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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY
PROPOSED SHORELINE AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS,
TUTUILA ISLAND, AND AUNU'U BOAT HARBOR
AUNU'U ISLAND, AMERICAN SAMOA

by

Thomas E. Silva

Stephen L. Palama

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

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INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed: (1) that road sections from Nu'u'uli to Faga'alu on Tutuila Island be improved (Figs. 1, 2, and 3); (2) that beach and shoreline erosion be halted along Coconut Point, from Nu'uo'osegi Cove to Mulinu'u Point (Figs. 1, 2, and 3); and (3) that a boat harbor be constructed on the island of Aunu'u, American Samoa (Fig. 4). The job contract from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Archaeological Research Center Hawaii, Inc. called for a reconnaissance survey of the road, shoreline and harbor sites to determine the possible archaeological, historical, and cultural significance in those areas. This survey was conducted to locate, identify, record, and evaluate any sites within and surrounding the road, shoreline and harbor areas, and to determine the necessity for another, more detailed archaeological, historical, and cultural investigation of significant sites found during the survey.

Previous Work

A considerable amount of scholarly literature exists for the Samoan Islands, the majority dealing with the prehistory, history, and culture of politically independent Western Samoa. Information on American Samoa is centered principally on the Manu'a Group, for it was from these

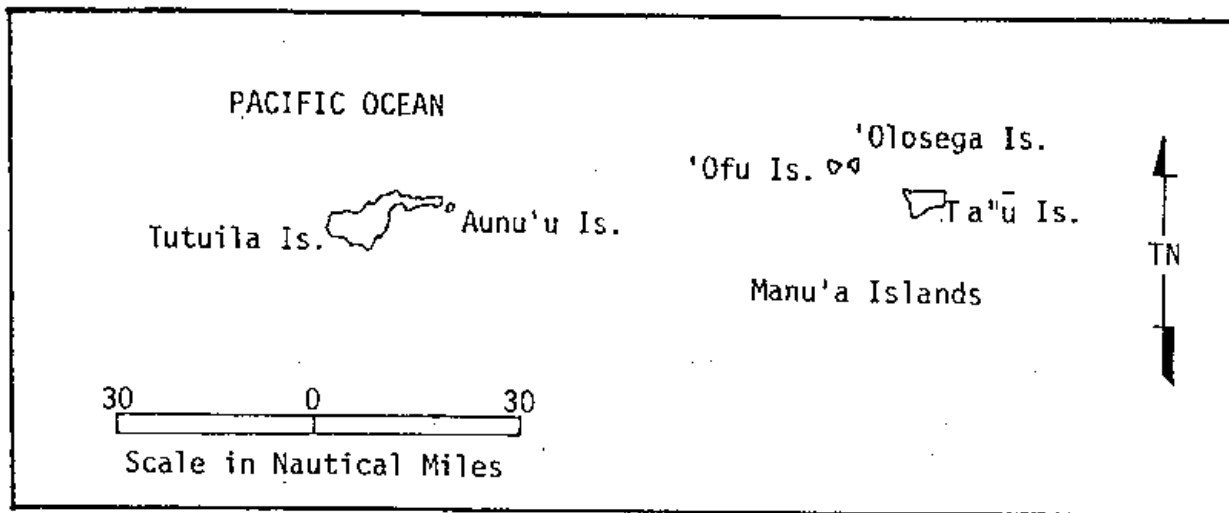


Figure 1
AMERICAN SAMOA

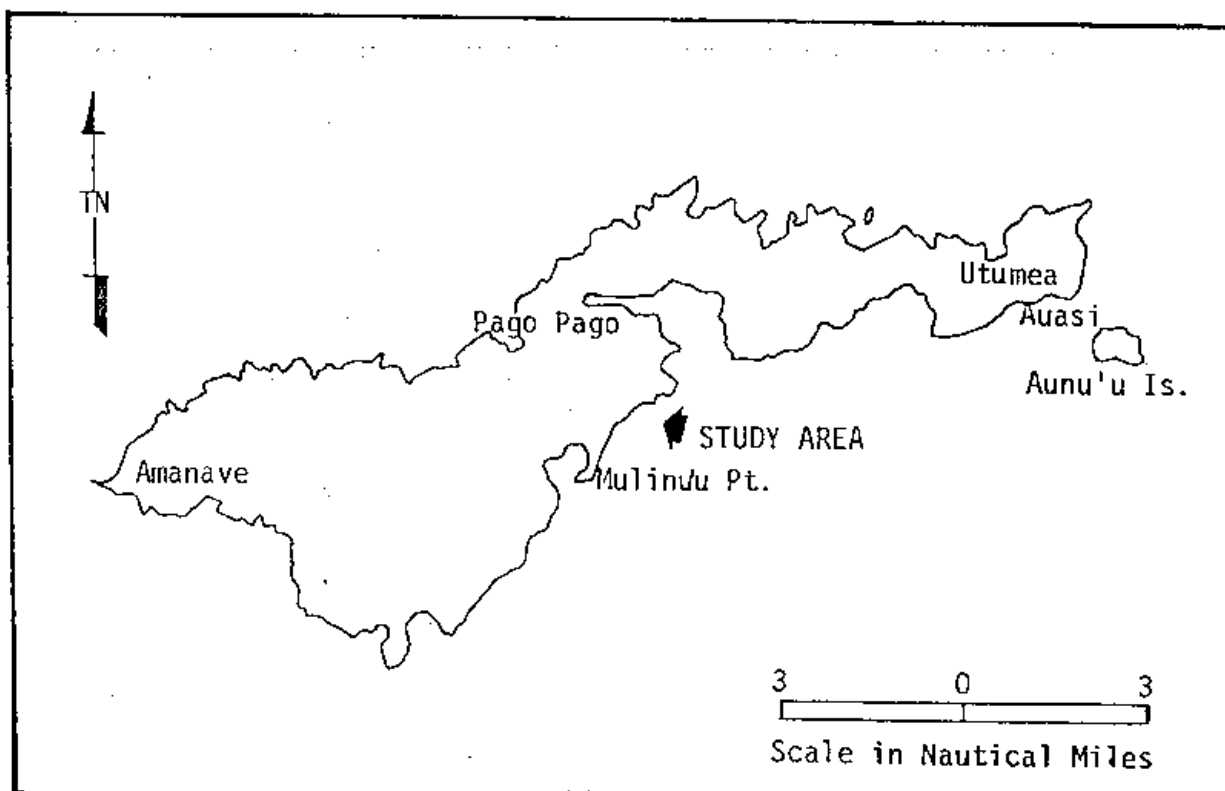


Figure 2
TUTUILA AND AUNU'U ISLANDS

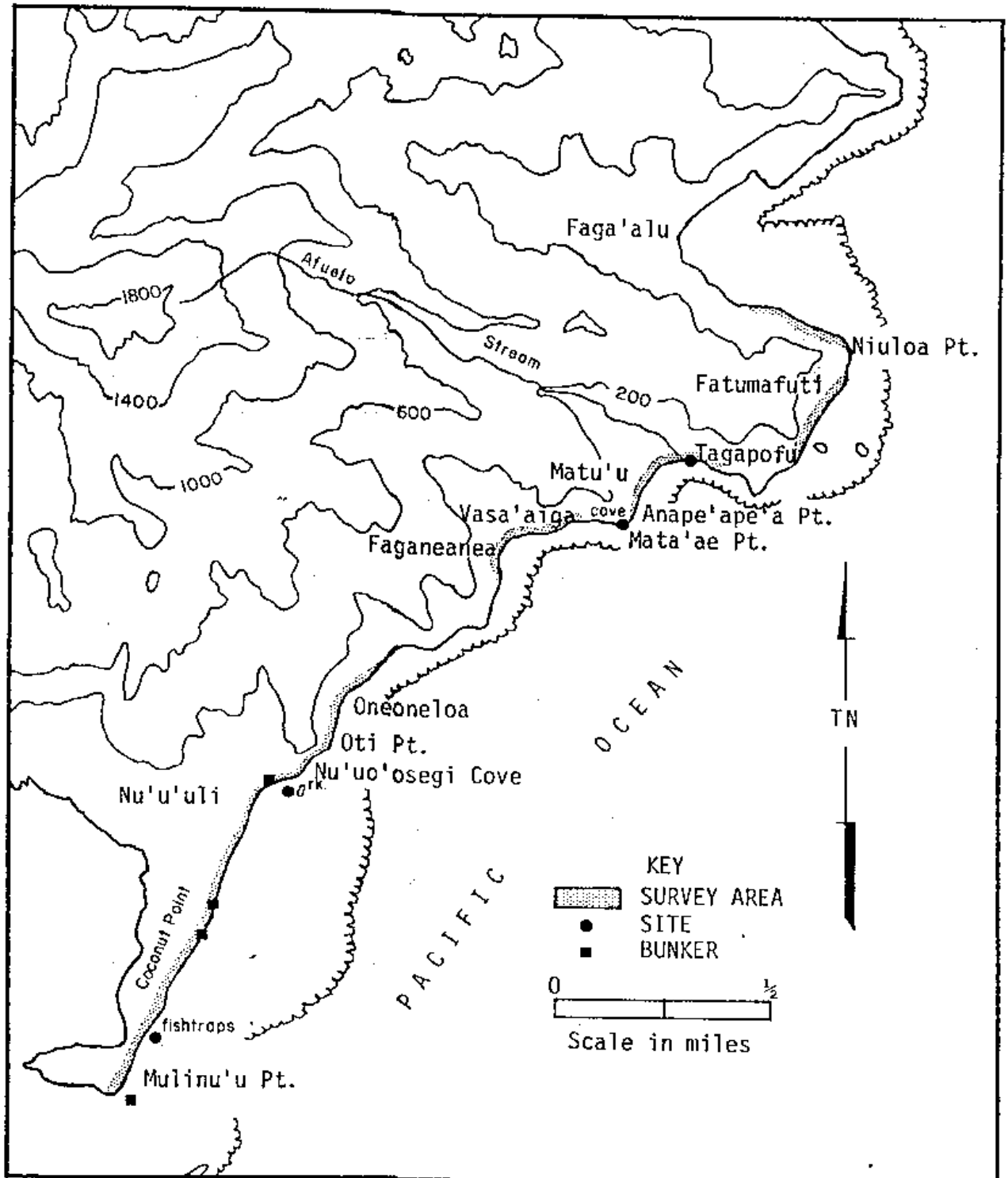


Figure 3
ROAD SECTIONS AND SHORELINE SURVEY AREA

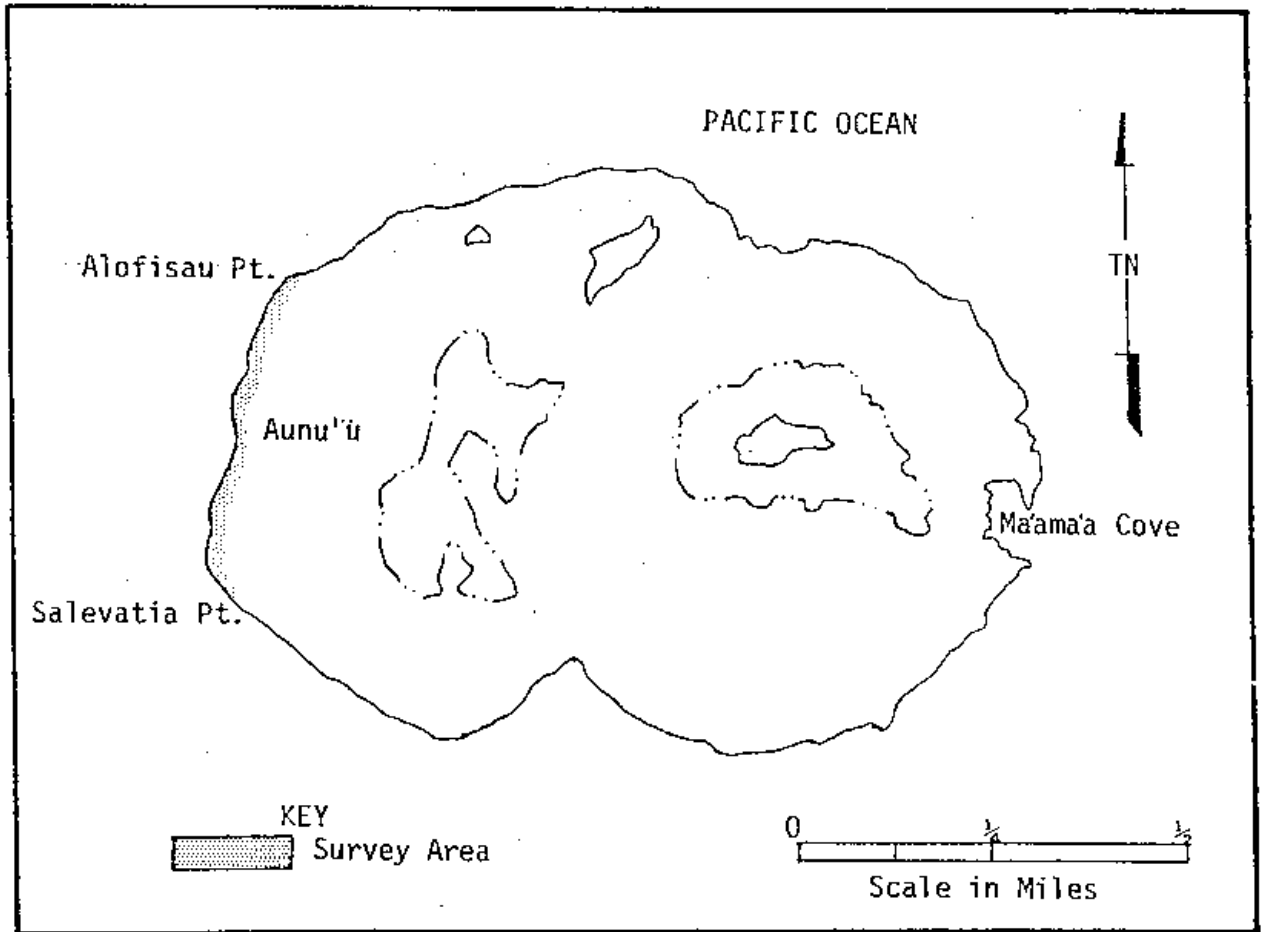


Figure 4
AUNU'U ISLAND

islands that the original Samoan culture is said to be derived.

Peter H. Buck (1930) studied the material culture of Samoa in the late 1920's. In 1960 and 1961, William Kikuchi (1963) conducted fieldwork in American Samoa for his Master's thesis, and in 1962 he worked with Yosihiko Sinoto of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum to complete reconnaissance surveys and archaeological test excavations on Tutuila and Ta'ū Islands. Since then, no archaeological work has been undertaken in the immediate areas with which this report is concerned.

