The Past Surrounds Us

Historic Preservation in American Samoa

John Enright and the Staff of the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office

Preface

This book is a collection of columns written originally for weekly publication in the Samoa News. Their...the Samoa News on Monday mornings, probably with a cup of coffee. Wake up and smell the coffee columns.

In The Grapes of Wrath John Steinbeck asked, "Without the past, how do we know who we are?" The intent of these columns was to bring that question home to my fellow citizens of Tutuila ma Manu`a.

I am a story teller, not an historian. Histories are comprehensive; this book is anecdotal. My impulse is to humanize the past, to try to feel how the people who lived it felt.

This is a travel book, but the trip is through time not space. The place never changes: Tutuila ma Manu`a ... is here I have tried to get right. The facts are important. The facts are what we share, what we agree upon.

But the existence of different versions of the past, of what is important there, is the...from outside the fale like a song being practiced--the shared chorus and separate verses.

Tutuila ma Manu`a will flower as long as they tend those roots.

Teu le va.

John Enright

American Samoa Historic
Part 1: The Past Around Us

John Enright

Anyone who has spent any time in American Samoa recognizes it as a special place, a place quite unlike any other place they have ever been. What is it that makes American Samoa unique?

There is its physical beauty, of course, its jungle-cushioned volcanic peaks and stretches of dramatic... world of traditional village and family life—that somehow occupy the same space and time.

But an important part of American Samoa's special character is the scope of events that shaped what it is today, its special history.

In a very real way, place is history, especially for a place that has been occupied... by the same people for... that name. A place where ancestors have been transformed into legends and legendary sites, like Fatumafuti.

While part of American Samoa's rich legacy is preserved in its oral traditions, customs... historic districts that nurtured and contained those traditions need to be maintained.

That is the purpose of historic preservation in American Samoa--to sustain the uniqueness and importance of... by preserving, rehabilitating, and promoting the essence and evidence of their human history.

That history goes deep here. The historic resources left behind by three thousand...
Some sites, such as Government House and the Atauloma Girls School, are visible and easily recognized. Other sites that have been destroyed can never be replaced, and important information about our past is lost forever.

In recognition of the scientific and cultural importance of these tangible links to our islands' past, the protection extends to historic resources located on both public and private lands.

In this series of articles we will take a look at the different types of historic resources and briefly discuss what has been done and can be done to protect them from unnecessary damage.

---

Part 2: Ancestral Evidence

John Enright

The oldest instances of historic resources in American Samoa are archaeological. The dictionary defines archaeology as the science dealing with the study of past life and activities. These material remains are usually found in the earth and must be carefully retrieved.

Archaeology is a painstaking science that relies upon the patient accumulation and analysis of vast amounts of data. But enough pieces of information have been put in place that we can see part way into the past.

The most recent scientific estimate is that the first Samoans settled in these islands about 3,000 years ago. This is concluded from studying the pieces of a distinctive type of pottery they brought with them called Lapita pottery.

The archaeological evidence suggests that these pioneers settled in villages mainly along the prehistoric coastline. These villages were used as a place of refuge for lives--pottery, stone tools, volcanic glass, shell fishhooks and ornaments and tools for their manufacture.

Closer to the surface most of the prehistoric remains date to more recent periods.
When not at war in later prehistory Samoans lived in villages; in American Samoa these were mostly in American Samoa.

The late prehistoric sites at Maloata and Fagatele Bay, both on Tutuila, and Faga on Ta`u are village sites. The central open space (malae) surrounded by meeting houses, chief’s houses, other residences, and cook houses.

The final prominent site type from late prehistory are tia seu lupe, called star mounds. One example of this is Fatuoaiga compound and is open to the public. Signs at the park describe the sport and its history.

This has been a very quick view of archaeology in American Samoa. One thing we do know is that after 3000 BC, there was an increase in cemetery activity, and caution must be taken whenever earth-disturbing activities are undertaken.

