RE-DEFINING ‘THE BEACH’
THE MUNICIPALITY OF APIA
1879-1900

LEILANI LEAFAITULAGI GRACE BURGOYNE

Throughout the nineteenth century ‘the beach’ was a term used to refer to the five key portside settlements of the Pacific: Honolulu, Pape’ete, Kororāreka, Levuka and Apia. This thesis considers the relationship between the evolution of this concept and the development of the port town community resident at Apia, Samoa. In this pursuit a particular focus has been given to the signing of the 1879 Municipal Convention of Apia. Through the signing of this Convention the space of ‘the beach’ was re-defined as an international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa. In this regard, the port town of Apia was re-defined as both a ‘neutral territory’ and a ‘municipal zone’ and was brought under the jurisdiction of a consular-controlled Municipal Board. In the light of these attempts to ‘control’ the community resident at Apia, this thesis will examine the ways in which the establishment of the Municipality was intimately connected to a desire to re-define both the physical and the ideological landscape of ‘the beach’ at Apia. To illustrate this, particular attention will be given to the concept of ‘the beach’ and its relevance to this community, the establishment of the Municipality, the workings of the Municipal Board, and finally the gradual re-definition of ‘the beach’ that was largely achieved through the relegation of this concept to the past, and the introduction of respectable forms of sociability to Apia. At its heart, therefore, the thesis is concerned with the evolution of an urban space and of a community, and the ways in which its development may be encapsulated within one term – ‘the beach’.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of both my father, William John Edward Burgoyne, and my papa, Edward Francis Oldehaver.

_Requiescent In Pace_
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<tr>
<td>AJCP</td>
<td>Australian Joint Copying Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJHR</td>
<td>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANZ</td>
<td>Archives New Zealand, Wellington</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWMML</td>
<td>Auckland War Memorial Museum Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>British Consul, Apia</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCWP</td>
<td>High Commissioner to the Western Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NML</td>
<td>Nelson Memorial Library, Apia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLA</td>
<td>National Library of Australia, Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMB</td>
<td>Pacific Manuscripts Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLS</td>
<td>Robert Louis Stevenson</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGA</td>
<td>Samoan Government Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>State Library of Victoria</td>
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<td>UDL</td>
<td>University of Delaware Library</td>
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<td>USCD</td>
<td>United States Consular Despatches</td>
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<td>USNA</td>
<td>United States National Archives, Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>WPA</td>
<td>Western Pacific High Commission Archives</td>
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<td>WPHC</td>
<td>Western Pacific High Commission</td>
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GLOSSARY OF SAMOAN WORDS

All definitions have come from G.B. Milner's Samoa Dictionary as well as being supplemented from my own knowledge of the Samoan language. The meanings of words given here are provided primarily with regard to the context in which they appear throughout the thesis.

A'ana A political district in the west of the island of Upolu.

'afakasi A person who is of mixed European and Samoan descent. The term is a transliteration of the European word 'Half-Caste' although in Samoa it has come to take on meanings that are self-defining and distinctive to the experiences of this community. It is generally not used in a derogatory way.

aitu A ghost or spirit.

Ali'i 1) A chief or man of noble birth. 2) A term of respect for a man or a boy. 3) An elderly man.

Amelika United States of America.

Apia 1) The village of Apia. 2) The port town of Apia on the North-West Coast of the island of Upolu.

Atua A political district in the east of the island of Upolu.

ele 'elesā 1) The name given to a certain area of land designated as the Neutral and Municipal territory of Apia during the period 1879-1900. 2) Forbidden or sacred land.

fa'alavelave Anything which interferes with normal life and calls for special activity. (N.B. A wide range of events, ranging from a wedding to a canoe lost at sea is covered by this concept).

fa'alupega Ceremonial style and address of a person or social group traditionally associated with a certain area. This usually includes a specific reference to the most important titles or kin-groups in strict order of precedence.

fa'amasino 1) Judge, magistrate, consular representative. 2) Investigate, inquire, try (before a Judge).

fofō 1) To apply a traditional Samoan medical treatment. 2) A person who is skilled in the application of Samoan medical treatments and massage.
fōma'i  A doctor.
fono  To meet ceremonially or officially.

Itūmālō  Political district.
Lotu Ta’iti  The London Missionary Society.
Lotu Tonga  The Methodist Church.

malaga  1) Ceremonial visit paid according to Samoan custom. 2) Journey, trip.
mālō  1) Prevailing party, power in authority, government. 2) Prevail over an opponent. 3) Success, victory.
matāʻupu  1) Subject, theme. 2) Chapter. 3) Affair, business.
matai  Titled head of a Samoan extended family (formally elected and honoured as such). A high-ranking titleholder.
matai pule  The authority/power exercised by the titled head of a Samoan extended family over a particular area and/or district.

nuʻu  1) Village. 2) Home.
papālagi  1) Foreigner. 2) European, white person.
pitonuʻu  Sub-district, sub-village.
Peretania  Great Britain.
pule  See matai pule (above).

Puletua  Party opposed to (or without a voice in) the government.

Siamani  Germany.
Tuamasaga  The political district that covers central Upolu. Apia is in Tuamasaga.

