve's loud exclamation, "Janet, I can't believe you're back!" dismissed my worry. We anchored on the west side and piled into the longboat to go to shore. The talk was lively during the short boat ride to Bounty Bay as we exchanged greetings and news. Since my first visit, the island had experienced a drought, and consequently lost some of its lushness, but the people welcomed us in their same lovely fashion, minimizing their problems.



The author stands above the two Frenchmen who crewed the yacht during her second visit to Pitcairn Island. The passenger at right wearing a hat is a millionaire Virginia cattleman who chartered the boat in search of an island to buy and settle.

Steve offered me a ride on the back of his moped up the Hill of Difficulty. Andrew and Dobrey, who were at the top of the hill, were shocked to see me again. "You're mad, girl," Dobrey exclaimed, conveying her fear of the sea. She cannot understand my traveling long distances in sailboats. Andrew hugged me in his grandfatherly way. Per-

The Continuing Adventures of Smiley Ratliff

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office has yet to endorse Arthur M. "Smiley" Ratliff's request to build a mansion and an airstrip on Henderson. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the World Wildlife Fund and the International Council for Bird Preservation all contend that Ratliff's plan to build on Henderson would inflict serious damage upon the island's ecology and wildlife. Left unanswered is the problem of how to solve Pitcairn's continuing isolation and its worsening shortage of medical supplies without Ratliff's proposed airstrip. Compounding the problem has been the continued opposition of the British government to a contribution to a £2 million fund proposed by journalist Glynn Christian, a fifth generation descendant of Fletcher Christian.

haps I filled a spot left empty by his absent children and grandchildren.

The rain barrels and cisterns were not as full of water as I had remembered them. The leaves on the trees were sunburned brown and bore a slim supply of fruit. Dobrey said they were anticipating a supply ship soon, but provisions were dwindling.

The *Striana* stayed at Pitcairn for only a few days. I spent the time visiting the families I knew and hiking the circumference of the island with Andrew, Steve, and Trent. One evening, in place of the usual movie, I gave a slide show of the pictures I had taken during my first visit. The islanders had great fun joking about the images of themselves. Departing a second time was more difficult. Renewing my attachments had made them stronger. Andrew gave me a carving of a shark that he had made and wished me well, saying, "I do hope I may see you again before I die."

We set sail westward under a night sky, but not before several Pitcairners had a chance to explore our quarters on the *Striana*. Their longboat and our sailboat parted in the darkness.

Since his trip to the South Pacific, Smiley has made a formal offer to the British Government to purchase Henderson Island, an offer now being negotiated. His proposal has the support of the Pitcairn Island Council. The islanders are fascinated by, though skeptical about, Smiley's scheme to settle Henderson. His plan includes building an airstrip on Henderson that could insure regular supply and mail services for Pitcairn and assistance in medical emergencies. Pitcairners are cautiously optimistic about help from outsiders. There are people eager to aid the island, but logistics often are prohibitive.

Tom, who spoke with me recently via ham radio, voiced the interest and consensus of the Pitcairn people, claiming that "an airstrip on Henderson could be beneficial in more ways than one". The change that may come to the life of the islanders will be profound, yet the effects are difficult to predict. Smiley's fantastic dream may work its way to reality. The ambition of one mind could settle another island of the Pitcairn Islands, as Fletcher Christian's will created the settlement on Pitcairn. Ironically, Smiley wants to "get away from it all" and live alone on his own island, insulated by the sea, and Pitcairners, who know isolation, desire more and regular "contact with the outside world".

Janet Kinnane is a photographer in a neurobiology laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. She recently spent a year sailing in eastern Polynesia.

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24 October 1984

Dear Mr Balazs

In your letter of 3 October you asked a question about the wooden turtles carved on Pitcairn Island.

In brief, I think it can be safely said that they represent sea turtles rather than a land animal.

Certainly there were two (at least) Galapagos tortoises brought to Pitcairn by Captain Johnston on the "Yankee" in the 1960s (although only one survives) but I do not think they are the subject of the carvings. For one thing their carapace is most unlike that on the turtles carved by the Pitcairners and for another this land dwelling creature is known locally as a 'turpin' (terrapin). Had the carvings been of it this surely would have been reflected in the name.

Best wishes.

James Stewart
G D Harraway

G D Harraway

*see
Nat. Geo.*

Animals and birds

The only native mammal is the Polynesian rat (*Rattus exulans*); and cats, dogs, goats, fowl and the common mouse have been introduced, the mouse as late, it is said, as 1942. The Register Book records that rabbits and cattle were landed in 1849 but they did not survive; and the common pig was exterminated towards the end of the last century when the island was converted to the Seventh Day Adventist religion. An interesting and rare introduction is the Galapagos giant tortoise. (*Testudo elephantopus*). However, it does not breed and its numbers have diminished until only one survives.