Field Team

The field team was composed of Mr. Stephen L. Palama and Mr. Thomas E. Silva of the Archaeological Research Center Hawaii, Inc., Lawa'i, Hawai'i.

CALENDAR OF FIELDWORK

- July 1, 1975 Palama and Silva arrived at Tutuila, American Samoa.
Met with Mr. Bob Page, Public Works, Government of American Samoa.
Examined road sections at Matu'u and from Fatumafuti to Faga'alu.
- July 2, 1975 Met with Mr. Page, Public Works.
Met with High Chiefs Puailoa and Savusa of Nu'u'uli.
Examined beach erosion at Coconut Point and Nu'u'uli Village.
Examined road sections from Nu'uo'osegi Cove to Faganeanea.
- July 3, 1975 Drove to Auasi Beach (Fig. 2) where they were taken by longboat to Aunu'u Island.
Met with High Chief Lemafa, High Talking Chief Fuiava and Talking Chief Aemaemalo.
Examined southern section of proposed harbor site on Aunu'u Island.
- July 4, 1975 Completed examination of proposed harbor site on Aunu'u Island. Interviewed village people for information about their island and the areas to be affected by the harbor.
Returned to Tutuila.
- July 5, 1975 Examined road section at Vasaaiga. Reexamined road sections from Nu'u'uli to Faga'alu.
- July 6, 1975 Reviewed notes and worked on field maps.
- July 7, 1975 Departed Tutuila for Honolulu and Kaua'i.

RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Methodology

Prior to any fieldwork, a search was made through literary sources for references to any archaeological, historical, or legendary sites or events in or pertaining to: (1) the geographical area of the shoreline from Mulinu'u Point to Faga'alu on Tutuila; and (2) Aunu'u Island. No references were found.

The principle methodology used in this study was the simplest of many types of archaeological surveys, a reconnaissance survey. This involves a simple walk-through search for any sites, including those which might be of archaeological, historical, or cultural value, and then the physical location of these sites on a base map. Reconnaissance surveys do not require detailed site clearing or test excavation of any sites.

Tutuila Survey

The shoreline sections to be surveyed on Tutuila had been adequately marked by Public Works of American Samoa prior to the arrival of the field team. The boundaries of each section were identified by a white numeral enclosed in an orange circle. These were painted directly on the asphalt road on the shoulder closest to the sea.

For survey convenience, the shoreline improvement area was divided into two sections: (1) the shoreline area, or the lands south of the road; and (2) the inland area, or the lands north of and immediately

adjacent to the road. The two members of the field team walked through and closely examined all areas identified in this report.

Shoreline Area

The entire shoreline and beach areas from Mulinu'u Point to Faga'alu (Fig. 3 and Plates 1 through 7) was intensively examined, and the inspection failed to reveal any obvious archaeological features. However, some features of recent historical origin were located and should be noted in this report.

Two cross-shaped fishtraps were observed off Coconut Point (Fig. 3 and Plate 2). These traps extend out from the beach onto the reef flat, one approximately 150 feet (45.72 m) and the other approximately 200 feet (60.94 m). A circular enclosure, approximately 6 feet (1.82 m) in diameter, is attached to each of the three ends of the cross. The traps incorporate modern materials, being constructed of chicken wire mesh hung along upright wooden sticks anchored in the sand and coral on the reef flat. The style is similar to that of fishtraps observed at Apia Harbor in Western Samoa. The fishtraps were discussed with High Chief Savusa of Nu'u'uli Village, who reported that they belonged to people from outside of the village. The traps are no longer in active use.

Retaining walls have been constructed along the shoreline at Nu'u'uli Village in an effort to stop erosion. All of the walls that were observed appeared to be of recent construction. Cement was used as a bonding agent to hold the stacked rocks and coral slabs in place. The inscription "March 1974" was found etched into the cement on the top of one of these walls. Informants from the area reported that most of the

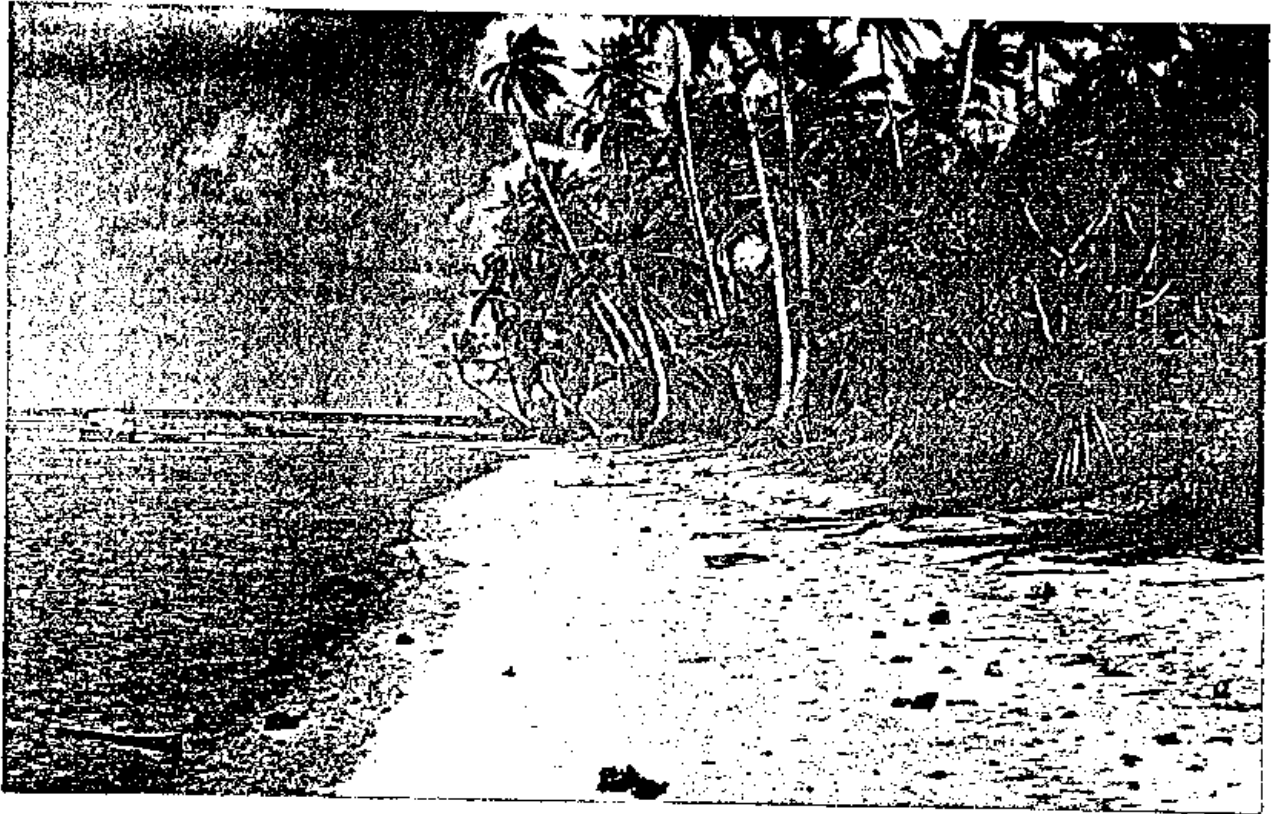


Plate 1
BEACH EROSION, MULINU'U PT.