* * *

Part 3: Papalagi

John Enright

The best current scientific guess is that after the first Polynesians arrived in Samoa, they still stayed in touch as best they could through voyaging. Then 28 centuries, one hundred ten generations, into their occupation of these islands, a strange breed of castaways was stranded. The castaways were taken in, the visiting parties were also dealt with as was dictated by custom.

Samoan legends and proverbs are rich with incidents of travel and contact between the native Pacific peoples and their own. The castaways were taken in, the visiting parties were also dealt with as was dictated by custom.
The first recorded European contact occurred in 1722, when Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen sighted several small islands. The first European Christian missionary, Englishman John Williams of the London Missionary Society (LMS), arrived in 1832. Williams and his followers had a profound impact on Samoans and their culture.

On the north shore of Tutuila, in the now deserted village of A`asu, is a monument set up by the government of the Western Samoa Trust Territory to commemorate the 39 Samoan warriors who also died in that first cultural clash. Other missions lead by the Catholic Church and the Church of Later Day Saints were later established. A white concrete cross on the shoreline in Leone memorializes the arrival of the Catholic Church on Tutuila.

Two of the oldest still standing architectural structures in the Territory--the Fagalele Boys School and the Tutuila Catholic Church--were constructed during the period of missionary influence. Construction by the LMS of the Fagalele Boys School was authorized by the metropolitan LMS Board in 1843. Work started in 1845, and the school was opened in 1854. The Tutuila Catholic Church was consecrated in 1846, the year after the LMS traders arrived.

From the 1850s on a slowly increasing number of European and American traders set up shop on Tutuila, while the Manu`a Islands remained largely untouched by these events.

Historic structures associated with Euro-Americans, both military (to be discussed in Part 5) and otherwise, continued to be built on Tutuila. The number of visitors increased, and American missionaries, including the Salvation Army, worked to convert the indigenous population to Christianity. Many of the historic buildings on Tutuila are still standing today, although their function has changed over time. Many have been repurposed or abandoned, and some have fallen into disrepair. A few are still actively used, such as the Catholic Church in Leone. Other structures have been converted into homes, commercial buildings, or other uses.

* * *

Part 4: The U.S. Navy Arrives

John Enright with Stan Sorensen
America's initial interest in Samoa was one of global balance of influence among competing continental powers, the farthest edge of Europe's influence, and the center of American interests. It had become a strategic location.

In March 1889 warships of the German, English, and American navies faced off against each other in Apia. The potential war was a result of the countries having no earthly or heavenly claim over the islands. A late March hurricane destroyed most of the ships where they were anchored, stopping the potential war.

Ten years later, in 1899, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States signed an agreement that the United States acquired the eastern islands of Tutuila, Aunu`u, and Manu`a. That same year a dock and coaling station were constructed by the U.S. Navy in Fagatogo, and Commander Benjamin Tilley, USN, became the first Officer in Charge of the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila. Ten years later, as America drew closer to involvement in World War I, Congress appropriated $23,491 for the construction of buildings and repairs should soon be underway. Thirteen years later, a photographic exhibit of these and other historic sites on Tutuila is currently on display at the National Park Visitors Center in Pago Plaza.

Next week--World War II.

***
Part 5: World War II Tutuila

John Enright with Stan Sorensen

Being on the farthest edge of the European world, Samoa felt only the distant shock waves of World War I. In American Samoa, the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila underwent some wartime expansion.

World War II, however, brought a different scenario for Samoa and a much more major role in the war in the Pacific.

At the beginning of the war, American Samoa was definitely a front line station. The Japanese attack on October 22, 1941, on the U.S. fleet in Pago Pago Bay area. One of the shells struck the house of Frank Shimasaki in Utulei.

During World War II, the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila was the headquarters of the Samoa Defense Group, which protected the Samoan Islands, some of the Cook Islands and French Polynesia. It was the largest of the Pacific defense groups.

The most prominent survivors of this period are the two 6-inch naval guns at Blunts Point and their siblings at Kaivae Point. All were emplaced in 1941. The lower Blunts Point gun is a National Historic Landmark.