Tāupou  Title of the village maiden (a position held according to Samoan custom by a virgin singled out for her charm, looks, and manners. Among her duties is the preparation of kava.

vāivai  1) The conquered party. 2) Weak.
INTRODUCTION

BOUNDARIES AND FRONTIERS

Cross-cultural encounters produce boundaries and frontiers. These are spaces, both physical and intellectual, which are never neutrally positioned, but are assertive, contested and dialogic. Boundaries and frontiers are sometimes negotiated, sometimes violent and often are structured by convention and protocol that are not immediately obvious to those standing on either one side or the other.


Encased by a sweeping reef, two dashing freshwater rivers and a towering mountain, the bay of Apia, on the north coast of the island of Upolu, Samoa, has seduced many a traveller. As a young New Zealand-born ‘afakasi’ Samoan I used to dream of Apia. I would listen to my nana and papa, their stories of Lelata (our family land) just outside of ‘town’, of their picnics, the shop on the waterfront, the picture theatre, and would try to envisage this far-away place. Our family has always existed on the ‘frontier’. We are a product of Samoa’s interaction with the ‘outside world’ – we are ‘afakasi’. The ‘assertive, contested and dialogic’ is our reality, and we live it.¹

From the great depths of the Pacific we were born out of the crossroads that merged the indigenous ‘us’ and the foreign ‘them’. At the intersection of this crossroads lay the port towns of Honolulu, Pape’ete, Levuka, Kororāreka and Apia. These were urban phenomena born out of an intense, erratic, and

extremely complicated meshing of cross-cultural ideologies, belief systems, traditions and ideals. At each of these places could be found ‘the beach’. This was a term of reference that was used interchangeably to describe both the novel process of urbanisation, occurring along the shoreline of each port, and the multifarious communities that resided within it.

While this process of change spread rapidly, and encompassed the whole Pacific, its characteristics, physical, spiritual, and otherwise, were to become most evident at the intersections, the crossroads. Foreign sailing ships had specific needs, the foremost of them being a safe sheltered anchorage. Secondary to this, but significant in determining whether an anchorage was to become a ‘port’, was the availability of fresh water, fruit and vegetables, and ample firewood. During the early years of the nineteenth century, the popularity of an anchorage was also dependent on its proximity to what became known as the ‘trans-Pacific arc of the Japan whaling grounds’. Along the coasts of the Pacific Islands, these ships scouted for suitable anchorages to fulfil these basic needs. Upon coming ashore they transcended existing boundaries and created new ones. It was from this engagement that the Pacific ‘port’ essentially made the Pacific ‘township’; a phenomenon which, in the contemporary context, has become an ‘ethnically integral part of the Pacific scene’.

In this regard, this thesis is concerned with the development and evolution of one community and space that came to be known as ‘the beach’ at Apia. More specifically, it seeks to engage with an attempt to re-define and control both this community and this space through the establishment in 1879 of an

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international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa. Each chapter is designed to contribute to and shed light on the ways in which the discourse of ‘the beach’ at Apia and the establishment of this Municipality in 1879 were integral to the evolution of this port town community. It will also endeavour to shed light on the extent to which both the historical processes of urbanisation in the region, and the day-to-day politics which guided the dynamics of these port town communities, have received little scholarly attention from Pacific historiography at large.

In addressing these silences, this chapter is set out in three distinct ways. Firstly, I will address ‘the beach’. As the following chapter will demonstrate, ‘the beach’ was a multifaceted term of reference employed throughout the nineteenth century in the Pacific. It was a term that came to take on a wide-range of connotations and meanings and it was used at different times in a multitude of contexts. Similarly to the use of the phrase ‘the South Seas’, ‘the beach’ was employed in a manner that was not so much about geographical positioning but rather about particular forms of behaviour and understandings associated with living in the Pacific.\(^7\) With this in mind, this chapter, the introduction, will address the complexity that presents itself in consideration of the active role that twentieth-century authors and historians have undertaken in constructing and maintaining the subject of ‘the beach’. Through addressing these constructions of ‘the beach’ the chapter will then move on to examine the silences that exist within Pacific historiography with regard to the urban settler experiences of the nineteenth-century Pacific.

Finally, the chapter will reflect on my own role as an active participant in the construction of this history and on the ethical/methodological issues encountered in the course of my research. Thence, in conclusion the chapter will provide the contextual platform from which the rest of the thesis will extend, with

a broad discussion of the key events leading up to the establishment of the township of Apia itself, while also posing the research agenda from which the following chapters will precede.

From here, chapter one, which is titled ‘The Beach’ will explore the complex nature of this term and the ways in which it evolved throughout the course of the nineteenth century. In this regard, a particular focus will be given to the connotations attached to beachcombing in the Pacific and the ways in which these were then applied to the beach communities. More specifically, also, the growth and development of the urban space at Apia will be examined with a particular focus on the ways in which the eclectic community that resided there came to be identified as ‘the beach’.

Following on from this, chapter two, which is titled ‘Re-defining the Beach: the Establishment of the Municipality of Apia’, will examine the immediate events and politics that allowed for the signing of the Apia Municipal Convention of 1879. In this pursuit, particular examination will be given to the ways in which the signing over of Apia, as an international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa, allowed for an implicit encroachment upon the matai pule at the bay. In essence, this chapter is concerned with locating the establishment of the Municipality as an extremely significant event within the context of Samoan history. This is particularly so given the fact that it allowed for the re-definition of the physical space of the township, through the sectioning off of Apia as an extra-territorial district, and also made way for the establishment of a consular-controlled Municipal Board.

