

A TIMELINE OF THE UNITED STATES, SAMOA & POLYNESIA SINCE 1776

1776 13 British Colonies declare Independence from Britain's King and wage the American Revolutionary War. In Samoa, the traditional Tupua and Tuimanu'a Chieftoms rule and are aware of Dutch, French and British Explorers. British Captain James Cook visits the Tuitonga Islands after returning Mai, a Tahitian who had travelled to London in 1774-76



July 4, 1776 Independence Declaration ceremony



Mai of Tahiti Island

1777	“	“
1778	“	“
1779	British Explorer Captain James Cook is killed at Hawaii Island during an argument.	
1780	“	“
1781	American Revolutionaries & French allies defeat the British at Virginia, ending war.	
1782	“	“
1783	An American, British & French Treaty of Paris formally ends the American Revolution and recognizes an Independent United States Nation.	
1784	“	“
1785	“	“
1786	“	“
1787	French Explorer Adm. J. F. de La Perouse anchors at Fagasa, Tutuila for six weeks of exploring before losing 12 men during a sudden rock fight that kills 29 Samoans. The Samoan Navigator Islands are afterwards avoided by Explorers until the 1820s.	

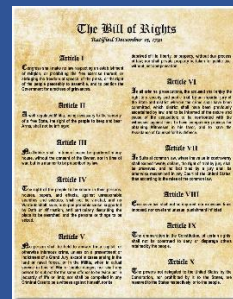
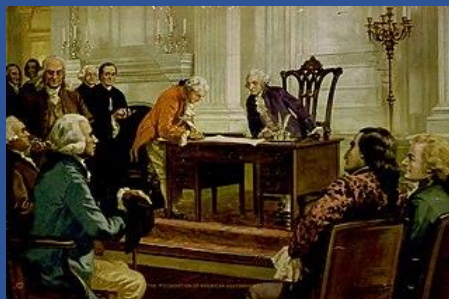


1968 stamp recalling 1868 French visit



French painting depiction of 1787 L'Perouse visit

- 1788 The U.S. Constitution is discussed and adopted by 11 of 13 State Conventions. Great Britain begins exiling it's prisoners to Port Jackson, Australia.
- 1789 The First American President George Washington begins his administration. At Tahiti, British mutineers cast Capt Bligh adrift and burn the HMS Bounty at Pitcairn Island.
- 1790 “ “
- 1791 North Carolina & Rhode Island finally approve the Constitution after the Bill or Rights (the first 10 Amendments) passes Congress. British Capt Edwards searches for Bounty Mutineers at Samoa during rule of Paramount Chieftains Tupua and Tuimanu'a.



A drawing of the American Congress and 1791 Bill of Rights Amendments

- 1792 “ “
- 1793 Spanish Explorer Malaspina anchors several wks at Vava'u, Tonga, southeast of Samoa.
- 1794 US Constitution 11th Amendment restricts out of state lawsuits ie. sovereign immunity
- 1795 “ “
- 1796 First President George Washington cordially resigns the first American Presidency.
- 1797 Constitutional State Electors choose John Adams as the second President of the United States. Several London Missionary Society Missionaries reach Tahiti to settle and preach Protestant Christianity to the Tahitians.
- 1798 “ “
- 1799 George Washington dies at his Mount Vernon Potomac River estate in Virginia.

1800

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“

1801 The 25TH Anniversary of the United States has 16 States. The new American Navy fights Tripoli Barbary Coast pirates in the Mediterranean demanding tribute.

1802 Internal Samoan warfare develops among Paramount Chiefs after Tupua Iamafana dies. Belligerents are aided by escaped Australian convicts, runaway sailors and castaways.

