

IX. Sites, Trails, and Cultural Landmarks

In this chapter we summarize interview material about culturally significant sites, features, and natural resources within the National Park. Our focus here is on particular locations; more general legendary and ethnographic material pertaining to Park lands was presented earlier, in the 'Ethnohistory' chapter.

Settlement Sites.

According to our informants, the village of Pago Pago was previously located high on the mountain (within Park land). This was during the times of conflict between chiefs within Samoa, and between rulers of Samoa with those of Fiji, Tahiti, and Tonga, when people were reluctant to live by the shore because others could arrive by boat and make trouble. One person told us that when the Samoan islands were discovered by Westerners in 1772, people already inhabited the present area known as Pago Pago and only two or three families still lived in the old high village. Another informant asserted that people from Pago lived in the mountain location until the late 1800s.

One elderly woman reported that her parents and others of that generation went up to the old village regularly when she was a child and slept there overnight in fale o'o (small houses). They collected sisivao (small snails) to make into garlands, and fau bark for what she called "hula skirts," among other things. One informant was shown what he called "the proper border" between Pago Pago and Vatia by his ancestor and has passed that information on to his sons. He claims that this is privileged information, and that other people in the village do not know where the border lies. There are presently at least two structures on Park land in Pago Pago, both belonging to families who farm the land there and occasionally use the small structures for sleeping. We were not told of any structures in Fagasa or Afono Park land. Local residents believe that one should maintain quiet and decorum in upland locations (now within the Park). They do not throw coconuts or shout, or otherwise make loud noises in the bush, out of respect for the ancestors.

The village of Fagasa was also previously located at the top of the mountain; one Fagasa resident estimated that this was about 200 years ago, in the time of his great-great-great-grandfather. The Park land belonging to Fagasa is less frequented now than in previous times. One informant asserted that the Fagasa/Pago Pago boundary is in dispute because many Fagasa families have used the coastline and planted crops beyond the official village boundary. We were told that the original village of Vatia was located at Vaisa, at the boundary between Afono and Fagasa. When Christianity arrived in Samoa in 1830

people began to relocate to the present site of Vatia. Vatia has its own song, which tells how the people took the trail over the mountain to Pago Pago and climbed the Pola to get food. One informant learned from his father that before 1700, Afono people moved up onto the mountain (within Park land) to escape an enemy. He indicated a flat area where that village was located (see Map 1). Afono's Park land is very steep and difficult of access; we were told that the Park area is off-limits to villagers now, and that the village is working with the government to keep people from going up there.

In approximately 1958-60, one informant in Fitiuta lived with his grandmother in a fale near Luatele. He walked down the mountain to school and then returned each day. The rock foundation from that fale remains. Another woman lived at Papalaina (see Map 2) within Park land when she was young, and at least one other man lived on the mountain at that time. None of our informants knew of people having lived at Luatele, nor has anyone heard of anyone living at Saua. Two informants told us it is said that there was a village near Ma'efu Cove long ago, perhaps a hundred or more years ago. One informant said that he has heard the village of Fitiuta was previously located elsewhere, perhaps at Solotagata.

In Fitiuta, people previously built stone walls to keep feral pigs on the ocean side and away from the plantations. Many sections of this wall remain. In years past, the only pigs in the mountains were a very few which had escaped, and people hunted them with dogs. Now that the wall is not maintained the pigs have proliferated in the bush.

We were told that Ofu village was previously located at To`aga. One informant estimated that in 1940-50 ten to twenty families still resided at To`aga. Another resident lived there from about 1955-56 until 1968, and then again in 1970. For most of that time, he reported, no other families lived there. He has heard that people lived at Fa`ala`aga and Muli`ulu before about 1950. Many Ofu informants stressed the importance of women wearing their hair up--especially at night, the inappropriateness of wearing bright red clothing, and the importance of not yelling or making other loud noises. These respectful behaviors are considered important in the entire area--reef, bush, mountain, and the vicinity of the road.

Sacred and Legendary Sites.