Next, chapter three, which is titled ‘Control of ‘the Beach’: the Municipal Board of Apia’ will examine the establishment and workings of the Apia Municipal Board. In this manner, the chapter will explore the relationship between the workings of the Board together with the second function of the Municipal Convention, which was to bring order and control to ‘the beach’. With this in mind, a particular focus will be given to the attempted implementation of this
agenda through the issuing of a series of Municipal Regulations throughout the period and the ways in which they were consistently challenged from within the community. Through this examination, the chapter will outline the extent to which the primary function of the Municipal Board was to lay challenge to control the connotations of disreputability and degeneration that had come to be associated with living on ‘the beach’ in the Pacific.

With this in mind chapter four, which is titled ‘A Dawn of Quasi-Respectability’, will examine the later years of the Municipal Era and the introduction of ‘respectable’ forms of sociability to the port town. In this endeavour, a particular focus will be given to the activities and writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, during the early years of the 1890s, and the ways in which, as a ‘beach leader’, he actively sought to re-define the idea of ‘the beach’. In this manner, the final chapter places the attempts that came from within the community, as well as the official attempts being made by the Municipal Board, alongside of each other. It will demonstrate the extent to which the eventual re-definition of ‘the beach’, through the bringing about of a ‘dawn of quasi-respectability’, may be attributed to a range of informal attempts that came from within the community, and which, in conjunction with the official workings of the Municipal Board, helped to shape the identity of the community of Apia. While at the same time this process allowed for the relegation of the idea of ‘the beach’ to a particular cohort of non-conformists within this community, who were actively excluded from respectable occasions.

In conclusion, the final chapter, ‘From the lights of Apia and into limbo’, will reflect on the findings put forward in the preceding sections. In this manner it will also reflect on the idea of ‘the beach’ and the extent to which this theoretical framework casts light on the contested and malleable nature of Pacific History. The chapter will conclude with a consideration of the ways in which the urban experience of the nineteenth-century Pacific was multifaceted and how the idea of ‘the beach’ as a methodological tool allows the contradictions and ambiguities that are inherent in Pacific History to shine through.
The first port of any significance, in the Pacific, was that of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, Hawai'i. Geographically the harbour was ideal for the flood of trade vessels that began to frequent the bay from the 1790s onwards.\(^8\) Endowed with a safe sheltered anchorage that easily catered to deep draught vessels and conveniently stocked with an abundance of essential replenishments the town quickly grew from a bustling portside village into a town of marked size. At the heart of this development, lay a renegotiation and revision of old boundaries, fixed ideals and the establishment of new ones. Capitalist expansion into the Pacific brought with it alien sets of value systems and a plethora of introduced cultural paradigms. While many of the ships and crewmen pervaded the bay only temporarily, their long term impact in providing the impetus for this fledgling township to flourish is indisputable. Whether they came for fur, sandalwood, whale blubber, or sugar, what they left behind them had more of a lasting impact than anything that they could have taken out.\(^9\)

Out from Honolulu this process began to spread steadily with urbanisation gradually, if unevenly, coming to most island groups. Heading south lone ships skirted the islands, surveying and evaluating suitable anchorages for future visits. At each anchorage and with each beach crossing they contributed to a growing momentum of change and division.\(^10\) And through this process a conceptualization and growing awareness of the ‘other’ was cemented on both sides of ‘the beach’. In Samoa, the foreigners were given the name *Papālagi*, a collective term which signified difference, and referred in a literal sense to their initially seeming to have burst through the sky, or through heaven. In turn the newcomers referred to us as *The Navigators*; a name which gained little currency

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\(^8\) The first vessels to call into Honolulu for provisions were engaged with the North-Western Fur Trade (1785-1825) which was concerned with obtaining sea-otter pelts from the North Western Coast of America to trade at Canton for goods such as tea, spices, porcelain, and silk. This trade was closely followed by the whalers (1789-1870) who were to have the biggest long-term impact by creating a viable market, throughout the Pacific, for provisions trades. The first whaler to enter the Pacific was the *Amelia* in 1789. See, Ernest S. Dodge, *New England and the South Seas*, Cambridge, 1965.


in Samoa itself. 11 The primary evidence of this may be seen in the fact that only one name was to prevail in Samoa, and that was the name given to her by her forefathers. 12 This is not to deny, however, that Samoans have been (and continue to be) active participants in the ‘making’ and ‘remaking’ of ourselves, just as we have been active in forging our own constructions of papālagi ‘otherness’ and opposition. Although, arguably, it was during the nineteenth century that these processes of naming, and defining ourselves, our others, and (in particular) the urban space at Apia (within which the two came together) that this process came to take on a politicized character. The culmination of this was to lead to a re-definition of this space into an international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa, in the year 1879. That evolutionary process is the primary focus of this thesis.

