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NAVY DEPARTMENT

Washington

1 January 1929

AMERICAN SAMOA

The group of islands that comprise Samoa lie approximately 2,700 miles east of the northern tip of Australia and 2,200 miles south of the Hawaiian Islands. Of these islands, American Samoa is composed of Rose Island, Tau, Olosega, Ofu, Tutuila, and Aunuu, from east to west in the order named. The islands of Tau, Olosega and Ofu are generally known as the Manua Group, and the Island of Aunuu is embraced in the name "Tutuila". Rose Island is a coral atoll, uninhabited, and of practically no value. The sovereignty of the United States was extended to Swains Island, and the island made a part of American Samoa, by Joint Resolution of Congress approved March 4, 1925. Swains Island is 210 miles to the northward of Tutuila.

The Samoan Islands are of volcanic formation, rising in places abruptly from the sea, and mountainous. The Island of Tutuila is of irregular shape, about 18 miles long and from 5 to 6 miles wide in the widest part, containing approximately 40 square miles of land. A mountain range extends nearly the whole length of the island, with spurs on either side and indentations of deep valleys. Except at the foot of the mountains along the coast, and a broad fertile plain in the southwestern part of the island, there is very little level land. Pago Pago bay, the safest and best harbor in the South Seas, has its entrance to the southward and nearly cuts the island in two.

The climate of the islands is tropical, but equable. From May to November, strong southeast winds blow; during the other months the winds are variable. Severe gales and occasional hurricanes have been experienced. In 1889, 1903, 1913, 1915 and 1926, hurricanes visited the islands with great damage to property and food crops and some loss of life. Destruction of property and crops was so great in 1915 and 1926 as to necessitate appropriations from Congress and Red Cross relief. The rainy season extends from December to March. The average yearly rainfall for 20 years was 195.5 inches. The temperature is highest during the Summer months, December to February; coolest in the Winter months, June to August, ranging from about 88 degrees to about 62 degrees Fahrenheit. The average temperature for the fiscal year 1928 was 83.65.

The Naval Station in Pago Pago Bay is the seat of the government. The Governor is also the Commandant of the Naval Station. His staff is composed of the secretary of native affairs, a civilian appointed by the Navy Department, having cognizance of all native affairs and native officials; he is also district judge and registrar of titles. The chief customs officer, a naval officer appointed by the governor; the public works officer of the station, acting in the same capacity in the island government; the captain of the yard, responsible as sheriff for the public safety; the island treasurer, a naval supply officer, who also acts as general storekeeper for the naval station; the public health officer, who is senior medical officer, having charge of the Samoan hospital and outlying dispensaries in addition to his naval duties, and being responsible for quarantine regulations and sanitary conditions; and the navy chaplain, who is superintendent of education for the island government.

The judicial power of American Samoa is vested in a high court, district court, and village courts. The high court consists of the Governor, or someone designated by him as president of the court (usually the American judge) with two associate judges. The associate judges are chosen from the number of native district judges.

For administrative purposes, American Samoa is divided into three districts, the Eastern, Western and Manua districts. Each district is administered by a native district governor appointed by the governor. The districts are again divided into counties, each administered by a chief, who is appointed by the governor.

The soil of the islands is a deep alluvial deposit with only a slight proportion of decomposed lava, which makes a fertile tillable loam. Samoan fruits comprise the orange, lemon, citron, mango, avocado, vi, pagaya, pineapple, nonufiafia, banana, and other tropical fruits. The vegetables of the temperate zone thrive, such as tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, beets, carrots, cucumbers, sweet corn, egg-plant, onions, beans, watermelons and sweet potatoes. Sugar cane is grown to some extent; coffee in small quantities; also tobacco for native consumption. The most important product of the soil is copra (niu), the dried meat of the coconut. The coconut tree gives meat, drink and shelter to the Samoans. It grows anywhere it is planted and begins to bear nuts when about five years of age and matures in seven years. The tree grows to be very tall and is very strong. The roots form a dense network extending many yards from the trees, enabling them to withstand the heavy trade winds. Copra is the only export from American Samoa, the principal markets being San Francisco, Sidney, London, Hamburg and Marseilles, where the oil is expressed from it. This oil is in great demand in the manufacture of coconut butters of various kinds, soaps, salad oil, and for other purposes. The maximum amount ever exported was in 1912 when 1,526 long tons were shipped. The highest contract price ever received was \$156.80 per ton in 1920. The copra crop for the contract year 1925 amounted to 1,311 long tons for which a price of \$106 per ton was received. The copra production for the year 1926 was 589 tons, and the price paid was \$108 per ton. The bid for the 1927 crop was \$95.78 per ton. Due to the damage done to the trees by the 1926 hurricane, 1927 was a bad year for this product. The bid for the 1928 crop was \$99.56 per ton. Approximately 1,242 tons of copra were exported.

The Samoan live stock comprise cattle, horses, and pigs. Cattle thrive well and are of great value in keeping down the luxuriant growth of weeds and grass. The number of cattle and horses is constantly increasing, although it is still small. A great many pigs are raised by the natives, being in great demand for feasts. A good-sized pig for such occasions is worth about \$50. No sheep are found there as the natives will not eat mutton. There are a few fowls, and the domestic animals are represented by dogs and cats in large numbers.

There are no factories of any kind. A few boats are built, but no power machinery is used. Floor mats and sleeping mats are manufactured by the women, some showing expert workmanship. Formerly, the wealth of a family was measured by the number of mats it possessed. They are not for sale, but are offered as gifts on important occasions. All their work is done by hand, producing a quality that is worthy of much praise. The houses are skilfully made, as are also canoes, cups of coconut shell, bowls, and fanciful war clubs, fans, baskets, hats, and necklaces of shells and beads, some of which are sold to tourists.

The sanitation of the islands under American administration is carefully watched and progress is as continuous as funds will admit. The naval personnel have entire charge of public health and the medical treatment of the people. There are no civilian physicians, as the native population is treated without cost and the foreign element is very small. The senior medical officer is the public health officer and the quarantine officer of the port of Pago Pago, and has charge of the organization for the prevention of disease among the native population as well as of the medical department of the naval station.

The returns of a census of the Samoan population made in 1926 indicated a total of 8,763, an increase of 705 over the census of 1920.

A bank was established by the Government of American Samoa on May 19, 1914, the primary object being to induce the natives to save money; it also provides the community with the usual banking facilities and does a general banking business. The officers of the bank are for the most part the officials of the Island Government. Deposits subject to check draw no interest. Savings deposits draw interest quarterly at the rate of 2-1/2 per cent per annum. No officer of the bank receives any salary, except the assistant cashier when he is a civilian.

The school system consists of a Board of Education, a Superintendent of Education, a Director of Education, nineteen schools, forty-two teachers (average salary \$25 per month), and the inspection service. The cost of the schools now averages about \$15,000 per year. Each of the nineteen schools now established has five grades, from chart work through primer, to the third grade. Several of the schools extend to the fifth grade, two schools to the sixth, and one to the eighth. The enrollment (August 1928) was over 1900. Three new school houses authorized by an Act of Congress in an appropriation of \$11,000 for repairs and reconstruction made necessary by the hurricane of 1926, have been completed and the housing situation has been very materially improved during the past year.

A publication containing more detailed information on American Samoa may be procured from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., at 30 cents per copy.