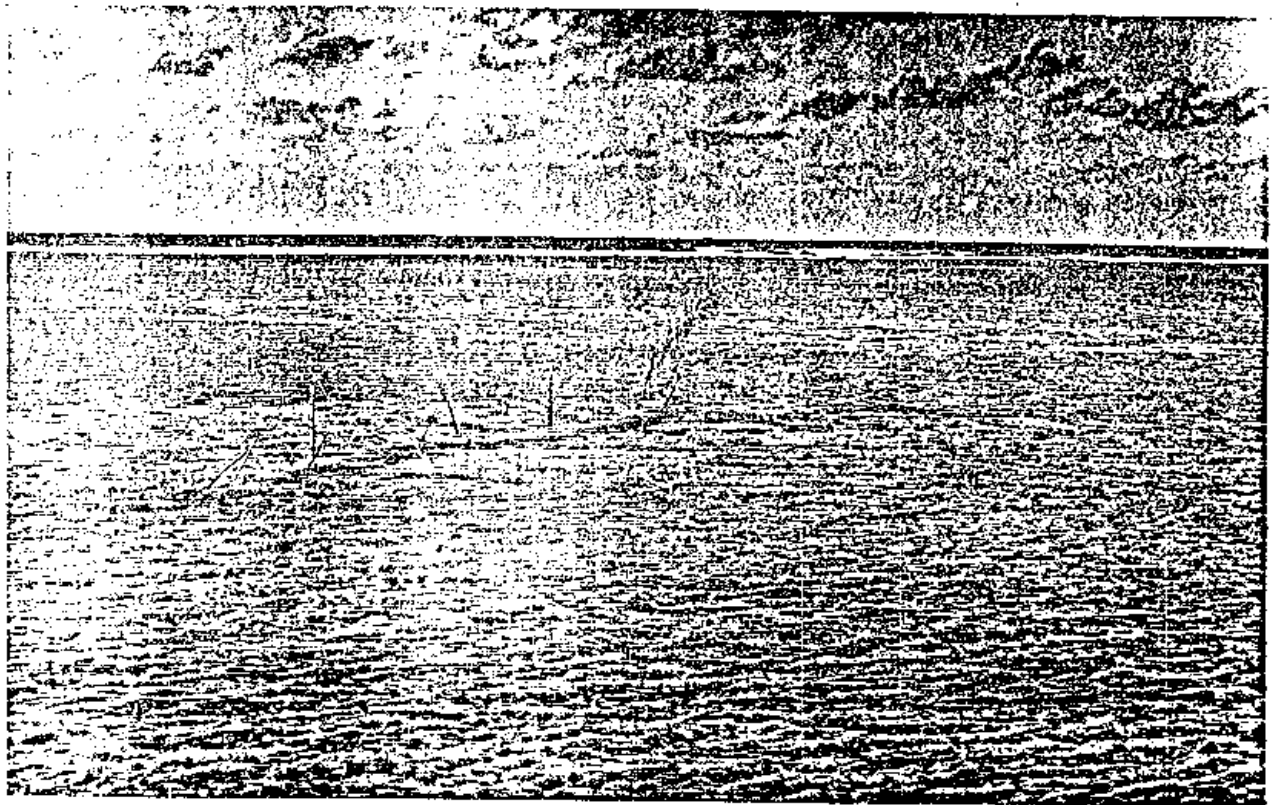


Plate 2
FISHTRAP AT NU'U'ULI

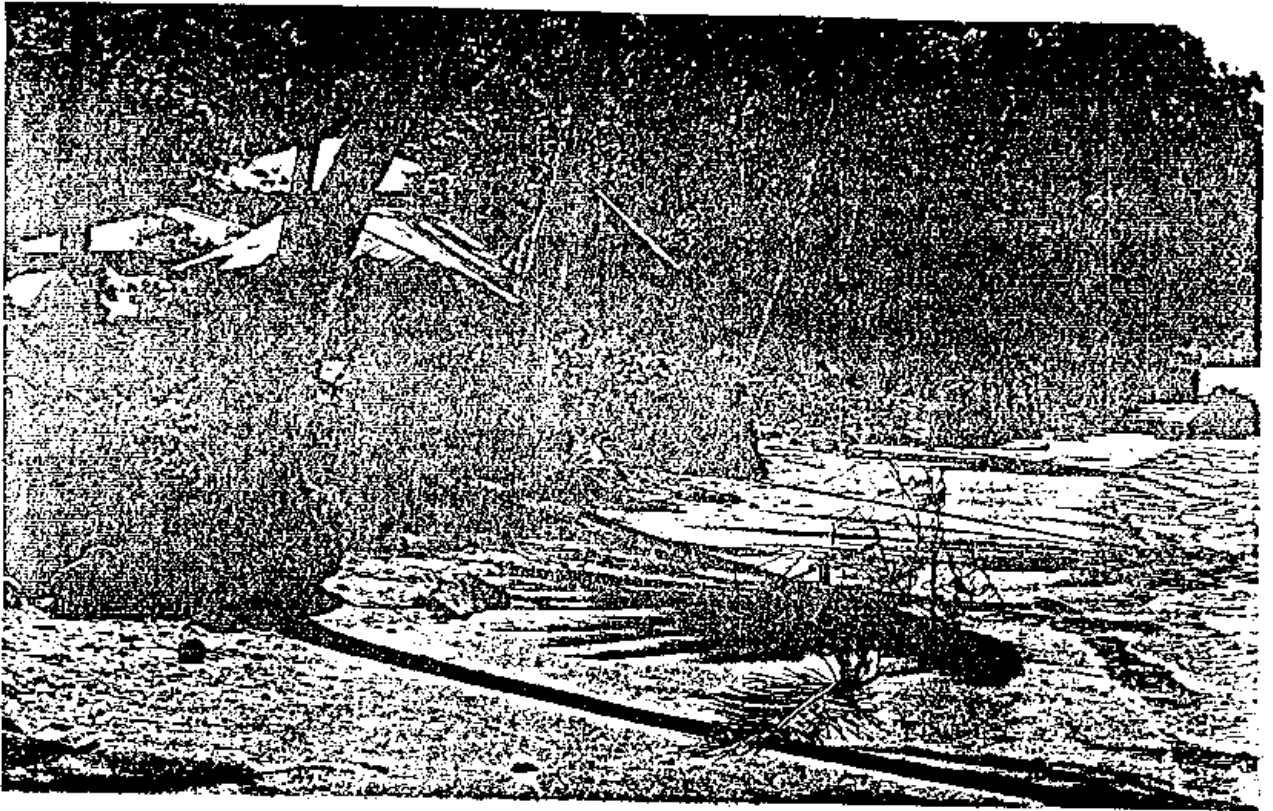


Plate 3
NU'U'ULI VILLAGE

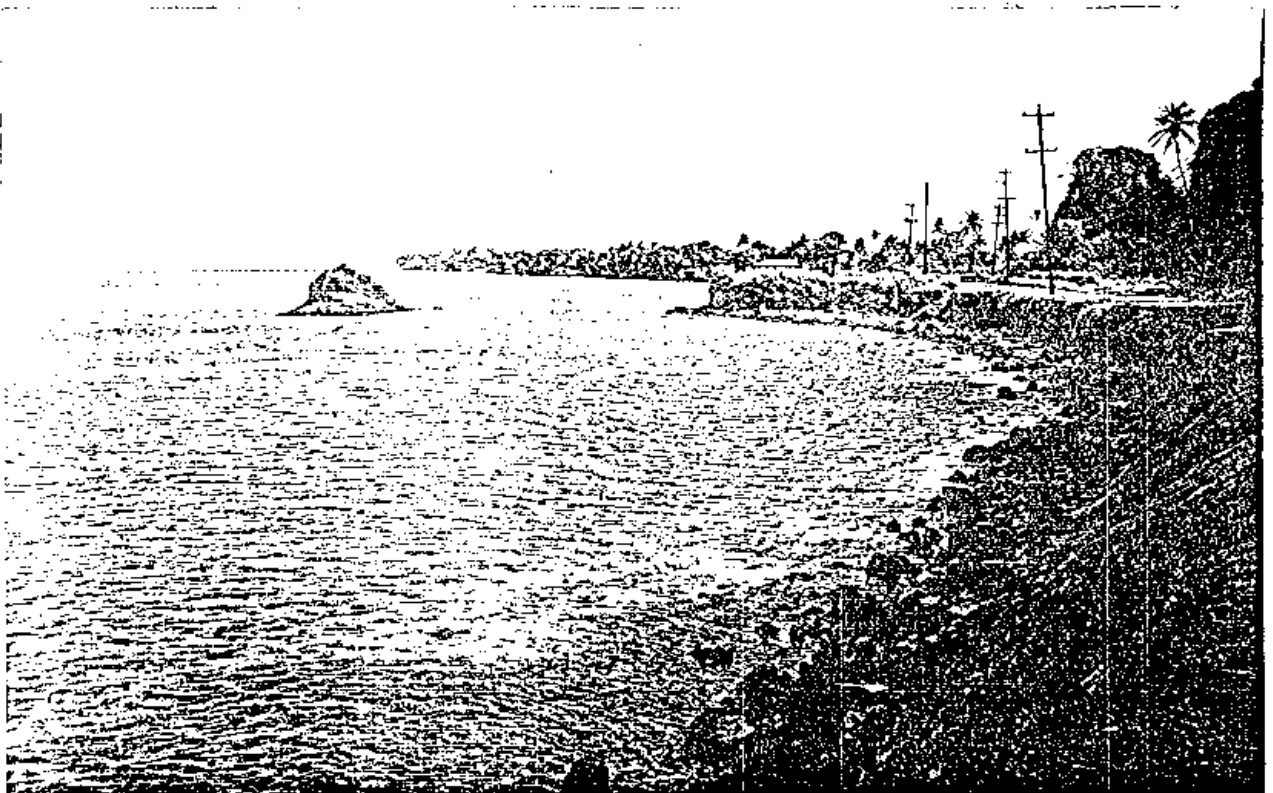


Plate 4
OFFSHORE ROCK AT NU'UO'OSEGI COVE

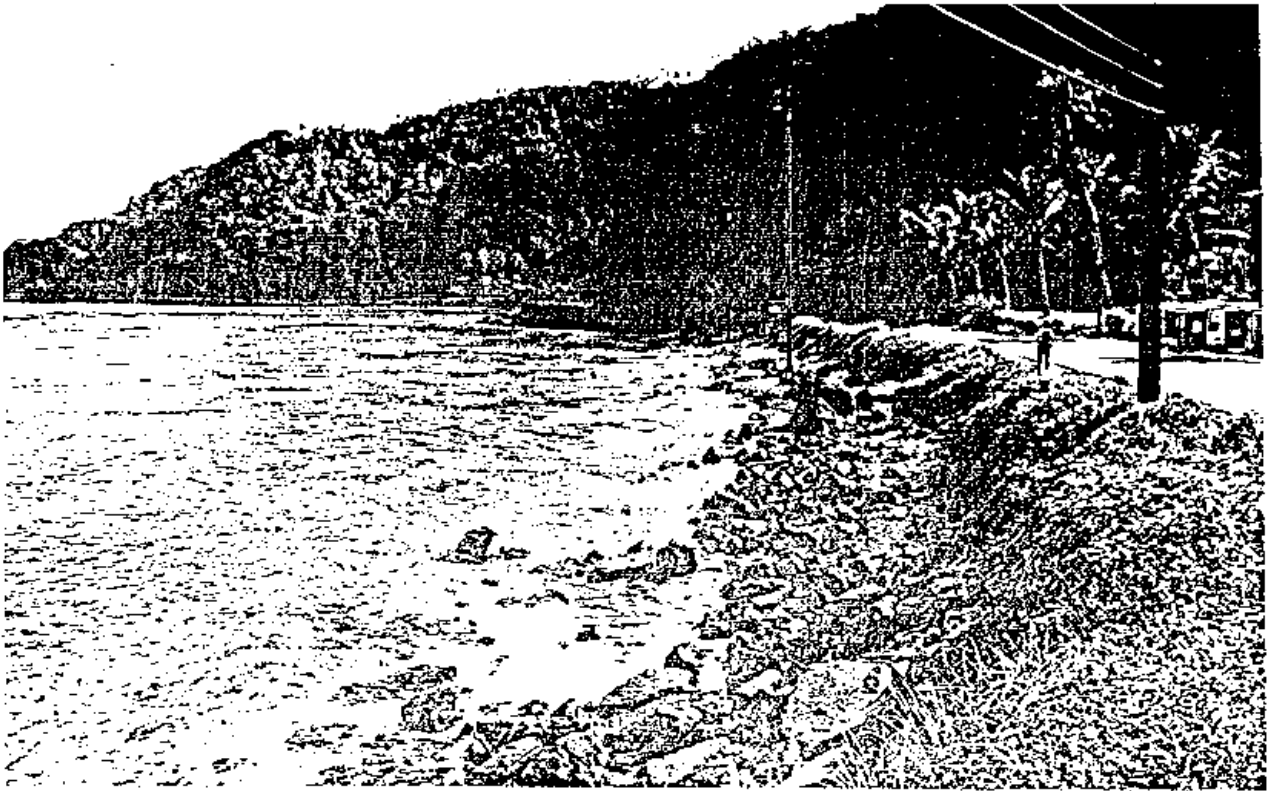


Plate 5
SHORELINE AT VASA'AIGA AND FAGANEANA

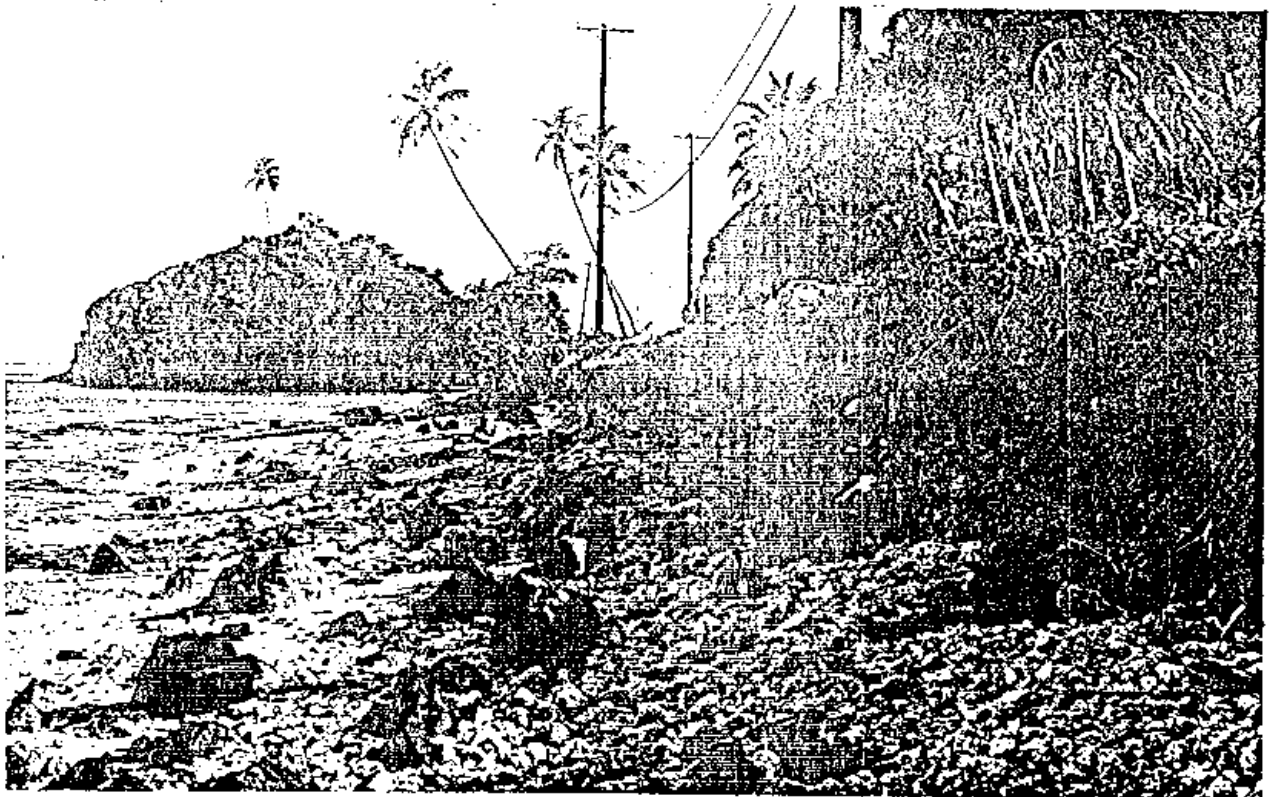


Plate 6
SHORELINE AT FATUMAFUTI

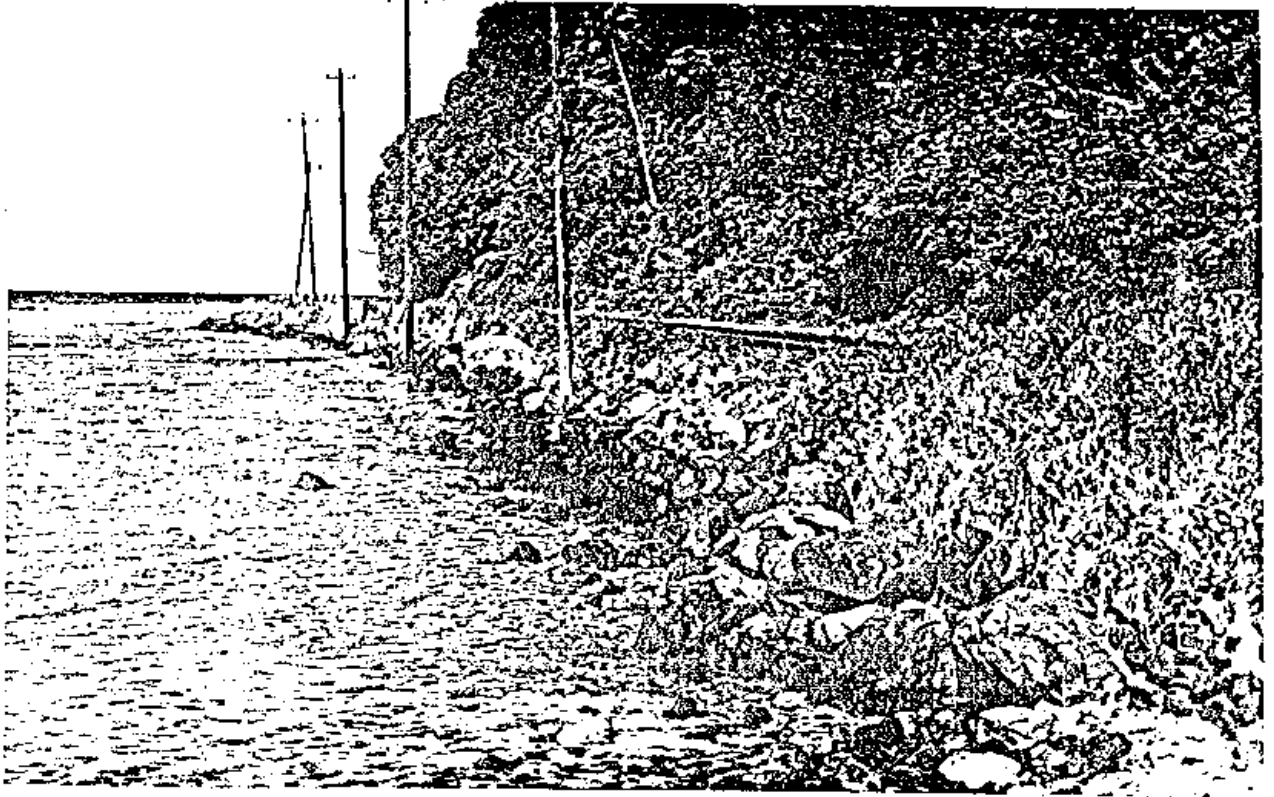


Plate 7
NIULOA POINT SHORELINE

erosion has taken place since the end of World War II. Stark evidence of such erosion may be observed at Mulinu'u Point (Fig. 3 and Plate 1), where concrete bunkers are now found situated twenty feet offshore. When the bunkers originally were built, they were placed on land that then stood above the top bank of the beach.