The birds of Pitcairn are predominantly oceanic and migrant, the few land birds having affinities with those of the Austral and Tuamotu Islands in French Polynesia.

Of 28 types listed, Henderson Island (see page 48) has 17 including the unique flightless chicken bird (*Nesophylax ater*); Oeno 13; Ducie ten and Pitcairn six. There is no record of the extinction of any native species. Of the birds breeding on Pitcairn the best known are the Fairy Tern (*Gygis alba pacifica*), the Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus pileatus*) and the Red-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaethon rubicauda*). The Pitcairn Island Warbler (*Acrocephalus vaughani vaughani*) or "sparrow", is a native sub-species, dark-brown above and yellowish to buff below. Legislation has been enacted to protect the bird life.



The unique and flightless Henderson Island chicken bird, from a drawing by Farrar Bell.

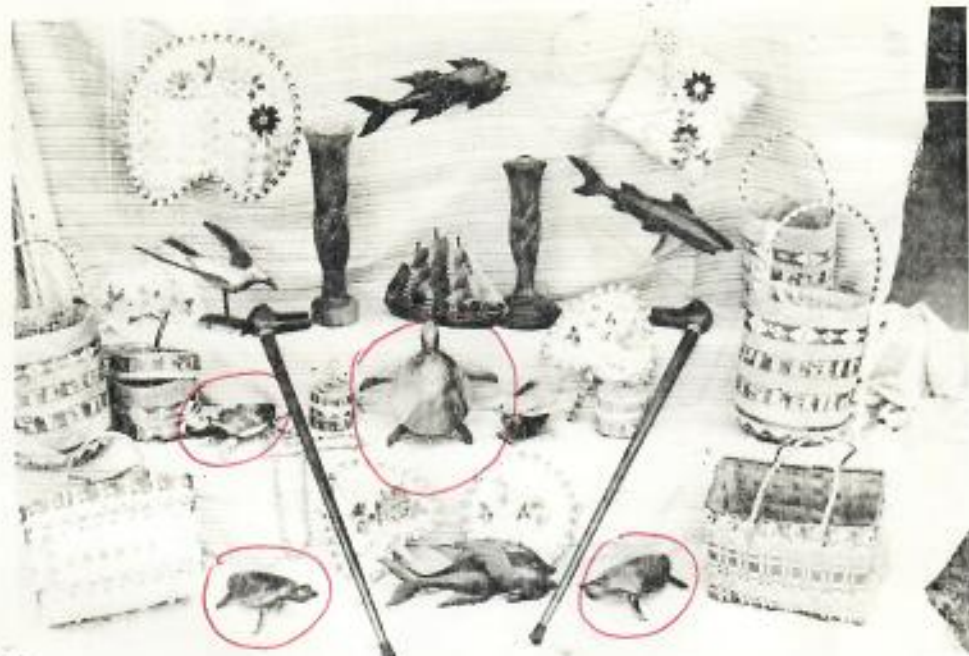
ADAMSTOWN AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The threshold of Pitcairn is a steep and narrow mud path. Running from Bounty Bay to the Edge—the level grassy area at the top of the cliff—it follows the track used by the mutineers when they landed. It rises sharply upwards for 70 metres hugging the side of the reddish cliff, slippery in the rain and hard and gravelly when it is dry. And as in the days of the mutineers certain goods must still be transported up this path if they are too heavy for the flying fox that the islanders now possess.

The settlement of Adamstown, the original home of the mutineers, is well situated on a northerly slope 120 to 150 metres above sea level, and covers some 24 hectares of park-like land. The main path from the Edge, above the landing at Bounty Bay, runs for about 800 metres through the village roughly parallel with the coast. "Upside" and "downside" of the path numerous little lanes wind towards sprawling houses, scattered irregularly among bushes, ornamental shrubs and garden patches. There are some seventy house sites in Adamstown but in 1981 only twenty-two were in use. The homes on the remainder, formerly the dwellings of islanders now dead or living abroad, have fallen into dilapidation or disappeared altogether and will soon be claimed by the advancing bush.

Built on simple foundations of boulders and logs or wooden piles, with floors of roughly dressed boards, the houses are well ventilated at ground level. The weather-board walls are often unpainted and, although most of the windows are now glazed, sliding

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Wood carvings and weaving.

The men can often be seen about the island with their baskets containing, perhaps, a partly carved flying-fish and the oddments of small tools and bits they need to complete it. The women's rôle is the weaving of baskets and hats from pandanus leaf and painting shells and other small articles, all of a type that is widespread in the Pacific.