1803 US Constitution 12th Amendment has President's Vice elected, not a runnerup Vice.

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1804

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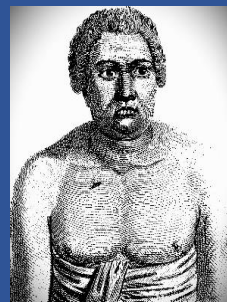
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1805

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1806 Vava'u Island Tongans ambush a British vessel and capture young teenager William Mariner. After 1810 rescue, his experiences of Tongan Culture are published in England



Literary Portraits of William Mariner and Finau of Tonga

1807

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1808

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1809

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“

1810 After many battles over power, Kamehameha I finally unifies all of the Hawaiian Islands

“

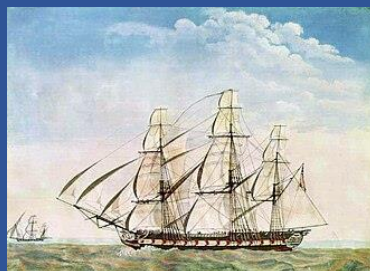
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1811

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1812 The USS Essex docks at Marquesas for several months during War of 1812 to counter British ships. They build Fort Madison & fight Marquesans until retreating in 1813.



The USS Essex menaced British Pacific trade.

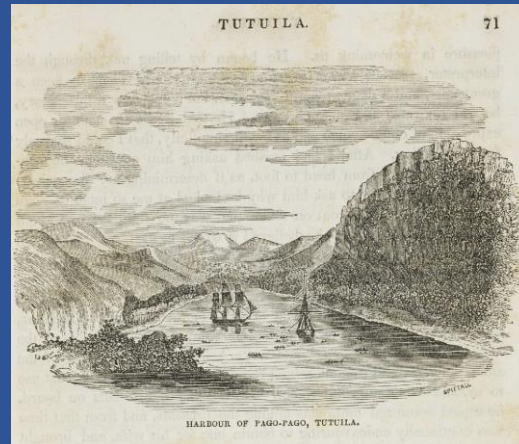
1813

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- 1814 “ “
- 1815 “ “
- 1816 “ “
- 1817 “ “
- 1818 “ “
- 1819 “ “
- 1820 A violent and tyrannical European castaway named Irish Tom of Manono harasses the people of Samoa until waylaid by Samoan men wielding sacred ironwood clubs.
- 1821 The United States Pacific Squadron is established to protect commercial shipping in the Pacific. It was replaced by the US Pacific Fleet in 1907.
- 1822 Whalers begin to frequent South Pacific waters killing whales to render valuable oil.
- 1823 “ “
- 1824 The American Popular Vote begins to elect Presidents via Constitutional Electors. At Samoa, Russian Explorer Adm. Von Kotzbue meets Tupua Tama Aiga Fa or Tama’aiga, who speaks broken English and is knowledgeable about gold coins, rifles and cannons. Later missionaries record Tama Fa Aiga as Tamafaiga, a cruel war priest savage demigod.
- 1825 “ “
- 1826 The 50TH Anniversary of the United States has grown to 24 States.
- 1827 “ “
- 1828 “ “
- 1829 The Samoan Siovili visits Tonga & Tahiti aboard Capt. Henry’s trading vessel and sees the anti-LDS Mamaia Culture. He returns to Samoa and begins a similar Siovili Culture that sanctified books and prophesized the arrival of Christ. His cult lasted until the 1860s.
- “ “
- 1830 LDS Missionary John Williams reaches Savaii with Rarotonga Convert laymen to preach Christianity to the Samoan Islanders. He writes of warfare between Samoan parties avenging the killing and mutilation of Tamafaiga. The opponents of this war are Malietoa Vaiinupo, Tuiatua Mataafa Filisonu’u and Tuiaana Nofoasaefa. Warfare eventually empowers the Malietoa Chiefs for the rest of the 19th & 20th Centuries.
- 1831 “ “
- 1832 Rev. John Williams visits Tutuila at Leone Bay with additional Tahitian laymen who soon convert and appoint Samoan laymen to spread the Gospel. Written histories begin.
- 1833 Samoan Islanders begin to learn Christianity and to construct Village Churches of burnt coral walls and thatch. The LMS is translated by the Samoans as the “Loku Kahiki”.
- 1834 “ “
- 1835 LMS missionaries form a Samoan alphabet and also translate Bible excerpts and Hymns into Samoan for publication by the LMS Printing Press at Huahine, Tahiti.