At Nu'uo'osegi Cove, a small offshore islet is said to contain the burial of a man (Fig. 3 and Plate 4). Stacked rocks were observed at the summit, but the existence of a burial there was not confirmed through archaeological excavations.

At Matu'u, an "L" shaped rock alignment forms a small terrace on the east bank at the mouth of Afuelo Stream (Fig. 3). Construction of the alignment appears to be historically recent and does not represent a style which would be archaeologically significant.

No other features of either positive or suspect archaeological value were located along the shore. If any such site did, in fact, once exist, they probably were destroyed by construction of the present belt road. Previous attempts at shoreline stabilization have also served to obscure any sites of archaeological interest.

Inland Area

The inland survey area extends from Mulinu'u Point in the southwest to Faga'alu in the northeast (Fig. 3). A series of valleys stretches along the coastline, and present in each of these valleys is a village, in which most aspects of Samoan material culture can be observed.

The predominant features of concern in the area are graves, some of which lie very close to the road. It is a common practice in Samoa for

graves to be located adjacent to family dwellings or on family properties (Kikuchi: personal communication 1975). Approximately ten graves were observed in the villages of Fatumafuti, Matu'u, and Faganeanea; others were observed at Nu'u'uili Village, but these should not be affected by the proposed shoreline improvements. All of the graves appear to be historically recent and are well marked.