As cultural entrance and exit points the Pacific Island port towns of the nineteenth century were contestable sites of power and identity. These were the spaces upon which the structures of ‘otherness’ and of binary opposition were simultaneously constructed and dismantled on a regular basis to allow for the survival of the community. Arguably, it is within these spaces, where ambiguity and ambivalence were the rule of the day, that Pacific historians are able to gain a rich insight into the many factors that came together to ensure the functioning of these multicultural communities. Central to this thesis, then, is the assertion that the processes behind the establishment of these communities did not permeate our shores with ‘unitary totality’ but rather were characterized by a vast unevenness and erratic dispersion.13 In this way, any understanding of what this meant for ‘us’ and ‘them’ can only be achieved through an examination of the

11 Upon sighting the Samoan islands in 1769 the French explorer Louis de Bougainville originally gave the archipelago the name ‘Small Cyclades’ but soon changed this to the Navigators Isles. John Dunmore, Storms and dreams: Louis de Bougainville: soldier, explorer, statesman, Auckland, 2005, p.190.
‘plural and particularized expressions’ of colonialism, in the Pacific, which were paramount at the portside settlements.14

Comparatively, the township of Apia developed relatively later than any of the other key Pacific Island port towns established during the nineteenth century. By 1823, for example, when significant numbers of ships were just beginning to frequent Apia bay, Pape’ete was already considered to be ‘a metropolis of the South Pacific’, and similarly Honolulu had a permanent foreign population of between 80 and 100.15 The first group of foreigners to settle in Samoa, the beachcombers, was made up of deserters, run away convicts, and ship wreck survivors.16 Upon a visit to Apia in the early years of the 1850s a traveller, J. D’Ewes, gave the following description of the township:

The white resident population, comprising store-keeper and other, might amount to about fifty individuals, but several whalers and other vessels were generally at anchor in the bay. The Americans and English were divided by a small river that flowed into the bay, making a line of demarcation between their respective dwellings, and formed quite separate communities.17

From D’Ewes’ estimate and similar estimates given during this period it is likely that up until the 1860s, at least, the port town’s resident population did not extend far beyond fifty in number. Nonetheless, by the time of the establishment of the Municipality of Apia in 1879, this number appears to have increased markedly. This may be ascertained from the first Municipal Census published in the Samoa Times in February 1880 which stated that at this time, there were living at Apia:

14 Thomas, p.x.
16 The influence of the beachcombers in Samoa and the early establishment of the port of Apia are discussed at length in the following chapter with regard to ‘the beach’.
31 Americans [including 1 ‘afakasi], 27 Germans, 43 British subjects [which included three ‘afakasi and three Chinese], 5 Spanish/Portuguese, 2 French, 12 Chinese [not including those listed as British subjects], 5 Tahitians, 1 Hawaiian and 50 Niueans.¹⁸

From these statistics it becomes apparent that by 1880 there were approximately 176 foreign men resident at Apia, with most of the Europeans coming from Great Britain, Germany and the United States. Notably, in the same edition of the Samoa Times, a further list of ‘special licenses’ granted by the Municipal board for the first quarter of that year gives further indication of the kind of business enterprises that some of these men were involved in, and through a perusal of the list it becomes apparent that many of the key occupational activities, were centred around providing goods and services to the visiting ships.¹⁹

Figure 1: Town and harbour of Apia on the Island of Upolu, Navigator Group, South Pacific. (ca 1867) C-036-005, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

¹⁸ ‘Census List of Foreigners Residing in the Municipality of Apia’, Samoa Times, 7 February 1880, pp.1-2. This census identified foreign residents by name, as well as by nationality. This information has been transcribed and may be found in Appendix F. It is likely that the Niueans accounted for in this census came to Samoa as indentured labourers under the DHPG. See, Gordon R. Lewthwaite, ‘Land, Life and Agriculture to Mid-Century’, in James W. Fox & Kenneth B. Cumberland (eds) Western Samoa: land, life and agriculture in tropical Polynesia, Christchurch, 1962, p.142. For similar statistics see, Jack R. Hughs, ‘The Samoa Express Post Office, 1877-1882’, in Richard Burge (ed.) A Postal History of the Samoan Islands, Wellington, 1987, p.37.

¹⁹ For a discussion of this license system see Chapter III, p.95.
By the 1880s the foreign community resident at Apia was cosmopolitan in both ethnicity and commercial enterprise, and to large extent had earned its reputation as being of ‘a most mixed character’. This was a reputation which was to be further cemented by the fact that the urban settlement, itself, was of an inherently eclectic make-up, having been cobbled together along ‘the beach’ from coral, adobe, and sand. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that it was from this natural landscape that the community came to take on its own identity, a process which will be the primary concern of the following chapter. What are perhaps not so apparent are the historical processes of textualisation during the twentieth century which have come together to shape contemporary perceptions and understandings of the Pacific beach communities.