Other historic structures of the World War II era include concrete fortifications, of which many survive. One of the most prominent is a Marine Corps communications bunker in “Happy Valley,” above Pago Pago village.

One of the the largest military complexes on World War II Tutuila was the U.S. Navy’s Mobile Hospital Number 3 (MOB 3). The remnants of MOB 3 are a few scattered concrete foundations and a reservoir above the Apiolefaga Inn.

Located near the hospital, In Malaeimi Valley, was the Marine Corps’ Advanced Jungle Warfare Training School, one of the largest jungle training schools in the Pacific. The bunker and foundations to the barracks remain to this day.

Two airfields were built during the war. The Tafuna Air Base was completed in April 1942.
A Marine Corps fighter strip, located along the strip of land where Leone High School
The islands were not safe until the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway threw the
Our remaining historic properties from this era serve as reminders of the important

* * *

Part 6: The Quarries of Tutuila

John Enright with David J. Herdrich

In recent decades, archaeologists and historians have been able to assemble some
Metallurgy was not practiced by traditional Pacific island cultures. Until the arrival
Archaeological research has provided evidence of shell, bone, obsidian, and stone
Here and there on the ridges, ridge spurs, and steep mountain sides of Tutuila can
To the trained eye, these sites tell a story of hundreds of years of continuous use.
From the dense scatter of basalt "flakes," "cores," "blanks," "preforms," and pieces of tools that have been found at Tatagamatau, it is clear that Samoan quarrying and toolmaking centers have been located at the site. These were special, export quality basalt tools. Tatagamatau. Leone Bay is far below you when you can see it through the jungle canopy. The footing can be treacherous in some places. Because of its significance, Tatagamatau has been entered upon the National Register of Historic Places.

Here is where it all begins, at a large basalt outcrop, where "blanks" were rock hammered out of a core. A sense of the social order of the manufacturers takes shape when we realize that tools were made in an organized manner. Why were road systems built with the quarries? Why the extensive defenses? Why the middens? What is the meaning of all those fortifications guarding the quarry? Why such extensive defenses?

Down at Sogi, on the Leone coast, are hundreds of foaga in the black lava flow, hand-worn bowl-shaped basalt tool bases. How many voyaging canoes from different islands pulled at their stone anchors in the bay? For many of Tutuila's prized adzes did leave the island as trade items. Thanks to recent developments in the field of archaeology, we can now see that Tutuila has assumed an historic role at the center of a great regional trade in fine stone tools.

The exciting thing about this story from the past is that it is still unfolding before us as we explore it.

* * *

Part 7: Star Mounds

John Enright with David J. Herdrich
It is pleasing when we discover something frivolous about our ancestors, it humanizes them. We usually view their sports. On Motu o fiafiaga we know they must have been doing something for fun.

As it happens we do know from Samoan oral history, early written European accounts, and archaeological evidence of a Samoan sport of chiefs from the time before missionaries—pigeon catching.

Deep in the steamy rainforest and along the nearly inaccessible volcanic ridgelines of Tutuila ma Manu`a can be found tia seu lupe, the star mounds of the Samoan high chiefs. The accounts of their construction attest that these tia seu lupe were once of some importance in Samoan culture.

Constructed of earth and stone and faced with rock or coral slabs, tia seu lupe are basically level-topped platforms for netting lupe. Lupe is the Pacific Pigeon (Ducula) and the sustainable method of hunting the lupe was with decoy pigeons and long-poled nets from atop a tia seu lupe.

The accounts of early European visitors to the islands report a pigeon-catching sport that was performed on tia seu lupe. However, the accounts sometimes suggest that these activities were performed in association with the high chiefly ceremonies of the time, and were not just locations for chiefly sport hunting.

From the journal of William B. Churchward, British Consul to Samoa, in 1887: "Pigeon catching is the oldest and most commonly performed sport in the islands. It is more universally practised than cock fighting, and whilst it lasted all sorts of irregularities could be indulged in without comment."