- 1836 LMS Missionary families arrive at Fagasa, Tutuila Island to teach and preach.
- 1837 A British warship the HMS Conway visits Samoa, the first since the L'Perouse warships.
- 1838 “ “



Some of Wilke's ships at anchor in Pago Pago Bay

- 1839 The US Exploring Expedition led by Com. Charles Wilkes' fleet, anchors between Sept-Nov, mapping the Samoan Islands, and making the first Commercial Regulations Treaty with Chief Malietoa Vainupo. First US Commercial Agent is established at Apia: James Chaucer Williams, son of LMS Rev. John Williams, who sadly dies soon afterwards at Tanna, Vanuatu after being mistaken for a slave raider. Wilkes' scientists also collect specimens that form the basis of the 1857 US Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC. Samoa's official relationship with America begins.
- 1840 “ “
- 1841 The USS Peacock & Flying Fish bombard the north coast Upolu Island villages of Saluafata in Feb, 1841 and then land forces after the reported murder of an American merchant trader. Their villages and canoes are punitively burned and destroyed.
- 1842 “ “
- 1843 “ “
- 1844 “ “
- 1845 “ “
- 1846 Herman Melville visits Marquesas' and afterwards writes the popular best seller Typee
- 1847 “ “
- 1848 Rarotongan Minister Ta'unga settles in Tau, Manu'a until 1878, leaving a legacy of letters describing Samoa, including the 1866 Volcanic Eruption between Olosega and Tau Islands
- 1849 “ “
- 1850 US Commercial Consul John Chaucer Williams nears the end of his service since 1839. British Consuls George Pritchard and William Pritchard also served during the 1840s-50s
- 1851 The 75TH Anniversary of the United States has 31 States. A whaling ship log describes a

Tuimanu'a Kava ceremony and a tidal wave at Tau Island, Manu'a.

1852 US Commercial Consul V.P. Chapin arrives to replace Acting US Consul George Pritchard.
1853 “ “

1854 US Consul Dr. Aaron Van Camp succeeds Consul V.P. Chapin.

1855 US Consul Dr. Van Camp has disputes with seamen, ship masters & merchants. German trader J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn arrive and begin coconut, cacao and rubber plantations.

1856 Samoan Chiefs petition the American Pacific Squadron ship USS Independence to remove US Consul Aaron Van Camp in April. Another petition to President Franklin Pierce regarding same follows. US Consul Judge Jonathan S. Jenkins arrives in 1856 and resigns in 1857 after former Consul Van Camp commences litigation.

1857 Acting Vice US Consul Robert S. Swanston serves, leaving voluminous records and together with British Consuls Pritchard and Williams and Samoan Chiefs draft Court Rules for Civil and Criminal Cases between Samoans & Foreigners. He is replaced by Esq. James C. Dirickson.

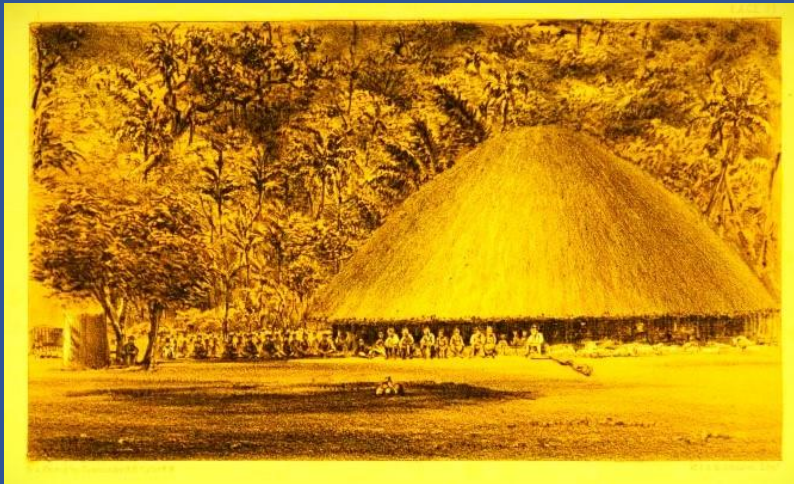
1858 “ “

1859 “ “

1860 US Consul Dirickson's term witnesses a Samoan war over Upolu Island land and the start of land sales to foreigners for guns and cannons. Methodist Reverend George Brown serves at Savaii, Samoa 1860-74 and eventually prints a memoir in 1910.

1861 Start of American Civil War. US Consul James M. Wolfe serves.

1862 Capt. T.H. Hood visits Tutuila & Manu'a and takes the first photographs in Samoa, later publishing etchings of the photographs in his book, Notes of a Cruise, 1863. US Consul E.W. Gardner in office.



