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 purpose was to inform my fellow citizens of Tutuila ma Manu`a of historic preservation efforts in American Samoa and to encourage them to participate in the preservation of their cultural heritage.

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, American Samoa. It 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 life sign of a community. The past is not something 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... That is the purpose of historic preservation in American Samoa--to sustain the uniqueness and importance of the place 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 have been destroyed and 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... This 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.

Archaeology is a painstaking science that relies upon the patient accumulation and analysis of vast amounts of information. 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. We know this 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. They lived in areas that were easy to defend and that had access to fish and tapa (a plant-based fabric) resources.

Closer to the surface most of the prehistoric remains date to more recent periods. From the oral tradition, we know that before the arrival of European captives in the 18th century, many of these households had moved from village to village, generally to follow the movements of the sea. However, some individuals did not want to move with the rest of the village and often hid themselves in caves, especially in times of exigency.
When not at war in later prehistory Samoans lived in villages; in American Samoa these were mostly in...

The late prehistoric sites at Maloata and Fagatele Bay, both on Tutuila, and Faga...

The final prominent site type from late prehistory are tia seu lupe, called star mounds.

This has been a very quick view of archaeology in American Samoa. One thing we do know is that after 3000 years of occupation, 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.

Samoan legends and proverbs are rich with incidents of travel and contact between their own. The castaways were taken in, the visiting parties were also dealt with as was dictated by custom.

Then 28 centuries, one hundred ten generations, into their occupation of these islands, a strange breed of...
The first recorded European contact occurred in 1722, when Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen sighted several islands in the Samoan group. The first European to land on Tutuila was French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville in 1768, followed by Jean-François La Perouse in 1787. On the north shore of Tutuila, in the now deserted village of A`asu, is a monument erected by the government to honor the Samoans who died in the battle of 1722. There is no monument to the 39 Samoan warriors who also died in that first cultural clash.

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. 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 Pago Pago Government House--were constructed during this period. Society and Cook Islanders working with the LMS, Tongans working with the Methodists.

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 next week) and otherwise, have remained largely unchanged for many decades, while fortifications, quarries, and star mounds ceased to be used.

* * *

**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 whose interests, American, British and German, had already established “claims” on the “Navigator Isles,” centered in Upolu.

In that age, the Pacific islands were like outer space to European powers, the farthest edge of their interests, American, British and German, had already established “claims” on the “Navigator Isles,” centered in Upolu.

In March 1889 warships of the German, English, and American navies faced off against each other in Apia to go to war for possession of these islands over which they had no earthly or heavenly claim.

An act of god, a late March hurricane, destroyed most of the ships where they were anchored or when they ran aground. The disaster caused great destruction and loss of life among both sailors and Samoans, but it stopped the potential war.

Ten years later, in 1899, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States signed an agreement that without France's participation, established American sovereignty in the archipelago and the United States acquiring 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. Commander Benjamin Tilley, USN, became the first Officer in Charge of the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila.

Commander Tilley was responsible for the construction of Navy Building Number 1, Government House, on Tutuila. In 1972, the Tutuila Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1990.

Other historic buildings completed during this period were Navy Building 21, the Administration Building, and the Hospital. Federal funds have been made available for their rehabilitation, and repairs should soon be underway.

Thirteen years later, as America drew closer to involvement in World War I, Congress appropriated $23,491 for the construction of housing in Fagatogo and Utulei. The 33 government and naval buildings in Fagatogo and Utulei comprise the “U.S. Naval Station Tutuila Historic District.”

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 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 December 7, 1941, hit American Samoa directly. 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 consisted of American Samoa, 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 Upper Blunts 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). MOB 3 is 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. This was a large bunker with supporting barracks. 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 and eventually evolved into the Pago Pago International Airport.
A Marine Corps fighter strip, located along the strip of land where Leone High School stands, was a strong temptation to enemy flyers. The islands were not safe until the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway threw the Japanese back on the reefs. Our remaining historic properties from this era serve as reminders of the important role that American Samoa played in history's greatest war.

* * *

Part 6: The Quarries of Tutuila

John Enright with David J. Herdrich

In recent decades, archaeologists and historians have been able to assemble some of the pieces of a story about the traditional Pacific islanders' fascination with stone. Metallurgy was not practiced by traditional Pacific island cultures. Until the arrival of metal implements brought by Euro-Americans, Pacific islanders fashioned what nature provided into tools and weapons. Archaeological research has provided evidence of shell, bone, obsidian, and stone implements, all carefully worked by hands and stone tools. Here and there on the ridges, ridge spurs, and steep mountain sides of Tutuila can be found outcrops of volcanic rock called basalt. A variety of adzes (matau), chisels, and scraping tools were made from basalt. 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 worked, quarries have been found on any other islands in Samoa. 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.

Here is where it all begins, at a large basalt outcrop, where "blanks" were rock hardened at various steps of manufacture allows us to reconstruct the stages needed to make each type of tool.

A sense of the social order of the manufacturers takes shape when we realize that the need to protect the quarry site was of utmost importance. The question becomes: 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 vessels. For many of Tutuila's prized adzes did leave the island as trade items. Thanks to recent developments in the understanding of these ancient cultures, already 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... 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... because of their distinctive projecting arms or rays. There are usually five to eight such projections.

On Tutuila alone more than 80 star mounds have been discovered.

The English translation of tia seu lupe is "platform for netting lupe." Lupe is the Pacific Pigeon (Ducula... 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... however, were probably of greater social significance than just locations for chiefly sport hunting.