Presumably because of these accompanying indulgent "irregularities," the first Christian missionaries took an early and virulent dislike to the sport and suppressed it.

One of the more impressive star mounds is the centerpiece of American Samoa's Tiaseulupe Park on the Tafuna Peninsula. The Tiaseulupe Park exists thanks to the generosity of the Haleck family, who spared the site from destruction.

The Tiaseulupe Park is unique in having an intact formalized road leading into the park. The length of the two sections is 34 meters and it rises more than 3 meters above the surrounding rocky terrain.

The English translation of tia seu lupe is "platform for netting lupe." Lupe is the Pacific Pigeon (Ducula) and the sustainable method of hunting the lupe was with decoy pigeons and long-poled nets from atop a tia seu lupe.

One of the more impressive star mounds is the centerpiece of American Samoa's Tiaseulupe Park on the Tafuna Peninsula. The Tiaseulupe Park exists thanks to the generosity of the Haleck family, who spared the site from destruction.

The fate of other tia seu lupe has not been so kind. Many lowland tia have already been destroyed, and the fate of others is uncertain. The Tiaseulupe Park asks the public's assistance in saving these sites once dedicated to the Samoan sport of kings.
Occasionally in these articles we have referred to a building or a site as being a "National Historic Landmark" or as being included on the "National Register of Historic Places." What exactly does that mean?

Basically, these are official designations established by the federal government to recognize significant historic properties.

In this instance, Tutuila ma Manu`a are considered fully part of America, with the assistance of both Federal laws and funding.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation and of consideration in making planning and development decisions.

The National Register is administered by the National Park Service under the Secretary of the Interior. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historic and cultural foundations of the Nation.

National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to strict standards and criteria.

The American Samoa Historic Preservation Office has been nominating local historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
Two of our National Register sites--Government House (Mauga o Ali`i) and the World War II Blunts Point Gun Site were recently designated as National Historic Landmark, recognizing their significance to all Americans.

What does it mean to have a site listed on the National Register aside from the official recognition of its historic and cultural importance?

It means that the property’s significance must be taken into consideration in the planning for Federal or state projects. The property owner has no obligation to consider the property’s significance when altering, managing, or disposing of the property, however.

In the States it also means that the property owner is eligible for Federal tax benefits for money spent on preserving the property. However, the ASG tax code does not currently include such benefits.

Perhaps it should. Perhaps even more can be done locally to protect our islands’ historic specialness. Why leave the oversight responsibility for our cultural continuance up to the Feds?

History grows as time passes. Each generation has its own story to pass on along with those of the deeper past. What story will we have left for them to read on the land we tended for them?

* * *

Sites in American Samoa currently listed on The National Register of Historic Places:

The U.S. Naval Station Tutuila Historic District includes the following buildings in Fagatogo and Utulei (present uses are indicated in parentheses):

Navy Building 1. Government House (National Historic Landmark)

Navy Building 20. Duplex Officers' Quarters (District Court)
Navy Building 21. Administration Building (High Court)

Navy Building 26. Deuplex Officers' Quarters (Lt. Gov.'s residence)

Navy Building 31. Fitafita Barracks (Dept. of Public Safety)

Navy Building 38. Radio Station (territorial Register's Office)

Navy Building 43 & 24. Commissary (Jean P. Haydon Museum)

Navy Building 45. Bakery (Western Union)

Navy Building 67. (Customhouse)

Navy Building 72. Jail (Archives)

Navy Building 78. Ammunition Magazine (behind Public Safety, used for storage)

Navy Building 131C. Old Rainmaker Hotel (South Pacific Mini-Games)

Navy Building 133. Nurses' Quarters (Pago Pago Yacht Club)

Navy Building 140. Enlisted Men's Club. (Triplex apartments, southeast of Public
Parade Grounds (Fagatogo malae)

Other sites:

Blunts Point Naval Gun Site, Gatavai (National Historic Landmark)