Faleasau, Manu'a. One of several T.H. Hood photo etchings c1861.

1863 British Consul J.C. Williams becomes Acting U.S. Consul

1864 U.S. Consul Jonas Coe begins a term that lasts until 1872.

1865 End of the American Civil War. US Constitution 13th Amendment abolishes slavery.

1866 A subsurface volcanic eruption occurs between the Olosega & Tau Islands of Manu'a, lasting for about a month between Sept and Nov. US Constituion 14th Amendment defines Citizenship, Immunities, Due Process and Equal Protection.

1867 " "

1868 " "

1869 US Constitution prohibits denial of right to vote due to race, color or previous servitude.

1870

1871

1872 Captain Meade visits Tutuila Island and makes a Treaty with High Chief Mauga Manuma,

1873 Tupua Chiefs reject Tutuila Treaty and support the First Samoan Constitution written by Colonel Albert Steinberger, a US negotiator sent by President Ulyssess S. Grant.

1874

1875 Col. Albert Steinberger – Samoa's First Western Government of Taimua & Faipule Parliament and King M. Laupepa. US Consul Samuel Stratton Foster

1876 The 100TH Anniversary of the United States has 37 States.

1877 Samoan Civil War, state of Puletua Party of M. Laupepa. And M. Talavou civil war

1878 US Treaty of Friendship.

1879

1880 USS Lackawanna Treaty? Dual Kingship period.

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885 German revolution and Tamasese Civil War

1886

1887 Mauga, Asi and other Chiefs exiled to German Jaluit Atoll. Hawaii Treaty

1888

1889

1890 Berlin Treaty Tripartite Govt of Samoa

1891 Adm. Kimberly surveys lands for coaling station. Start of Tripartite Land Comm.

1892

1893

1894 RLStevenson dies in Samoa Vailima.

1895 Mataafa and Chiefs exiled to Micronesia Jaluit Atoll.

1896

1897

- 1898 Aug. Death of King M. Laupepa. Dec. Mataafa v Malietoa Courthouse revolution.
- 1899 Jan-May US, Britain & Malietoa v Germany & Mataafa War. Nov Annexation/Division
- 1900 Tutuila Deed of Cession signed April 17, 1900. Commandant Benjamin Franklin Tilley appointed. April 30, 1900 Reg. 4 prohibits Alienation of Native Land. May 1, 1900 Reg. 5 establishes Form of Government: Commandant and District Governors, High Ct, District Cts and Village Cts and a Secretary of Native Affairs (Office of Samoan Affairs).
- 1901 The 125TH Anniversary of the United States has 45 States and 4 Island Territories. Fita Fita Guard established. Fita Fita Band established. Registration of Deeds Ordinance 4 establishes Registrar of Titles Office (Territorial Registrar)
- 1902 Coaling Station Wharf completed (1898-1902 project). A Volcanic eruption begins at Savaii Island in German Samoa and lasts until 1911.
- 1903 Commandant's House completed. Office of Secretary of Native Affairs created.
- 1904 Manu'a Deed of Cession accepted, signed July 16, 1904. Annexed on Dec. 2, 1899. Court House completed.
- 1905 USN Commandant leadership changed to a USN Governor leadership.
- 1906 Lt. Gov House Quarters completed. US Navy Silent Movies introduced? Matai Registrations begin at Territorial Registrar Office.
- 1907 Fita Fita Barracks completed 1907.
- 1908 Author, writer Jack London visits Tuimanu'a Elisara at Tau Village. A September statistical census found the population of Tutuila and Manu'a to be 6,780.
- 1909 J.W. Dwyer replaced Edwin Gurr as the Secretary of Native Affairs in c1909. The US Navy "Great White Fleet" stops at American Samoa. US Constitution 16th Amendment establishes a national, federal income tax.
- 1910 Village Taxpayer lists were being prepared for each Tutuila & Manu'a village during 1910. Leone & Manu'a Village Co-Ops build sailing/kerosene schooners.
- 1911 USS Princeton Station Ship?... list of station ships.... A May 20, 1911 notice regarding Regulation 3-1911 Amended the Temporary Customs Regulation of 1900, establishing cargo storage and processing fees. USS Annapolis takes Tutuila & Manu'a Chiefs to observe Savaii Volcano eruption.
- 1912 Oceanic Steamship company offers service between San Francisco, Honolulu and Sydney, Australia. US Constitution 17th Amendment creates direct election of Senators.
- 1913 Am. Samoa Depts of Treasury, Customs, Public Health and Agriculture established.
- 1914 The codification of regulations is started to create an American Samoa Code of Laws. American Samoa remains neutral at start of World War I. Bank of Am. Samoa created.
- 1915 The USS Fortune is stationed as the Tutuila Naval Station ship during World War I.
- 1916 Am. Samoa inspires visitor Somerset Maugham to write the Sadie Thompson "Rain" story.
- 1917 American Samoa enters World War I. America, Europe & Japan allied against Germany.