No specifically religious sites were reported within Pago Pago Park land. However, many sites in this area have legendary and/or quasi-religious significance. There are graves at the site of the old village of Pago Pago, as well as old building foundations and four-foot rock walls made of rocks carried from the shore. The graves are also marked with rocks. Some are very

long, and informants speculated that these might be of chiefs or of a taupou buried in a bonito boat. One resident tends three graves on Pago Pago Park land, all belonging to his ancestors (a great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, and a third person thought to be a brother of one of those men). He described his great-great-grandfather's grave as perhaps twenty feet long. We were told by several informants that in the past Samoans were much bigger, hence the exceptional length of ancient graves. There are also many such graves on Fagasa Park land. One informant hypothesized that might be pigeon-snaring mounds rather than graves. Another resident countered that there are probably no pigeon mounds on Fagasa land, because they are usually found in much flatter areas where they are needed to get near the birds. In Afono's Park land there are graves in the Asifelefele area and at Vaisa, the original site of the village. One person speculated that the graves date from 1800 or earlier. In Vatia's Park land there are graves at Levaga, near the mountain top where people used to live, and there are mounds reputed to be old house foundations.

Some people avoid the uplands now lying within the Park because of reports of spirits. Tuiatua is the 'aitu traditionally associated with the Pago Pago Park area. Twice, just before the highest Pago Pago chief died, there was a tremendous rumbling noise from the Park area. It sounded like an earthquake but was not accompanied by tremors. According to one informant's older relatives, this sort of omen has also happened in the past. It is also said that when the manuali`i bird cries there it is a bad omen. One man who regularly tends his family's graves there said he has not seen or heard anything unusual, and he attributed this to his great-grandparents' protection. He reported that people go there now and cut down coconuts with a bushknife, and this was not done in his great-grandfather's time: he was taught as a child to climb the tree and carry the coconut down. He theorized that people may be molested by spirits in such locations because of this sort of modern transgression.

People in Fagasa are very familiar with the story of the mumu and atule as one explanation of the dolphins returning with schools of mackerel each year. One person said the dolphins return when there is an abundance of mackerel because they feed on the fish; others attribute the occurrence to the legend. The numbers of dolphins and mackerel have greatly diminished over the years. This is variously attributed to overfishing, the fact that people sell the mackerel, even though it is prohibited, or, according to one person, because the matai ran out to the ocean and told the mackerel not to come.

A big, flat rock called Ma`a-tu`u-laumeau (lit., "Gathering Leaf Rock") stands near the footpath between Afono and Vatia. In old times, travelers would pick nearby leaves of any tree and put them on the rock, and say something roughly translating to "Let

the road behind become longer and the road ahead shorter." This would hasten the journey.

On Ta'u, most of the Park land is virtually inaccessible today, but there are many impressive geological and natural features within the Park boundary. There are three volcanic craters on Faleasao Park land: Olomatimu is at the peak of the mountain and gets the first rain, according to one person. Olomanu is the place where birds stay safely. Olotania is the other crater, but we were unable to document an explanation for the name.

Luatele (Judd's Crater) on Fitiuta used to be reachable by car in about 30 minutes, but since Hurricane Tusi, it has only been accessible by a difficult one to two-hour hike. There is a small opening in the crater, and in the past there were plantations inside. The plantations there were all destroyed by the hurricane, although 'ava still grows and is harvested there. In the past people kept fale there to stay in while tending their plantations. The smaller crater, Lua^lala^litiiti, has many pe^a living in its trees--"hundreds," according to one informant. There is no way to go inside this crater.

The people of Fitiuta are very familiar with the stories about the two rocks at Luama^a, the creation of Tagaloa Ui at Oneone Sa, and the first kava ceremony at Saua. We were also told about Taisamasama, where Malietoa and Tuimanu'a held a kava ceremony and dipped the 'ava, which accounts for the fact that everything underwater is yellow. In the 1980s a man had cleared an area as a small park (located .1 mile from Si'u Point) and lived there on the mountain side of the road in a small shack for six years. He came across graves there and reburied the bones in the same place. The burials are said to date from the time of the fighting between Ta^u and Fitiuta. Solotagata is known as the place where Ta^u and Fitiuta last fought, and where Fitiutans above killed the Ta^u people by pushing them down the cliff as they tried to climb up. The large rocks below are said to represent the Ta^u people who died: one can see the position they were in when they fell.