Fagalele Boys' School, Sogi

Atauloma Girls' School, Afao

Massacre Bay Historic Site, A`asu

Tatagamatau Fortified Adze Quarry Complex, Leone

A`a Prehistoric Village, Pa Cove

Additional sites that have been nominated for the Register:

Fagatele Bay Archaeological site
Publications II
Written by ASHPO

AS 31-72, Defensive Wall, Faleniu

Tulauta Historic Village, Tula

Maloata Historic Village, Maloata Valley

* * *

Part 9: A Closer Look at Tutuila in WWII, It Begins

John Enright

Overheard on the ASCC campus:

"I don't know why I'm studying history, man;
that stuff has already happened."
For more than 50 years now Samoa has basked in an era of historic tranquility, the Pacific Pax Americana, far from the tug and jar of petty politics; but for two generations we have been essentially and leisurely at peace.

War is now something somewhere else, on CNN, involving smart bombs and red and green lights on computer screens; but for two generations we have been essentially and leisurely at peace.

It wasn't always so. Once not so long ago, within living memory, the people of Tutuila ma Manu`a blacked out in places with strange names half the world away. "Stuff that has already happened," and to other people.

The following is from a document stamped "Secret" on every page by the U.S. Navy (declassified in 1972):

"The Japanese strike at Pearl Harbor came as a surprise to the people in American Samoa and the entire Western Pacific. With the beginning of the Pacific war, the U.S. Navy was required to block off supply lines which lead to Australia, New Zealand and later New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and Guadacanal.

"Some of the Naval personnel and contractors had their families with them who were immediately evacuated to Manu`a. Local civilians of Tutuila manu`a volunteered to assist the Naval personnel in the construction of defense facilities.

"There was no longer any time to worry about expense or approval in construction. Time became the valuable commodity. Six-inch guns that had been laying on the docks for weeks were prepared for installation immediately.

"All able bodied Samoans were called in to assist in building defenses. The women and children were also called in to assist. The women were trained to provide medical aid to the troops. The men were trained to build roads and fortifications.

The Second Marine Brigade, consisting of approximately 5600 officers and enlisted, landed on Tutuila 20 January 1942. That same month the approaches to Pago Pago Harbor were mined.

The Historic Preservation Office is interested in hearing your story about life on Tutuila during World War II. Please tend your memories well. Don't let a proud legacy become just stuff that has already happened.

* * *
Part 10: A Closer Look at Tutuila in WWII, The Impact

John Enright

Dates and numbers are the precision parts of history. Without them the understanding-the-past machine could not work. Chronology and statistics can help us flesh out our understanding of our foreparents' lives.

Although Tutuila ma Manu`a were saved in the end from the tremendous physical destruction that was the fate of the islands in the South Pacific during World War II, the war effort's cumulative impact upon these islands changed them forever.

Before WWII, the American presence was primarily confined to the Naval Station in Fagatogo and Utulei. After that, but before the U.S. forces moved to the island in 1942, a few troops at the Naval Station were dispersed to villages outside the town in order to maintain order and prevent the pe'a i a'o (mobs) from attacking the Naval Station. Nevertheless, the civilians of Tutuila, and the Manu`a as well, were not in a panic. They had been warned to expect an American rush. It was generally agreed that the civilians who were removed from the Naval Station remained essentially as they were, and that the lives of those in their gafa were not greatly affected. That was to change.

In 1940, as the continental clouds of war began to gather on the horizon, 10,311 people lived on Tutuila, and of all those, 31 were palagi, 4 Japanese, and 1 Chinese. Additional Naval Station personnel numbered 263.

By May 1942 there were 7,995 U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel on Tutuila. Not only were they the largest number of armed men to have ever been present on the island, but thousands of other American soldiers had been dispersed over the island to keep their numbers down to manageable proportions. In addition, military aircraft from the Naval Station used Tutuila Island for training exercises. Tens of thousands of armed strangers passed through.