Many naturally formed caves were observed in the road cuts. Of these, only one cave revealed evidence of human occupation. This large cave lies outside the study area, but its archaeological potential makes it worth mentioning. The cave opening is situated above the road on the southeast side of the cliff at Anape'ape'a Point (Fig. 3). This cave was examined in 1962 by Sinoto and Kikuchi (Emory and Sinoto:1965). Two strata of charcoal were discovered, one at a depth of 8 cm (3.12 inches) and the other at 15 cm (5.85 inches). Smaller charcoal fragments were also recovered from deeper depths. The soil floor extended to a depth of 57 cm (22.23 inches). No other cultural remains were recovered during the test excavation. Anape'ape'a shelter was the only cave found by Sinoto and Kikuchi in American Samoa which yielded evidence of human occupation.

Aunu'u Harbor Survey

The shoreline of Aunu'u Island was examined from Alofisau Point to Salevatia Point (Figs. 4 and 5 and Plates 8, 9, 10, and 11). The survey was aided by locational bench marks placed on the island by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey team. An additional marker designating the southern boundary of the survey area at Salevatia Point could not be

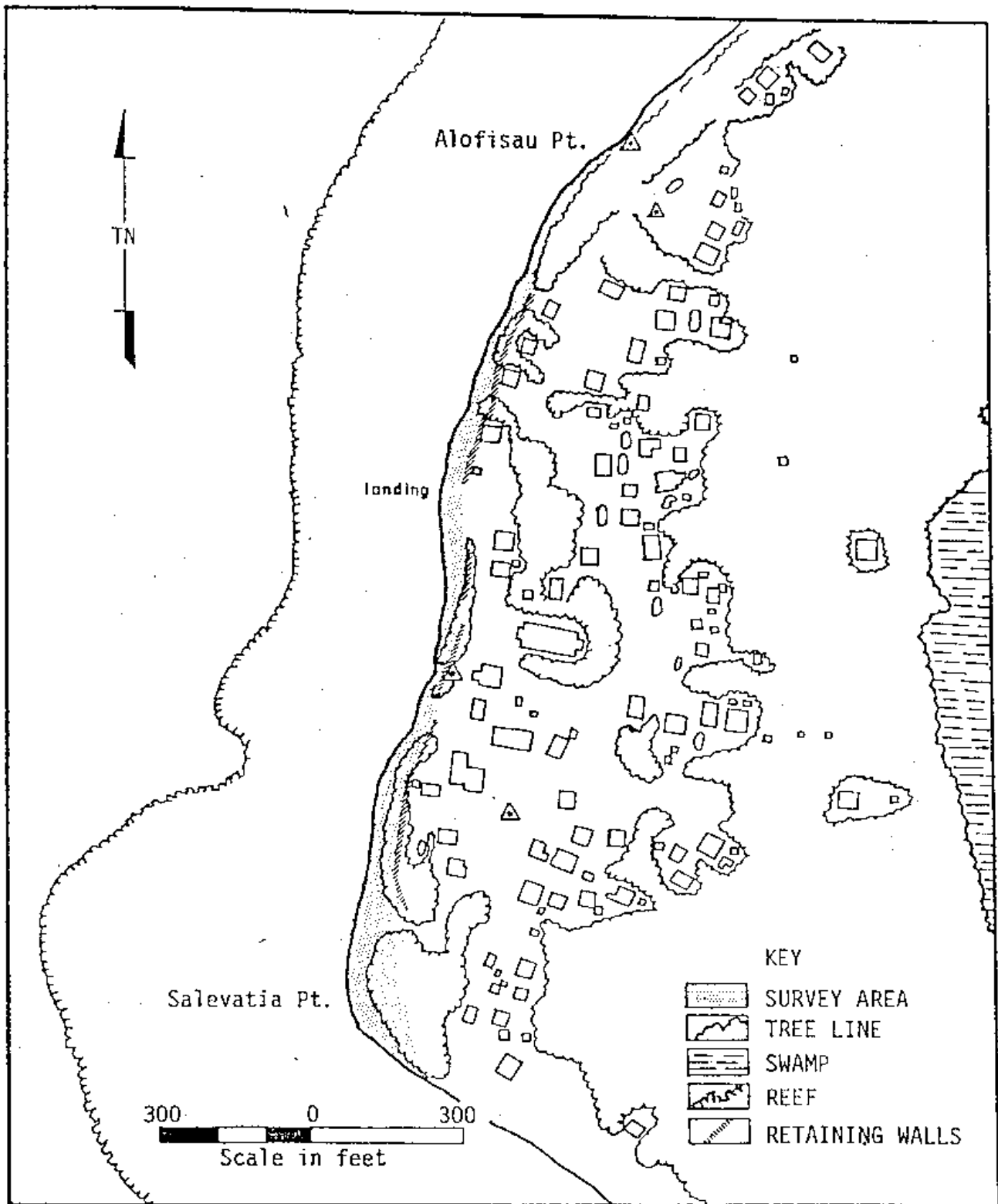


Figure 5
AUNU'U VILLAGE HARBOR SITE

located by the survey team. No sites or features which could be of archaeological interest were noted for the area.

The survey area is situated along the beach area fronting Aunu'u Village (Fig. 5 and Plate 9). The eastern edge of the survey area is bordered by intermittent sections of retaining walls basically oriented in a north-south direction. The walls which lie to the north of the present boat landing are more massive and in a much better state of repair than those walls which are found to the south and which extend almost to Salevatia Point. Flat coral rocks were loosely stacked over a fill, usually consisting of small coral rubble. The average height of the northern section of walls is six feet (1.83 m), while the walls of the southern sections average three feet (0.91 m). During the survey, a village woman was seen stacking rocks onto one section of wall. Dr. Kikuchi has observed that portions of these walls were not present when he visited Aunu'u in 1962. Although there appears to have been more than one phase of construction for these walls, most sections appear to be recent, showing no signs of great antiquity.

High Chief Lemafa pointed out an old family grave site to the survey team. The site is located beyond the limits of the survey area approximately 100 feet (30.48 m) inland from Salevatia Point. The seven graves are poorly marked with each being identified by a single upright coral headstone. No inscriptions or other markings were found on the upright stones. The headstones found closest to the ocean were exposed only two inches (5 cm) above the ground. These appear to have been buried by drifting sand, while those further inland were more visible above the

surface. It is possible that other headstones, identifying graves, exist closer to the shoreline and survey area and have been completely buried by the drifting sand.