There is a grave along the road past Fitiuta going toward Saua (located 2.5 miles from Si^u Point). This grave, of the chief Moaali^{ite}le who died 50-60 years ago, is well tended and was recently cemented. It is surrounded with coral rocks and recent plantings. A lean-to structure behind the grave is where a family member stayed while he worked on the grave about a month before our visit. One man has marked many old graves in the Saua area. Many bones were found under a Pu^a tree next to the stream (1.3 miles from Si^u Point) when people cemented the stream. There are still many bones there, and likely some were cemented over before they were discovered.

When the road through Saua to Si`u Point was made, six burials were found about three feet down, each with a rock marking where the head was. These rocks are approximately 18 inches long with rounded holes near the tip. The villager who found them reburied the bones in the same area and buried the rocks with them. All but one of the rocks were later taken. He also built a wall to mark the graves. This is at 1.75 miles from Si`u Point on the mountain side of the road. This informant has marked well over 100 graves between Saua and Si`u Point. He often marked them with rocks which unfortunately were later moved by fisherman looking for hermit crabs. There are many graves at Liu, both above and before Ma'efu.

On Ofu, the Tui Olosega owns Sunu`itao Peak and down, having won it from the Tui Ofu long ago in battle. During that battle many heads were cut off and they are said to lie there there. No one told us of trails, caves or graves in that area, but there are said to be many bones remaining from that battle.

Trails.

One trail from Pago Pago goes into Pago Pago's Park land from Satala. During World War II, U.S. Marines used the mountain ridge as a trail. According to one informant, there are still telephone wires and ammunition there, especially between the TV tower and the ridge that goes down toward Vatia. In one area along the ridge there are rocks placed in a circle, the significance of which is unknown. Informants recounted legends about people disappearing while traveling along the trails, and these occurrences were usually attributed to 'aitu.

Another trail, no longer used, ran from Pago above Leloaloea to Vatia (see Map 1). It was a steep and difficult hike and might take a young person one and a half to two hours. As late as 1964, according to one person, the only way to travel between Pago Pago and Afono or Vatia was to hike over the mountain. Children would stay in Pago Pago for school during the week and then hike back to their homes on Friday afternoons. The trail over the mountain from Leloaloea to Vatia had cement steps about a thousand feet up. A couple of missionaries reportedly died there a few years back. Trails also ran through the Fagasa Park land, although the names are not now commonly known.

One informant told us that the Vatia trail was used as late as 1977. This person lived in Pago from Sunday to Friday to attend school, and then hiked home to Vatia over the trail on Friday afternoons. The fastest runners would carry the perishables obtained in Pago Pago; they would run down into Vatia with ice cream. At one point the U.S. government provided a boat which would pick up school children in the north shore villages and bring them to Pago Pago on Monday mornings and return them on Fridays.

Another trail from Vatia to Pago Pago was called Alasopo and was a steep and difficult climb. A villager familiar with the trail might take an hour and a half to make the hike, and others as much as 3-4 hours. People were no longer using the trail by World War II. There was a bad road accessible by 4-wheel drive only. One man who had the only 4-wheel drive vehicle drove the road two or three times a day and took passengers for two dollars. The trip took about an hour. We were told that it was actually quicker to take the trail. When the road was repaired in 1984-85 it was closed between 8am and 4pm and people again relied on the foot trail.

An Alao-'aitu ("ghost road") starts at Vaisa (at the boundary of Afono and Fagasa) and extends to Savai'i. According to one informant, this was used by Western Samoans during the war with Tonga: those who fought and died in Vaisa would then return home by following the well-carved road starting at the mountain and continuing along the ocean floor to Western Samoa.