In this regard, questions remain as to writing of ‘the beach’ throughout the twentieth century in recent Pacific Island historiography. Of particular note in this regard, is the work of Greg Dening. In his engagement with alternative methodologies of writing, constructing, and experiencing ‘History’, Dening has employed ‘the beach’ as a twentieth-century metaphor. Similarly, to the way in which ‘the beach’ evolved as a multifaceted term of reference in the nineteenth century, Dening’s construction of ‘the beach’ is intricate and complex. First and foremost, ‘the beach’ for Dening is a ‘metaphor’ as well as a real and lived space upon which his histories have been experienced and played out. In his seminal work, Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land Marquesas 1774-1880, he writes:

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20 W.K. Bull, Trip to Tahiti and other islands in the South Seas, Melbourne, 1858, p.23.
"Islands and beaches' is a metaphor for the different ways in which human beings construct their worlds and for the boundaries that they construct between them. It is a natural metaphor for the oceanic world of the Pacific where islands are everywhere and beaches must be crossed to enter them or leave them, to make them or change them. But the islands and beaches that I speak of are less physical than cultural. They are the islands men and women make by the reality they attribute to their categories, their roles, their institutions, and the beaches they put around them with their definitions of 'we' and 'they'.

Dening’s metaphor has little to do with the specific ways in which ‘the beach’ as a term of reference, was used throughout the nineteenth century to refer to the urban settlements of the Pacific. On the other hand, it has much to do with the ways in which historians, in the twentieth century have come to engage with the ‘past’. Dening’s construction of ‘the beach’ and his employment of this metaphor in his writing has been hugely influential in reinvoking the concept of ‘the beach’ as a valid and specifically Pacific metaphor which carries with it inherent ambiguity and ambivalence. This is made particularly apparent in his use of the metaphor of ‘the beach’ as ‘a double-edged space, in-between; an exit space that is also an entry space; a space where edginess rules’, a conceptualisation which recalls the mixedness and state of being ‘in-between’ which was characteristic of all of the urban port town communities of the nineteenth-century Pacific.

Dening’s beach does not end here, however. It encompasses this edginess, this double-edgedness in every experience, every life recounted, retold, and reconstructed. In his writing, Dening bears out his belief in the fact that:

22 Greg Dening, Beach Crossings: Voyaging across times, cultures and self, Melbourne, 2004, p.16.
Words, hold their future, their present, and their past within them. They swallow time like black holes. And when words carry space as well as time - giving identity to self and other - boundaries are just as blurred. In words, both memory and identity are fluent.  

Consequently, Dening establishes a basis upon which ‘the beach’ as a metaphor is able legitimately to supersede its own future, present, and past, and be reconstructed, remoulded with each new text, each new word, each unique experience recounted. In this way, ‘the beach’ as Dening’s metaphor becomes characteristically universal in essence as well as meaning. Through its continual state of existing in-between, Dening’s metaphor of ‘the beach’ refuses to be pinned down and is also, in consequence, unable to be tied overtly to its own textual lineage, which explains, in part, its apparent disconnection from its own nineteenth-century origins.

Moreover, in his resuscitation of ‘the beach’ as a viable metaphor through which the past may be engaged with and the liminal nature of the historical project captured, Dening has also invoked counter-constructions in the form of conversations related to ‘the beach’ which have come to take on literary and historical functions of their own. Take for example the following dialogue written in response to him by the editors of the book *Exploration & Exchange: A South Seas Anthology, 1680-1900*:

As beaches differed with indigenous polities that attempted to structure the terms of interactions, so they did too with varying groups of Europeans, who from the beginning of the nineteenth century sought more than peripheral interaction, aspiring rather to install themselves on the landward side of the beach, and to impose terms of trade....Although intrusions were nothing if not uneven, it becomes inappropriate to speak of a beach, since we can no longer postulate a scene of liminality situated between cultures that retain integrity. This is not to suggest that the distinctiveness of indigenous culture collapses with colonial government and that there is no longer

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a domain of practice beyond interaction. It is rather to acknowledge the limits of the spatial and topographical metaphor itself.26

Through the very act of writing and engaging with Dening’s beach, these editors themselves, among many others, become twentieth-century protagonists in a continual reconstruction and re-conceptualisation of ‘the beach’. Moreover, as they so aptly state, the use of ‘the beach’ as a metaphor is, as are all metaphors, constrained by its own limits. Nonetheless, similarly to the silence that exists in Dening’s own employment of ‘the beach’, this counter-construction, too, does little in addressing the existence, on the landward side of ‘the beach’, of an urban beach discourse which evolved during the previous century on its own terms. That is, one which evolved within the port town communities and which encompassed both the foreign and the indigenous as a community that existed ‘in-between’.

Importantly, though, while Dening is the most prolific commentator on ‘the beach’, he is nonetheless not alone in his historical reconstruction of ‘the beach’ in the twentieth century. With regard to the writing of Apia and Samoa, in particular, ‘the beach’ has played a key role in allowing for the articulation and construction of historical narrative. The foremost example of this may be seen, in the writing of R.P. Gilson, whose tome, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, is generally held to be the key source with regard to gaining any understanding of ‘Samoa’s entry into the modern world’, despite the criticism that it ‘rates higher in research than in readability’.27 In *Samoa 1830 to 1900* ‘the beach’ first appears in Gilson’s chapter on the ‘Foreign Settlement at Apia Bay’. Here, in his first reference to it, Gilson writes:

> Apia may have had ‘quite a business look about it’, but judged by most aesthetic standards, its rating was low. Lower still were many estimates of the state of society at Apia – particularly of the Beach, which comprised the European element (clergy


excepted) and its various Polynesian dependants, mainly women, sailors and labourers.28

In this regard, Gilson’s first reference to ‘the beach’ is used to identify the members of the community that belonged to this cohort. In contrast, it is soon found that as the narrative progresses ‘the beach’ is not used solely in this manner. Rather this term is used to refer inter-changeably to, on the one hand, the township of Apia, as an urban space, and also to particular factions within the foreign community. Notably, the literary mechanisms through which these references are differentiated consist of the alternative uses of the phrases ‘on the beach’ and ‘of the beach’.