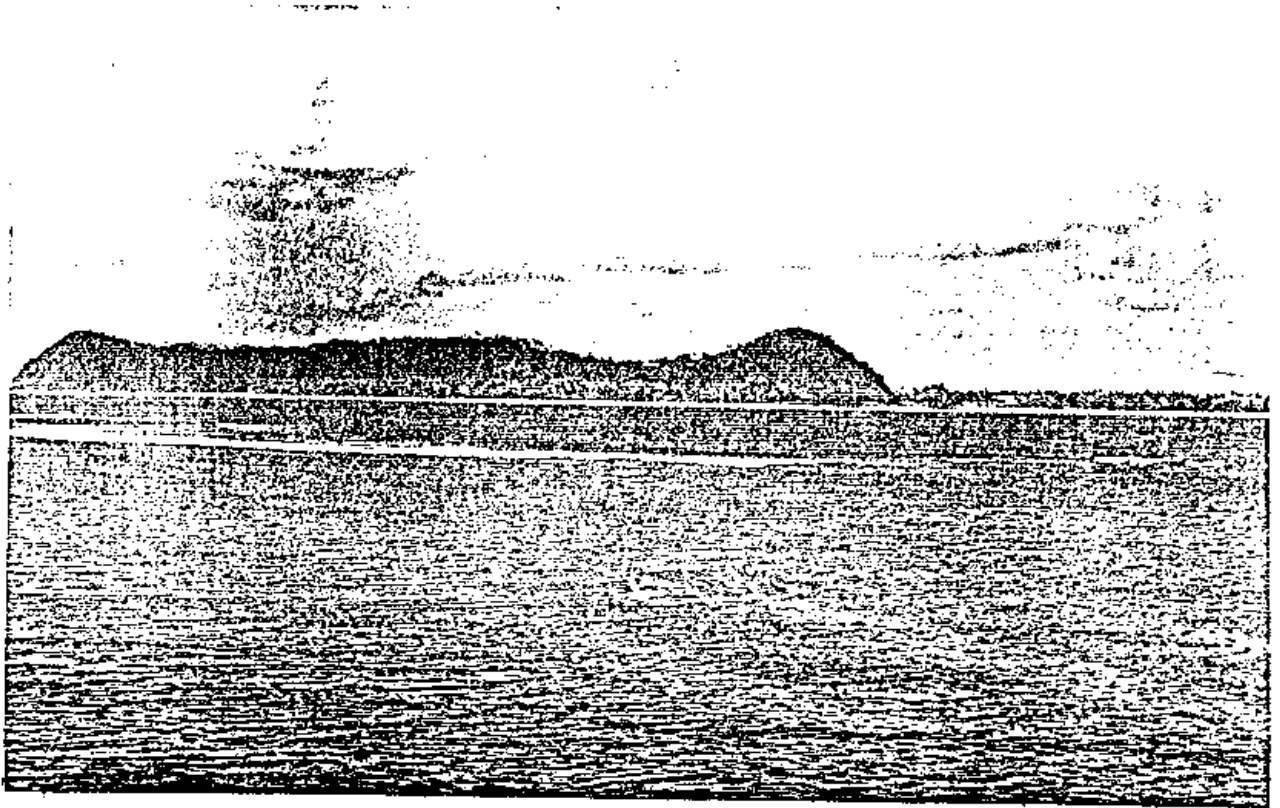


Plate 8
AUNU'U ISLAND



Plate 9
PROPOSED HARBOR SITE, AUNU'U



Plate 10
AUNU'U LANDING

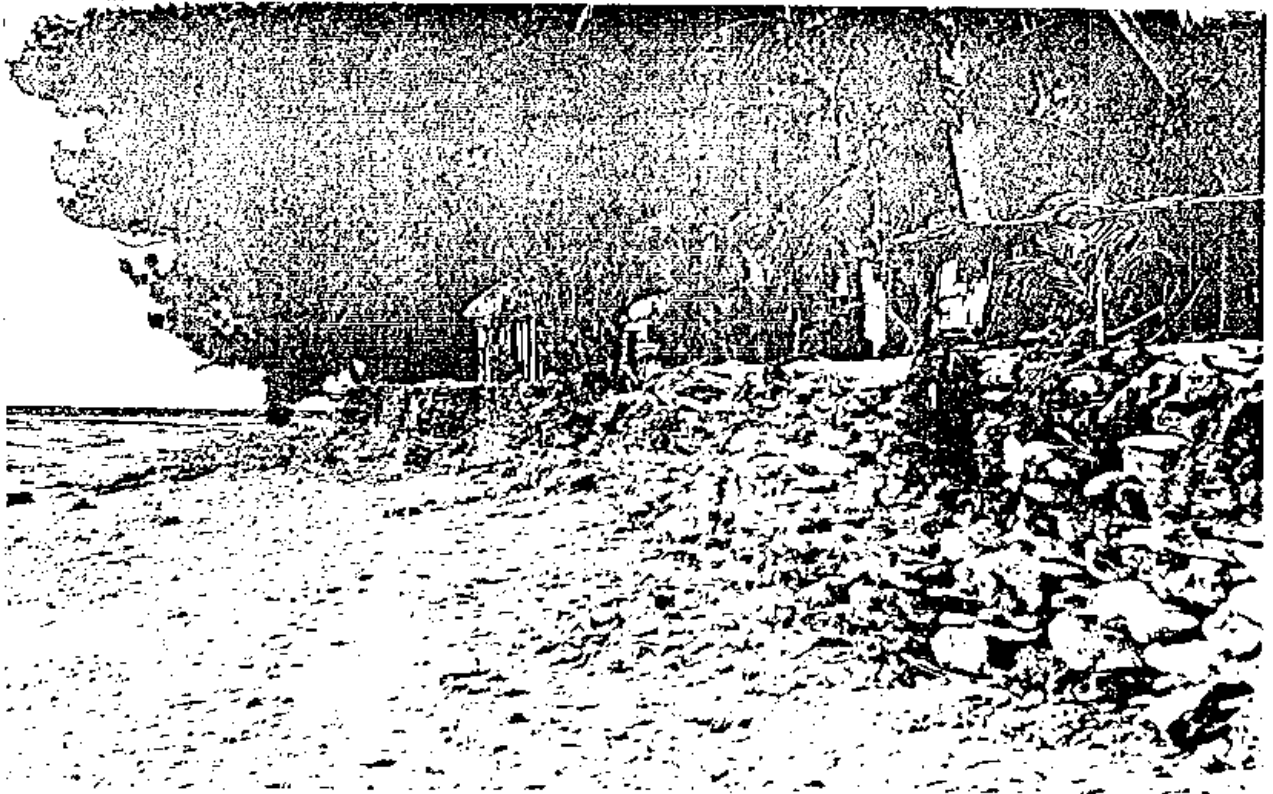


Plate 11
RETAINING WALL, AUNU'U VILLAGE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of this survey of the road sections, shoreline and proposed boat harbor area on Tutuila and Aunu'u, no sites of archaeological, historical or cultural significance were found. However, the following recommendations are presented by the survey team.

It is strongly suggested that great care be taken to insure that modern burials in the inland sections of Tutuila are not disturbed during the shoreline protection project. Further, it is strongly recommended that special precaution be taken to prevent the alteration or destruction of the cave at Anape'ape'a Point on Tutuila Island, because of its research potential. Should this site be threatened by physical change, it is strongly recommended that salvage archaeology first be conducted to retrieve the archaeological, historical and cultural information which might be gained from this site.

GLOSSARY

Alofisau Pt.	Northwest point of land on Aunu'u Island.
Anape'ape'a	Point of land; cave shelter in south central Tutuila.
Auasi	Village in southeast Tutuila.
Aunu'u	Island off the southeast end of Tutuila; name of village on Aunu'u Island.
Faganeanea	Village in south central Tutuila.
Fatumafuti	Village in south central Tutuila.
Mulinu'u Pt.	Southernmost point of land on Coconut Point, Tutuila.
Niuloa Pt.	Point of land in south central Tutuila.
Nu'uo'osegi	Cove in south central Tutuila.
Nu'u'uli	Village on Coconut Point in southern Tutuila.
Oneoneoa	Village in southwest Tutuila.
Pago Pago	Village in central Tutuila; name of harbor in Tutuila.
Salevatia Pt.	Point of land in southwest Aunu'u Island.
Tagapofu	Village in south Tutuila.
Ta'ū	Island in the Manu'a Group of islands; name of village on Ta'u Island.
Tutuila	Largest island in American Samoa.
Vasa'aiga	Village in southwest Tutuila.

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