Marshal law had been declared. All able-bodied Samoan men had been put to work building military structures on the island. In addition to the usual sources of income, a good many men worked on the naval facilities. The number of work projects on the island expanded from the one at the Naval Station to include other projects throughout the island. In the beginning, it was not clear who would police the island. The American military police were put in charge of law enforcement. Because of the presence of Japanese nationals, a special police force of Japanese nationals was established to be under the direct control of the American military police. The American authorities were concerned that the Japanese nationals would not report to their new police force, and therefore they arrested those who did not. There were seven Japanese arrested, three men and four women. Three of the men were given a sentence of seven days in the territorial jail, and four of the women were taken into custody, then released but kept under observation.

As opposed to before, now all of Tutuila felt the impact of the military presence, as all 52 of the village police were changed to military police. Many men were arrested for minor offenses. There were reports of men being asked to report to the police station to be questioned about their associations with the Japanese. There were a few cases of Samoan youths who were suspected of being Japanese agents. One of these was a Samoan youth who was taken into custody for questioning. He was later released.

As opposed to before, now all of Tutuila felt the impact of the military presence, as all 52 of the village police were changed to military police. Many men were arrested for minor offenses. There were reports of men being asked to report to the police station to be questioned about their associations with the Japanese. There were a few cases of Samoan youths who were suspected of being Japanese agents. One of these was a Samoan youth who was taken into custody for questioning. He was later released.

But the major long-term historical impact was economic and social. Men were pulled from the plantations to work in the deforestation projects. Some of the work was done under military supervision. All of the men were paid with dollars and not the substance of life. Therefore, the main industry, which was the tapping of the coconut palms, was not carried on to any extent. In addition, the military took over the coconut plantation in Fagatogo and Utulei. The other coconut plantations were allowed to continue, but their ability to remain viable was not assured.

In 1941 the Government of American Samoa's total revenues from all sources was $87,330; four years later at the end of the war, total revenues were $359,104. The increase in revenues was due to the military expansion on Tutuila.

But the major long-term historical impact was economic and social. Men were pulled from the plantations to work in the deforestation projects. Some of the work was done under military supervision. All of the men were paid with dollars and not the substance of life. Therefore, the main industry, which was the tapping of the coconut palms, was not carried on to any extent. In addition, the military took over the coconut plantation in Fagatogo and Utulei. The other coconut plantations were allowed to continue, but their ability to remain viable was not assured.

But the major long-term historical impact was economic and social. Men were pulled from the plantations to work in the deforestation projects. Some of the work was done under military supervision. All of the men were paid with dollars and not the substance of life. Therefore, the main industry, which was the tapping of the coconut palms, was not carried on to any extent. In addition, the military took over the coconut plantation in Fagatogo and Utulei. The other coconut plantations were allowed to continue, but their ability to remain viable was not assured.
Buildings make statements. Public buildings make public statements. Think of the Pentagon, for instance, or the cathedrals. They are proud statements. “I am power.” says the Pentagon. “I glorify God.” say the cathedrals.

The buildings speak for the people who built them, and the people who built them spoke from a particular time and place. It raises the questions: What was its builder proud of? What does that pride tell us of his thought and time?

Government House was built in a turn-of-the-century architectural style called Tropical Victorian Military. It was built to be the residence of Commandant of the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila (USNST). It is a proud house.

Even by turn-of-the-century mainland standards it was a rather grandiose residence. Commander Tilley never got to live in the house; his successor Commander E.B. Underwood was its first occupant. One of them, Commander W. J. Terhune, USN, committed suicide there (see sidebar).

Government House was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and was designated as a Federal Historic Site. Recently the residence received an extensive interior and exterior face lift and paint job.
Although in recent times Government House was largely hidden from public view by thick tropical vegetation, it remains the seat of governance, or, as a recent letter to the editor put it, “American Samoa has its own White House.”

