

ments between leaving England in 1815 and returning there some twelve years later. In the MS however, or at least in his conversations with Craik, additional details were supplied—details which can be checked against recorded shipping movements and other historical facts. One may discount his dramatic story of escaping from his tribe on the American brig *Avenger*, Captain Jackson, bound for California, and the ship itself does not appear among shipping records available here. But Rutherford gives satisfactory evidence of having reached Tahiti and of spending at least some months there in 1826. Whether, as he claims, he persuaded the missionary Pritchard to marry him to a Tahitian woman, and whether he acted as interpreter to 'Captain Peachy, of the Blossom sloop of war', is immaterial. Unless however he had been in Tahiti at this time he could hardly have known of George Pritchard's presence (he had arrived only in 1824)<sup>23</sup> nor of F. W. Beechey's voyage of exploration in the naval vessel *Blossom* which spent March and April 1826 at Tahiti.<sup>24</sup>

Rutherford says he left Tahiti in January 1827 for Port Jackson on the *Macquarie*, Captain Hunter. The vessel is in fact recorded as arriving at Port Jackson from Tahiti in November 1826, and though neither the name of the master nor the muster of the crew on this voyage have been located, John Hunter had captained the *Governor Macquarie* at least from 1821 till 1825.<sup>25</sup> Rutherford's story, allowing for a slight error of date, is therefore probable enough. Certainly he was in Sydney early in 1827: he could not otherwise have known of the return from New Zealand, in February that year, of Herd's abortive expedition to found a colony here.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the details in Rutherford's account of his subsequent return to England via Hobart and Rio, particularly of the interest taken in him by consular officials and of financial assistance from benevolent patrons, read like embellishments intended to impress Craik. The verifiable nugget of fact is that the naval vessel *Blanche*, on which he claimed to have sailed from Rio to Spithead, returned to England after three years' duty at South American stations in September 1827,<sup>27</sup> and Rutherford was undoubtedly back in England by the end of 1828.

Rutherford's account of how he spent the years before reaching New Zealand also includes some useful clues. Any attempt to check on the details of his life before 1815 would be unprofitable and irrelevant, but the particulars he gives of his voyage out from England that year seem to dispose of the possibility of his serving a convict sentence. The absence of his name from the list of convicts on the *Ocean* ('John Rutherford' could be an alias) is less conclusive evidence than his own statement that he sailed on the vessel—an unlikely admission if he had been a prisoner rather than a seaman. And though the figure he gives of the ship's tonnage is not exactly correct, nor his date of its departure, his knowledge that the voyage which ended at Port Jackson on 30 January 1816