To illustrate this point one might consider the following alternative uses of ‘the beach’ in various contexts throughout the text. In a discussion of economic prospects at Apia, for example, Gilson writes, ‘The merchant’s scope for sharp practice was, of course, limited by fierce competition on the Beach…’29 Here, it becomes quite clear that the use of the term is employed to convey a sense of space and to refer quite specifically to the township of Apia in its entirety (meaning both the merchant community and the urban space of the township). Conversely in the chapter titled, ‘The Foreign Residents’ Society and Mixed Tribunals’, references to ‘the beach’ are used in a way that does not specifically distinguish between one particular factional group within the community (as indicated in Gilson’s earlier definition) or the community in its entirety. This may be ascertained, for example, in the following use of the phrase:

28 Gilson, p.179.
29 Gilson, p.183; For similar uses of the phrase in this context see, Gilson, pp.192,194,199,234,225,231, 253.
Until then (and from about 1850) the main line of cleavage lay, rather, between settlers and the Samoans, first in the context of Samoan warfare and general political ‘backwardness’, which tended to unite the Beach to resist interference, and secondly in the context of various pressures, chiefly the demand for economic opportunities, which united the leaders of the Beach in the case of Samoan political reform.30

While it may seem pedantic to point out such slight differences in the use of this turn-of-phrase, it is significant in illustrating the extent to which contextual understandings of ‘the beach’ in the twentieth century have been recast, and redefined by the act of historical writing. It is also important in highlighting the point that the inherent ambiguity of the physical space of any beach, lends itself, in the writing of Pacific History in particular, to a textual ambivalence which blurs distinctions, and is not easily pinned down. In this matter, therefore, it is imperative that Pacific historians are clear in articulating nineteenth-century concepts that continue to be reconstructed in the present.

Furthermore, Gilson is not alone in his textual reconstruction of ‘the beach’ as simultaneously an urban space, in the form of a port town, and as a faction of the community residing within it. Other twentieth-century writers who have similarly reconstructed the discourse of ‘the beach’ at Apia through the act of writing include F.M Keesing, N. A. Rowe, Deryck Scarr, David Pitt, and Caroline Ralston, among others.31 Of these authors, the most significant in her discussion and construction of the beach communities of the nineteenth century is certainly Ralston

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30 Gilson, p.223. For similar uses of the phrase in this context see, Gilson, pp.222, 203,232,239,245,252.
With reference to the literature on the growth and development of the urban settlements in the Pacific, Ralston’s seminal text, *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century* (1978) remains unchallenged as the key source on the subject. Prior to Ralston’s work there existed no single study concerned with the historical parallels that characterized the development of nineteenth-century Pacific port town communities. And while this may partly be explained by the relative youth of the discipline of Pacific History at this time, there nonetheless existed a relative interest in this subject area from within the cognate disciplines of Anthropology and Geography. In the case of Apia, for example, at least three articles were written during the period 1958-1979 concerning the development of the port town and contemporary issues such as the impact of urbanisation on the villages within the vicinity of the town. At the same time, there was at least one other article published in 1960 in the *American Anthropologist* concerned with the evolution and impact of urbanisation on the Pacific, at large.

Ralston’s *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century* stems from her 1970 PhD thesis, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’ which was supervised by Professor H.E. Maude in years 1967-1970. Ralston’s thesis traces the development of the five key Pacific Island ‘beach communities’ of the nineteenth century: Honolulu, Pape’ete, Kororāreka, Levuka and Apia. Her central thesis is that despite the fact that the growth and development of each of these was not contemporaneous,

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36 The research for Ralston’s PhD Thesis was carried out in the years 1967-69. See, Caroline Ralston, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’ PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1970.
there existed strong similarities in the processes that helped to shape the ‘proto-urban’ communities that emerged at each of the port towns. In both her published work and the original PhD thesis, Ralston’s central concern lies in the tracing of these varying stages of development, and identifying the similarities that helped to shape each community.

Within this framework, that at Apia is identified as one of the later port town communities to emerge (being contemporaneous in development with that at Levuka). Many of the broad assertions that are made with regard to its growth and development are made with reference to similar stages that occurred in each of the earlier port towns. This is a line of argument, which, while useful for gaining a broad understanding of urban development in the Pacific, does little in allowing for an engagement with the uniqueness and specificity of time and place which could also be found at each of the port town settlements. Evidence of this, may be seen in Ralston’s argument that the rise of respectable forms of sociability, which, she argues, occurred in the later stages of each of the beach communities development, may be directly ascribed to the arrival of a number of expatriate white women, whom she states ‘brought with them the attitudes and many of the moveable attributes of Western civilization’. This is an argument which she broadly puts forward with regard to material sited from the beach communities of Levuka and Honolulu although no evidence is provided to illustrate how this particular factor, may have been integral in the development of Apia, Pape’ete, or Kororērea.