* * *

(sidebar)

The Tragedy of Commander Terhune

Stan Sorensen

Commander Warren Jay Terhune, originally of New Jersey, was commissioned as American Samoa’s 13th Naval Governor in 1903. While under the command of Terhune, issues involving Samoan culture, such as the treat with the Los Angeles newspaper, and restrictions on palagi-Samoan marriages, and demands by an emerging Mau (some reasonable and some not). His ordeal was worsened by declining health, by his apparently puritanical nature, and by a disloyal aide who proved to be a carbon copy of his predecessor, siding with the Mau and with other dissidents and intriguers. Hearing of these difficulties, Secretary of the Navy Joesphus Daniels appointed a court of inquiry, headed by Rear Admiral William G. Evans, who was then patrolling the south through the entrance to the bay.” Seven days later, Captain Evans was designated as his successor.

Warren Terhune was the only Governor of American Samoa to die in office. His ghost is rumored to stroll about the grounds of Government House.
Part 12: Atauloma Girl's School, Origins

John Enright

This chapter of our historic preservation story is a painful one to relate. My family and I called Atauloma... before it was condemned in 1995, and we were forced to leave. As I wrote in a poem at the time:

Homes are like parents

who linger long after they're gone

filling a space that should

never be empty neither in dreams

nor in memory -- the wind

through her rooms is a voice
that narrates my life but

the stillness has also been mine.

But Atauloma's story is told not just by its final lament but by a chorus of voices stretching back to its inception almost a century ago.

Although the first palagi Christian missionary, John Williams, arrived on Tutuila in 1832, by 1892 the local ... communicants. Atauloma was one of the influences which contributed to the improvement of this situation."

In other words it helped revive the church which is today known as the CCCAS (Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa), which is the present owner of the condemned building.

Basically, what the Rev. Cooper did was get all his far-flung Samoan pastors and parishioners in Tutuila and ... the structure and he did not have to spend any of the Church funds previously set aside for the purpose.

In 1855 the L.M.S. had established Fagalele Boys' School in Leone, the sole secondary school in Tutuila. The Church realized that it must choose and train fiatua as well as faifeau.

Before the establishment of Atauloma in 1900, girls from Tutuila ma Manu`a chosen for such training (usually for the good reason for the matai of Tutuila ma Manu`a to want their prize daughters closer to home.

This new school was modelled upon Papauta, and an English missionary administrator, Elizabeth Moore, came across a mile of choppy ocean, something so shoving-the-discipline-into-your-face about it.

The Historic Preservation Office welcomes your family's stories about Atauloma and other aspects of Samoan history. Call us at 633-2384. Next week, the rest of the Atauloma story.

* * *
Part 13: Atauloma Girls' School, The Place

John Enright

To the extent that ghosts represent the past, history is haunted. And indeed unattached spirits are most . . . from other places. Ghosts are cross-culturally universal, but they seem to congregate in special places. Like Atauloma, a most renowned haunted house.

After its completion in 1900, Atauloma assumed its intended role as a secondary school for girls. The young . . . and other islands. They came to a place unique in these islands, a building that deserved to be proud.

The building is massive, set on a concrete slab 70 by 116 feet laid into the face of a ridge 40 feet above . . . beams of California fir and redwood.

The first floor rooms have fourteen-foot ceilings; the second-floor ceilings are only slightly lower. There . . . double doors leading out to wide verandas that completely surround the building on both floors.

An open interior courtyard is planted with bamboo and is also ringed by verandas. The slender, graceful . . . size and pleasing algebraic politeness hovering rather incongruously on the jungled ridge.

Atauloma continued to serve as a church girls' school until the early 1960s. Most of the reported apparitional occurrences fall into the category of girlish tricks and revenant curiosity. These aitua encounters could result in possession and subsequent strange behavior. Only traditional Samoan healers could be successful.
In the bush, a short distance up the ridge behind Atauloma, is an old overgrown cemetery with twenty-some native villages for burial. It is believed that their restless spirits still roam Atauloma.

In 1970, the then vacant building was leased and restored by the Government of American Samoa, who converted the site of so many tales. If you would like to help, give us a call at 633-2384. The girls thank you.

A rule of thumb for historic buildings is that proper maintenance is eight times less expensive.