From the journal of William B. Churchward, British Consul to Samoa, in 1887: "Pigeon catching is the oldest... in a high degree, 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... length of the two sections is 34 meters and it rises more than 3 meters above the surrounding rocky terrain,

The Tiaseulupe Park exists thanks to the generosity of the Haleck family, who spared the site from... being there was like when the festival of seu lupe was on and the jungle was alive with birds to be caught.

The fate of other tia seu lupe has not been so kind. Many lowland tia have already...
Part 8: The National Register of Historic Places

John Enright

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.

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

The American Samoa Historic Preservation Office has been nominating local historic sites to the National Register. Four additional sites will soon be added, and nominations for another five have been prepared.
Two of our National Register sites--Government House (Mauga o Ali`i) and the World War II Blunts Point Gun--were designated National Historic Landmarks, 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 local projects. It should not interfere with a private property owner’s right to alter, manage, or dispose of the property.

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

Perhaps it should. Perhaps even more can be done locally to protect these 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 ages. 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 Safety)
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, a period of relative peace and red tape.

War is now something somewhere else, on CNN, involving smart bombs and red and green lights on computer screens, in places with strange names half the world away. “Stuff that has already happened,” and to other people.

It wasn’t always so. Once not so long ago, within living memory, the people of Tutuila ma Manu`a blacked out their lights to avoid enemy detection when the Japanese invasion began. People just like us, living where we live, seeing the same sea, walking these same streets.

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 South Pacific. The invasion was coordinated with the attack on Midway and had the objective of cutting off all 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 the mainland. The overwhelming majority of the civilian population were Samoans. The men of the island armed with bush knives, volunteering to do anything necessary for the defense of Tutuila.

“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 mobilized also. The island was in a total state of defense.

The Second Marine Brigade, consisting of approximately 5600 officers and enlisted personnel, 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 ma Manu`a during the Second World War. 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 of past events is incomplete.

Although Tutuila ma Manu`a were saved in the end from the tremendous physical destruction that was the fate of so many other islands 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. Although some of the villagers removed from the Naval Station remained essentially uninvolved with the lives of those in their gafa, a number of others undoubtedly found themselves drawn into the American presence and its associated activities.

In 1940, as the continental clouds of war began to gather on the horizon, 10,311 people lived on Tutuila, with the Naval Station's 310 personnel comprising the vast majority of the island's inhabitants. 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, with another 5,074 in Upolu. The overwhelming majority of these were stationed at the Naval Stations. In addition, the number of American personnel on Tutuila increased through the arrival of military aircraft and personnel, with hundreds of planes and aircraft filling the skies over Tutuila. By the end of the war, tens of thousands of armed strangers had passed through the islands.

Marshal law had been declared. All able-bodied Samoan men had been put to work building military installations, while women and children were employed in various capacities. At least 12 Japanese (3 Japanese and 1 German) 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 island's villages were inundated by the presence of American military personnel. In some cases, the military presence was welcomed, while in others it was met with resistance.

But the major long-term historical impact was economic and social. Men were pulled from their plantations to work on military installations, while women and children were employed in various capacities. A new force, American wealth, was now part of the fa`aSamoa, and the traditional economy was disrupted.

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 had increased to $151,452. The war had a significant impact on the economy of American Samoa, as American military expenditure provided a much-needed economic boost to the local economy.

In 1941, the United States government began to issue Samoan citizens United States passports, which allowed them to travel freely within the United States. This was a significant change, as it allowed Samoans to travel to the mainland for the first time, and opened up new opportunities for education and employment.

But the war also had a negative impact on the traditional culture of American Samoa. The American presence disrupted traditional social and cultural practices, and many traditional customs and practices were lost. The war was a turning point in the history of American Samoa, and its impact is still felt today.
Part 11: Government House, Mauga O Aliʻi

John Enright

Buildings make statements. Public buildings make public statements. Think of the Pentagon, for instance, or ... 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 ... 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 ... 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, with the proper establishment, with servants, etc., that should properly go with such a position. That's proud.

Togotogo Ridge in Utulei (already renamed Observatory Point by the Navy) was leveled and graded from low-lying ground near water level, this large, airy, white house stood high above the rest. Commander Tilley never got to live in the house; his successor Commander E.B. Underwood was its first ... occupied the residence. 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... 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 was recently reopened as a "living symbol of American Samoa's role as a 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 1900. His primary responsibility was to ensure that "palagi-Samoan marriage regulations [were] sufficient to prevent [American Samoans] from imposing the present system on their younger generation.

His ordeal was worsened by declining health, by his apparently puritanical nature, and by a disloyal group of advisors and restrictions on palagi-Samoan marriages, and demands by an emerging Mau (some reasonable and some not).

Hearing of these difficulties, Secretary of the Navy Joesphus Daniels appointed a court of inquiry, headed by Commodore William H. Evans. "I am sending a school master here by 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 ... 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 ma Manu`a.

Before the establishment of Atauloma in 1900, girls from Tutuila ma Manu`a chosen for such training (usually ... to himself, and the Church realized that it must choose and train faifeau as well as fiatua.

This new school was modelled upon Papauta, and an English missionary administrator came to himself, and the Church realized that it must choose and train captains as well as faifeau.

Before the establishment of Atauloma in 1900, girls from Tutuila ma Manu`a chosen for such training (usually ... to himself, and the Church realized that it must choose and train captains as well as faifeau.

This new school was modelled upon Papauta, and an English missionary administrator came to himself, and the Church realized that it must choose and train captains as well as faifeau.

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.
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 it to a house for (human) habitation. The CCCAS canceled the lease and took back Atauloma, but perhaps too late.

A rule of thumb for historic buildings is that proper maintenance is eight times less expensive than new construction. If you would like to help, give us a call at 633-2384. The girls thank you.