- 1918 Tutuila U.S. Navy Radio Station established. First Radio. Am. Samoa quarantine prevents Spanish Influenza.
- 1919 Dept. of Public Works established. First truck, cars, buses arrive?
- 1920 Public School System started.
- 1921 "The Faleniu 17" anti Navy protests results in the Tutuila Mau movement.
- 1922 Civil unrest develops over taxes and laws.
- 1923 First twin steel radio antenna towers erected, 450 ft tall.
- 1924 Navy bus service established to Leone Village. First private Driver Licenses issued.
- 1925 March 4, 1925 Swains Island Annexed. 25th Flag Day. Flag Raised on May 13, 1925.
- 1926 The 150TH Anniversary of the United States has 48 States and 5 Island Territories.
Anthropologist author Margaret Mead visits Tutuila & Manua to study adolescence.
- 1927 American Samoa Mau is established.
- 1928 Margaret Mead publishes her controversial "Coming of Age in Samoa" study.
- 1929 Tutuila, Manu'a Deeds of Cession recognized by US Senate, approved by U.S. Congress & President.
- 1930 A U.S. Congressmen commission visits American Samoa First US Navy airplane flight over Tutuila
- 1931 Office of Attorney General established.
- 1932 USS Omaha station ship.
- 1933 An Attorney General is established for American Samoa to perform legal, personnel, archives, legislature, passports, taxation and vital statistics duties.
- 1934 Feleti Barstow Commission visits to plan cultural school for American Samoa built at Taputimu.
- 1935 Apprx. 40 miles of roads; 27 skirting the southern coast and 13 village roads. Samoan Institute for Teachers established at Poyer School in Atu'u.
- 1936
- 1937 United Artists movie The Hurricane filmed at Tutuila. Pioneer Female Aviator Amelia Earhart disappears in the Pacific northwest of Samoa.
- 1938 Pan Am Clipper plane lost at Fagasa.
- 1939 Roads and bridges completed to Amanave in the west and Tula in the east.
- 1940 The 1940 Census of American Samoa is conducted.
- 1941 American Samoa becomes part of World War II.
- 1942 Tutuila Naval Station shelled by Japanese submarine during WWII. Jan 11, 1942. Tafuna Airfield opens March 17, 1942. Thousands of Marine and Army soldiers sent to Samoa. First Samoan Marines Battalion formed.
- 1943 Wartime military activities in Am. Samoa. South Pacific Theater.
- 1944 Wartime activities in Am. Samoa, ie. Roll ups begin as troops advance.
- 1945 Chiefs of Tutuila and Manu'a create a representative Legislature at Gagamoe, Pago Pago

1946 Chiefs establish Samoana High School

1947 Chiefs petition for a Legislature

1948 First Bicameral Legislature of Am. Samoa established. Approved by Congress & President.

1949 Tutuila & Manu'a Chiefs reject US Navy and Congressional Organic Act Bills.

1950 Fiftieth Anniversary Flag Day

1951 The 175TH Anniversary of the United States has 48 States and 5 Island Territories Pres. Ex Order changes administration of American Samoa from Navy to Dept. of Interior. First DOI Governor Phelps Phelps 2/23/51-6/20/52. 16 months.