Additionally, with regard to the development of Apia Ralston’s thesis provides little insight into the internal complexities that helped to shape this community. These include, for example, the impact and influence of the Samoan villages within the district of Tuamasaga, which ensured that ‘Apia’ was affected just as much by internal influences as it was from outside. To an appreciable

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37 Ibid., p.x.
38 Ibid., p.260.
39 See, for example, the evidence given in Ralston’s footnotes with regard to this point; Ibid., pp.260-271.
extent, however, this lack of intimacy with the internal complexities of Samoa may be explained by the fact that at the time of writing (and up until the present) there existed no single published work or thesis concerned solely with the development of this particular port town. This was in contrast to the availability of John Young’s 1968 PhD thesis ‘Frontier society in Fiji, 1858-1873’ which discussed the development of Levuka in detail, and Gavan Daws’ 1966 PhD thesis ‘Notes on the Emergence of Urban Society in Hawai’i’, which was primarily concerned with the early development of Honolulu.\(^{40}\) Because of this, the strength of Ralston’s thesis lies in the fact that she contextualizes the development of Apia in relation to the other beach communities but does not address intricacies and exceptions to be found in Apia’s development at length.

Within Ralston’s arguments, particularly with regard to the later stages of development and the evolution of a ‘quasi-respectability’ at Apia, there also exist some weaknesses with regard to her use of at least two primary sources. These may be seen in her arguments about pyjamas being a ‘day-time uniform of many foreigners on the beach’ and with regard to the conversion of three ‘die-hard’ beach leaders.\(^{41}\) Importantly also, ‘the beach’ is mentioned briefly as a distinct, separate, and importantly urban entity in her PhD thesis:


\(^{41}\) This is seen, for example, in her discussion of the rise of a ‘quasi-respectability’ during the 1850s and her use of accounts left by Thomas Trood and A.W. Murray as primary evidence. For example, this becomes apparent in a general statement about foreigners wearing pyjamas to work which is based on Trood’s recollection of one man (Fred Hennings) doing this. While it may also be seen in her argument that there was a general shift towards LMS conversion during the 1850s based on the conversion at this time of three well-known foreign settlers, W. Yandall, W. Pritchard and E. Hamilton. Notably, this particular argument is based solely on the book Forty years’ mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea, from 1835 to 1875 which was written by LMS missionary A.W. Murray, who would have had his own politics/bias in writing and would have wanted to present a picture of Apia becoming a ‘godly community’. See, Caroline Ralston, Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century, Canberra, 1978, pp.155-156; Caroline Ralston, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’ PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1970, pp.226,228; Thomas Trood, Island Reminiscences: A graphic detailed Romance of a Life spent in the South Sea Islands, Sydney, 1912, p.31; A.W. Murray, Forty years’ mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea, from 1835 to 1875, London, 1876, pp.336-337,350-352;
‘The Beach’ was a term frequently used by expatriate residents and visitors to designate the concentration of island and western-style houses scattered round the shorelines of the principal harbours, and the Europeans who lived in them.\(^{42}\)

But it is not mentioned at all in her published work. It would appear, to have been subsumed into the larger framework dealing with Pacific Beach Communities. This is of particular interest, for in this regard Ralston’s thesis is quite clearly concerned with the parallel development of the beach communities as urban settlements and communities, but it does not address their place within more intricate and subtle systems of understanding.

Following on from Ralston, there has been little published or written work completed with regard to the historical development of the urban portside settlements in the nineteenth-century Pacific. Moreover of the work that has been published, it largely continues the pre-Ralston trend of coming from outside of the discipline of history. Much of it is focused upon pressing contemporary concerns such as urban management and sustainability. The names of John Connell and John Lea are prominent in this context. In consequence of this apparent dearth of historical literature in this area Ralston’s 1978 work stands alone as the primary point of reference for the contextualization of many contemporary concerns.\(^{43}\) Given its significance the question lingers as to why there has been so little treatment of the beginnings of urbanisation in the Pacific, during the nineteenth century.

In a consideration of these questions, a particular body of literature generated from the scholarship of Ann Laura Stoler and Nicholas Thomas has proved useful in promoting reflection and methodological consideration in the writing of this thesis. Both Stoler and Thomas belong to a revisionist school of

\(^{42}\)Caroline Ralston, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’ PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1970, p.x.

history and anthropology that has come to question the ways in which ‘colonialism’ has been analysed, constructed and engaged with by modern scholars. Out of this critique has arisen a scholarly concern with what has come to be termed ‘the anthropology of colonialism’, or as Dening has termed it ‘history’s anthropology’ – an investigation into the ways in which ‘colonial culture’ existed and operated in a diverse and problematic manner throughout the settler communities, and the ways in which historians write, construct and mould this history.44 As Stoler has written:

Colonizers and their communities are frequently treated as diverse but unproblematic, viewed as unified in a fashion that would disturb our ethnographic sensibilities if applied to ruling elites of the colonized...colonial cultures were never direct translations of European society planted in the colonies, but unique cultural configurations, homespun creations in which European food, dress, housing, and morality were given new political meanings in the particular social order of colonial rule.45

With this in mind, my own personal engagement with the work of Stoler and Thomas has posed a number of conundrums in the writing of this thesis. This has been particularly so with regard to key methodological and ethical issues that have arisen, and been engaged with at length at different stages of this journey. Consideration of some of these issues with regard to the writing of ‘the beach’ may serve to explain how this thesis has evolved throughout the course of the research.