On Ta'u below Fitiuta, an old rock footpath approximately six feet wide runs along the ocean side of the present road (slide 21). This is the former path and was used before the present road was built, around 1950. Also near Fitiuta, a narrow rock foot trail runs from Si'u Point and beyond to Ma'efu. People still use this trail to fish or tend their plantations beyond Si'u Point.

Caves.

In Pago Pago's Park land here are two caves (names unknown) near to each other with small bats living inside, according to one informant. (Marine Wildlife Services staff speculate that these are more likely the pe'ape'a swiflet.) There is also a cave near Vaisa Point, and bigger caves at Agapie Cove. In Fagasa there are caves at Fagatuitui Cove and at Matauta Point. We were told that Vatia has many caves, although we were not given names, locations, or specific histories.

Afono has many caves. Two small caves in the village's Park land are located at the big rock on Olo Ridge (slide 22). One is on the Afono side of the rock, and the other on the opposite side. This site was important in the past as an outlook, where someone would watch for enemies and alert the village to attacks from the ocean. Insect-eating bats live in another cave in Afono. The cave is visible at about 50 yards from the road and opens into a big pool. It is about 20 feet tall, goes about 50 feet back, and one has to duck to walk through it. Previously there were trees in front; now, since the hurricane, it is beachfront. A different cave, near Sliding Rock, Vaitoge, was also mentioned as harboring small insect-eating bats.

Water Resources.

There are streams on Park land belonging to Pago Pago and Vatia. Vaiula Stream lies within the Park, near the top of the mountain at Afono. One informant used to catch tuna (fresh-water eels) in that stream. On Fagasa land there are tufu (pools or springs of fresh water situated toward the seashore and sometimes brackish) that arose, according to legend, when Sina dropped her niu full of water. Fagasa also has many wells. According to one informant, there are no wells on Pago Pago Park land. We were told Vatia has many caves, although we were not given names, locations, or specific details. There are several waterfalls on Park land belonging to Fagasa and Vatia, including a small waterfall called Nu`ugaogao on Park land (location not noted). A waterfall about halfway between Vatia and Afono can be seen from the road.

Across from Vaisa`asa`a well at Fitiuta, on the ocean side in the area called Futu, there is fresh water when the tide goes out, and people bathe there (.6 miles from Si`u Point). Before Hurricane Tusi, people in Fitiuta could drive to the two streams Auvaitele and Laufuti to swim; now the road is blocked and one must walk. It is still a good swimming site where the water is very cold (see map). Mulitaisala stream in Fitiuta marks the beginning of the Park (2.1 miles from the end of the road at Saua). This is the river Pava floated down, according to legend; it marks the border between Saua and Fitiuta. If one stands at the end of the river facing the ocean, Pava's house was on the rise at left. On the right are low rocks which used to be Pava's swimming hole. Now the stream only flows during heavy rains now.

Vaito`a stream is just after Luama`a (toward Si`u). The Vaisa`asa`a well is at Saua, and is said to have been used by Tagaloa and his family. There is a well at Tufu, known simply as Tufu well. A well at Vaito`a on the mountain side of the road is known as Vaito`a or Tatatoto. One account says that this is where the baby Tagaloa was first bathed. Tagaloa simply pointed and told his followers to dig there for water, according to one story. Another well is found at 1.5 miles from Si`u Point. The Laufuti Falls are perhaps the most breathtaking physical feature found on the Fitiuta side of the Park. At present these are visible from the air or the sea, but are nearly inaccessible by foot. The coastal trail has fallen into disuse in recent years and is very rough.

On Ofu there is a well at To`aga, next to the Tuiofu's burial site. A former resident of To`aga reported that, years ago, the well was used for drinking, bathing, and cleaning dishes, and was kept clean. Although the well is situated at the foot of the mountain and is not on Park land, the complex is a notable site in the area and visitors to the Park may well be told about it. However, it is important to note that it is sa

for anyone not related to Misa to go to the well without permission from the family. It is particularly important for persons in the vicinity of the well to respect local custom regarding behavior in this area and to conduct themselves with reserve and decorum.