1952 Dept. of Public Safety police established. Fita Fita and Samoan Marines Exodus. Village Courts abolished and jurisdiction moved to District Courts. Second DOI Governor John C. Elliot. 7/16/52-11/23/52. 4 months. Third DOI Governor James A. Ewing. 11/28/52-3/4/53. 4 months

1953. Fourth DOI Governor Lawrence M. Judd 3/4/53-8/5/53. 5 months.
Fifth DOI Governor Richard Barrett Lowe. 8/5/53-10/15/56. 3 yrs. 2 months.

1954 Democratic Voters win Hawaiian Statehood.

1955

1956 Samoan Governor Peter Tali Coleman first term. 4 yrs. 7 months.

1957

1958

1959 Alaska and Hawaii become the 49th and 50th American States.

1960 Tafuna Jet Airport completed. American Samoa Constitution adopted. The 1960 Census of American Samoa is conducted.

1961 Seventh DOI Governor H. Rex Lee. 5/24/61-7/31/67. 6 yrs. 2 months.

1962 Western Samoa regains Independence after 61 years of German, New Zealand and United Nations administration. The first Independent Nation of the South Pacific.

1963

1964 First TV. TV Education introduced and Govt School System consolidated.

1965 Consolidation of village schools into Dept. of Education schools.

1966 President LBJ & Ladybird visit and dedicate Manulele Elementary School and had Kava.
1966 Constitutional Convention revises 1960 Constitution

1967 Apollo 10 Astronauts splashdown near Samoa and welcomed by Gov & Mrs. Aspinall.
1967 (1966) Revised Constitution takes effect.

1968

1969 Apollo 11 splashdown near Honolulu, Apollo 12

1970 Apollo 13 Moon Astronauts visit after splashdown during Flag Day

1971 Apollo 14-15...16..Moon Astronauts...ASCC Community College established. 1971 Pan

Am crash

1972 Apollo 17 Last Moon Astronauts to splashdown and visit Samoa. ASCC moves to Mapusaga

1973

1974

1975

1976 The 200TH Anniversary of the United States has 48 States and 5 Island Territories. First microwave Satellite Station ASTECA 1976 Manua airstrip crash SPIA

1977

1978 First Electorate Inauguration/Government Coleman-Tufele Jan __ 1978 – Jan – 1981

1979

1980 The 1980 Census of American Samoa is conducted. An airplane crash mars the 1980 Flag Day.

1981 First 4 yr electorate (1981-84) Coleman

1982

1983

1984

1985 2nd 4 yr electorate Lutali. First live TV.

1986

1987

1988

1989 3rd 4 yr electorate Coleman

1990 The 1990 Census of American Samoa is conducted. Hurricane Val.

1991 Hurricane Ofa.

1992

1993 4th 4 yr electorate Lutali

1994

1995 First Internet company 1996

1997 5th 4 yr electorate Tauese

1998

1999

2000 Am. Samoa celebrated the 1-1-2000 Millenium Date, The 2000 Census of American Samoa is conducted.

2001 The 225TH Anniversary of the United States has 48 States and 5 Island Territories. 6th 4 yr electorate Tauese (First reelected administration. 7 yrs. Died in Office 2003)

2002
2003
2004 Hurricane Gita.
2005 7th 4 yr electorate Togiola
2006
2007
2008
2009 8th 4 yr electorate Togiola (First 8 yr administration). A tidal wave damages Am.Samoa.
2010
2011
2012
2013 9th 4 yr electorate Lolo
2014
2015
2016
2017 10th 4 yr electorate Lolo (Second 8 yr administration)
2018
2019
2020
2021 11th 4 yr electorate Lemanu Mauga
2022
2023
2024
2025 12th 4 yr electorate of Governor Pulaali'i Nikolau Pula begins. 100TH Swains Island
Olohega commemoration celebrated. 125th Tutuila Flag Day.
2026 Tutuila Flag Day 126, Swains Day 101, Manu'a Day 122 & US Independence Day 250!

This publication is a work in progress and will be updated periodically until Aug 31st, 2026.
Some content is interpretive of traditional historical interpretations, translations and
literature about Samoan history, language and culture and the author accepts all
responsibility for any errors or scholarly contention of historical accuracy.

Information sources for this document are printed and online historical literatures of Samoa and public archives information from the American Samoa Office of Archives & Records Management and various other National, State, Territorial and International Archives, Libraries, Museums and Universities.

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