Miro (*Thespesia populnea*), a dark, durable and handsomely grained wood, is preferred for carving and, since Pitcairn itself has long been denuded, visits for supplies to Henderson Island, 160 kilometres to the north (see page 48), are made when opportunity offers, usually when the Master of a passing ship will carry the islanders' boats, which are later sailed home in convoy. The most common articles carved are flying-fish, sharks, tortoises, vases, birds, walking sticks, inlaid boxes and, of course, models of H.M.S. *Bounty*, most of which are sold or bartered on board ships.

Trading

There is little reliable information about how much is obtained from "trading", but one observer has reported that "the people always say, the money is in those ships so long as you have the curios to trade". Whatever the return is, and it is counted in goods as well as money, it is not negligible.

Five strokes of the public bell announce that a ship has been sighted and whatever is being done is at once dropped, fruit and curios are hastily gathered, the boats are launched and manned and plunge out through the surf of Bounty Bay. The custom of exchanging "public fruit" for goods of approximately equal value which later could be distributed



Pitcairn Island, viewed from the west. Features from far distant left to near right include St. Paul's Rock, Ship Landing Point, Adamstown, Gannets ridge, Matts Rock, Rat Hole, Nellie Fall, West Harbour, Water Valley. The highest point on the island, Big Ridge, has an elevation of 347 metres.

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Pitcairn Island.
Boat Building. Made with ribs of locally hewn timber and planked with imported hardwood, the 12 metre longboats provide an essential link with shipping which passes the island. The design follows that of a boat gifted to the island by Queen Victoria. One New Zealand-built aluminium surf boat is also in use.

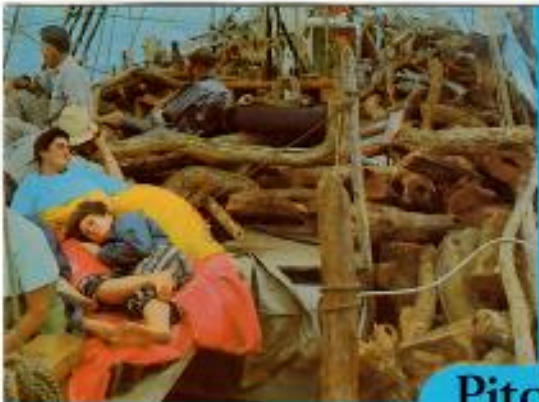
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Pitcairn
Island



Pitcairn
Island



Pitcairn Island. (Clockwise from top left):

A day's catch being sorted and cleaned. Many fish varieties abound in waters around the island. Caught from canoes and longboats or from the rocks, they provide an essential part of the Pitcairn diet.

Distantly viewed between Norfolk pines, the school and schoolhouse nestle beneath Gannets Ridge.

The Square, centre of public life. In these buildings are housed the Dispensary, Library, Post Office, Island Secretary's office and Courthouse (which doubles as the public hall).

Radio Station at Taro Ground, elev. 265m. This Government station keeps daily schedules with New Zealand for the transmission of telegrams, weather reports and radio-telephone calls.

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Pitcairn Island. (Clockwise from top left):

Returning from Henderson Island on the brigantine "Romance" with a load of miro wood used for carving.

The coastline at Tedside.

Looking north from the Square.

Gannets Ridge, elev. 309m. Christians Cave, from which Fletcher Christian watched for ships, shows up as a dark triangle in the middle of the rock face.

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Pitcairn Island.

Grave of John Adams. Of the nine "Bounty" mutineers (including their leader, Fletcher Christian) who landed on Pitcairn on 15th January 1790, all but two are thought to have met violent deaths within the first few years of settlement. By 1800 only John Adams remained alive. Of those who landed from the "Bounty" this is the only known burial site.

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Pitcairn Island.

Jetty and Harbour. Boat sheds and canoe houses above the harbour at the western end of Bounty Bay. After use the boats are hauled out of the water to protect them from the surf which frequently pounds the island's rocky coastline. In January 1790 the "Bounty" was run aground on the rocks in this photograph and burned after everything useful had been carried ashore.

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Pitcairn Island.

Sugar Cane Grinding. The juice is used to make molasses. A good deal of co-operation is evident in the community when it is time to grind the sugar cane.

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Pitcairn Island.

Fishing. Wahoo are caught by trolling. Fish provide an essential part of the Pitcairn diet.

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Mr George Balazs
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PITCAIRN ISLAND ADMINISTRATION
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PRIVATE BAG,
AUCKLAND.
NEW ZEALAND.

m



Bernice: 57 cm

Brian:

(Simon) 69 cm

Steve: 45 cm. length.
(Trent)

Brian.
(Jackie): 41 cm.



Clarice: 47 cm.

Charles
(Simon) - 34 cm.

Olive: 45 cm.

Vula.
(Jackie: 44 cm).



Steve:
(Trent) 88 cm

Captured at Oeno.

Steve
• (Trent) : 48 cm.