

AM. SAMOA HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD
FINDING GUIDE 5-2026
Finding Guide to “Mau” Resources of
American Samoa & Samoa (Eastern & Western Samoa)

Series: OARM Public Archives Reference Box documents, photos & microfilms.
Title: Tutuila Mau Movement Resources c.1920-1930.
Summary: This guide is to resources of originals and reproductions held in the public reference boxes of OARM, the American Samoa Office of Archives & Records Management. They include reproductions from various libraries, archives and museums in the United States and other countries. Digital images of some of this collection are also available.
Access: Public (more than 90 yrs old). This guide made possible via a grant from the US National Archives’ National Historical Publications and Records Commission.
Samoan:

KOMITI O FA’AMAUMAUGA AMELIKA SAMOA
LISI 5-2026
Lisi o fa’amaumauga o le Mau Amelika Samoa ma Samoa
(Samoa Sasa’e ma Samoa Sisifo)

Sologa: Tusi ma ata fa’amaumauga laotele o OARM.
Igoa: Tusi ma ata o le Mau Samoa Sasa’e ma Samoa Sisifo aga’i 1920-1930.
Tala: O le lisi lea mo putuga mao’i po’o kopi o ie ia le ofisa OARM Amelika Samoa ma isi ofisa fa’amaumauga, faletusi ma fale matamata i Amelika ma isi Atunu’u ese.
Iloga: E laotele ia fa’amaumauga (e 90 tausaga taluai). Sa soasoagi le NHPRC, se lala o le Ofisa Fa’amaumauga Tele Amelika (US National Archives) mo le taumafaiga.

Overview: The “Tutuila Mau” was an American Samoan Political Movement that occurred after American, British and German Imperialism annexed American Samoa in 1899. The Samoan word “Mau” can be translated by as meaning an “Agreement” or “Decision”. The members of this Political Movement probably had it’s roots during the initial Samoan Government of 1876 -1899. During the 1880s - 1890’s all Samoan citizens were publicly taxed by the German Government of 1884-1889 and afterwards by the Samoan Tripartite Government of 1889-1899. Samoans paid via copra, which is are dried coconut cuttings that were valuable for commercial trade producing coconut oil. Initially, adult village males were required to provide an amount of copra every year, often amounting to several tons of copra bags per village. Many Samoans objected to this and also to

German and American laws that interfered with Samoan Culture. There were many cases of Samoans being arrested and exiled or jailed because they refused to pay taxes to the 19th century colonial governments or obey colonial laws. After the 1899-1900 annexation, continued dissatisfaction with taxes in German Samoa led to the exile of a group of Savaii-Manono dissidents, who were sent to German Saipan in 1909. These exiles were subsequently liberated by the Japanese Government of 1914 during WWI, and returned to a new British New Zealand Samoa in 1915. After WWI in 1918, civil unrest over copra taxes and Naval laws spread to American Samoa. Dissatisfaction with Governor Terhune policies in 1920 and American Samoan immigrant Samuel S. Ripley's issues with the Naval Govt in 1921 seem to have led to the Mau Movement in American Samoa. Other concerns over Navy government marriage laws, culture and land policies, imprisonment of Chiefs in 1921, restriction of the Tuimanu's royal title, and a Navy monopoly on copra price rates also contributed to this civil rights movement. An American Tutuila Mau movement therefore developed and began regular meetings in 1926. This coincided with the Samoan Mau Movement in British New Zealand Samoa which was actively suppressing the Western Samoa Mau Civil Rights Movement. Tutuila Mau meetings seem to have lasted until the U.S. Congressional ratification of the Tutuila and Manu's Deeds of Cession in 1929. The ratification led to a Congressional Commission visit in 1930 and the appointment of several Samoan Chiefs to the Commission. The Congressional group held public meetings and afterwards made recommendations for an Organic Act with citizenship and other benefits, but it was not approved by Congress. The Copra tax otherwise continued with cash instead of copra being instituted in the 1920s and lasting until the late 1940s. World War II then changed Samoan taxation with wartime job opportunities and a cash economy. When the Naval Administration left American Samoa in 1950, the wartime boon of government jobs was over and led many American Samoans to enlist or migrate to Hawaii and California for better economic opportunities. A Dept. of Interior substitute administration then promoted a tuna cannery industry economy and later, a jet airport and hotel tourism. By 1963, the local legislature then established an income tax law.

List of “Mau” archival resources

I. 1876-1899 Samoa Governments:

- 1887 imprisonment/exile record of Mauga, Asi & others to German Jaluit Atoll. ie. German Govt. Tutuila and Upolu exiles who refused to pay taxes. T27 Microfilm.
- 1890s Tutuila tax dissidents. Tripartite Samoa Government arrest, extradition and trial of Tutuila Chiefs to Apia for refusing to pay taxes. T27 Microfilm.
- 1895 Tripartite exile of Mataafa Party to Jaluit Atoll. T27 Microfilm.

II. 1900-1914 German Samoa Government:

- 1909-1915 German Saipan exile story of Samoans who refused to pay taxes. ie. Chief Lauaki Party. T27-Microfilm and Reference Box document & photo copies.

III. c1920 – 1936 American Samoa Government.

1. T1182 microfilms about 1920s civil unrest during Governor Terhune & Governor Evans...

- Arrest/exiling/sentencing of Samuel S. Ripley party c1920.
- Arrest, trial and imprisonment of 17 Faleniu Mau Chiefs c1921
- Story of Chris Young Tuimanu’a royal title case c1925.
- 1926 Tutuila Mau Organization formation
- 1930 Congressional Commission Visit.
- Report of Cong. Commission.
- Merl Lavoy photos and stereo-photos of 1930 Congressional visit.

2. Reference Box document and photograph reproductions...

- R1-F5-Item h. A letter regarding Sam Ripley.
- R3 Univ. of Hawaii Professor David A. Chappel historical 2000 book re: Tutuila Mau.
- R3 Bishop Museum photo of a Mau Meeting Siva at the Nu’uuli Village Malae.
- A 1930s issue of a Mau Newspaper.
- Newspaper Albums: Clipping of candidate Samuel Ripley of Honolulu c1950s.

3. OARM Microfilm resources:

- T1182-24 Mau letters
- T1182-34 Mau Corres.
- T1182-35 Mau corres.
- T1182-43 Mau Corres
- 1930 Congressional Visit report, photos on microfilm.
- 1930 Merl Lavoy photos, stereo photo copies of Commission visit.

4. Digital copies folder of Tutuila Mau documents & photos c1920 -1936.

5. Samples of OARM reference box and microfilm Mau letters/corres topics:

- c1920 Gov. Terhune restriction of Dist. Governor Mauga and Satele Titles.
- July 26, 1920. Chiefs of Tutuila petition to President Warren Harding requesting an investigation of Gov Terhune.
- c1920 Mrs. Ripley letter to First Lady Mrs. Harding described in Annual Gov. Rpt.
- Sept 1920 Tutuila Chiefs letter to Navy Investigator Kail re various issues to address ie. forbidding interracial marriages; accountability; right to hold fonos; etc.
- October 1920. Tutuila Chiefs to Investigator Kail requesting local elections.
- Aug 1921. Seventeen17 Faleniu Chiefs jailed by Gov. Waldo Evans for several years. Accused of promoting dissent. C.S. Hannum of Calif becomes their lawyer. These Chiefs were tried and sentenced from 5-7 yrs each.
- 1926 Construction of a Mau Faletele in Nu'uuli. Photo of Nu'uuli Mau Faletele meeting. Faatonu newspaper article of Mau Meeting.
- c1927 Formation of the New Zealand Western Samoa Mau

6. 1927-1936 outline of Western Samoa Mau Movement.

- New Zealand arrests and surveillance of Samoa Mau activities c1920s. Restriction of Samoa Mau Flag and uniform; Police clashes.
- Mau jungle retreat. New Zealand Airplane leaflets.
- Deportation/exiling of Mau leaders Olaf Nelson, Edwin Gurr... 1920s-30s.
- Dec. 1929 death of High Chief Tamasese and others during an Apia march; Song lyrics. Funeral photographs.
- Mau Guardian Newspaper. Other national & international newspaper articles re Mau
- Reconciliations and recognition of Mau by New Zealand Labor Govt Party c1930s.