To a Pacific historian, interested in the inconsistencies and incongruities that characterized colonial settlements, Stoler’s call for greater analysis carries a particular resonance. The ‘unique cultural configurations’ and ‘homespun creations’ of my past are as real today as they were one hundred and twenty years ago.46 As a little girl I would watch with fascination as my handsome fair

‘afakasi papa, with his blue eyes, and German beer belly, would speak the most beautiful Samoan that I have ever heard, and at the same time uphold the sternest of European codes of behaviour and civility in his house. The distinctions between the culture of his ‘afakasi father, his Samoan mother, my Samoan nana, and ‘afakasi mother, and the place of our new settlement, New Zealand, were as blurred as they were apparent. Undeniable amongst this jumble of identities, ideologies, traditions and practices, though, was the incredible impact and influence that the colonial past had had on our lives today.47

In this way, my own curiosity and desire to know more was fostered from a very young age, when I myself came to the realisation, that I too was different, not quite ‘whole’ as far as others were concerned. This was because I was always having to justify my right to ‘be’ Samoan, continually tested in cultural situations with regard to whether or not I behaved and lived according to fa’apālagi or fa’asamoā standards, and was never allowed to embrace the fact that part of me was pālagi – for this was seen as abhorrent and inconsistent with the fact that I was also Samoan.48 In the identity of both my papa, and my mother I found solace; therefore, I could be both. I am ‘afakasi, and it was valid in both worlds to profess this. Perhaps in this way, then, the writing of this thesis made subjective sense to a large extent. For the township of Apia epitomized this state of being caught ‘in-between’; the foreign and the indigenous locked in and inseparable, and yet simultaneously caught in a state of contradiction.

Because of this, the challenges in the writing of this thesis came as much from within as they have from without. However, as the research and the writing progressed it became more and more apparent that there was validity in listening

48 For further discussion of what to means to have to justify and fight to ‘be’ see, Albert Wendt, ‘Towards a new Oceania’, Mana Review: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature, 1, 1, 1976, p.53; Jacq Carter, ‘None of us is what are Tūpuna were: When ‘growing up Pakeha’ is ‘growing up Māori’, in Witi Ihimaera (ed.) Growing up Māori, Auckland, 1998, pp.253-267.
to the many voices of ‘the beach’ in the archives and in the secondary texts. It was a valid exercise to investigate how it came to be that this particular settlement made up of such an eclectic and diasporic range of cultural identities came together in one place to form a ‘community’. While also exploring the inherently contradictory and heterogeneous nature of ‘colonialism’ and the extent to which the contested nature of ‘the beach’ encapsulated this.49

Another methodological issue that I was confronted with throughout the course of this thesis has been the knowledge that the discipline of history itself has been (and arguably still is) implicit in the colonizing process.50 By the very nature of our writing, we as historians, determine privilege and construct ‘History’ – textual narratives that give us insight into the past but that are not the ‘Past’.51 This distinction is not always clearly stated by historians, but significantly as one who exists ‘in-between’ it is important to state that I do not see this contradiction as a limitation but rather the emancipated means through which this thesis has evolved. In doing this for example, I have taken a clear methodological approach in my writing through turning on its head the current state of orthodox history and anthropology which continue to objectify and construct the indigenous through the text. In this regard, I have attempted to reclaim this process through objectifying the anomaly of the foreign, and examining the extent to which the construction of the ‘Stranger’, ‘Settler’, or ‘Colonizer’ is as much a Manichaean classification as the idea of the ‘Native’ or the Half-Caste’. These ideas of opposition and otherness are colonial constructs that need to be questioned, and the cracks that existed within both the inter-dynamics and intra-dynamics of each of these must be addressed in order for Pacific History to be liberated from its colonial past and present.

From the point of view of one who is both a product of the colonial past and a historian who is engaging in a practice that has been implicit in the colonial

process, the questioning of these basic assumptions is integral to any study of what this past really meant. As a foundation stone Stoler and Thomas’ work demands a self-reflexivity and degree of disciplinary revision that is often laced in with, but not central to, historical engagements with the colonial past. Central to this revision has also been the criticism that ‘scholars need to attend more directly to the tendency of colonial regimes to draw a stark dichotomy of colonizer and colonized without themselves falling into such a Manichaean conception’.52 In this regard, Pacific historians need to engage with the spaces ‘in-between’, the spaces within which these dichotomies collapsed and were negotiated on a day-to-day basis. These are the interstices where the cracks, contradictions and inconsistencies run rife, and where ideas such as ‘the beach’ are given legitimacy.

Another significant methodological issue that has been considered at length with regard to the writing of this thesis has been my decision not to engage with oral history. There are a variety of reasons for this and these will be discussed in detail because of the importance of oratory to our people. Firstly, within the historiography of Samoa there exists no one work which has provided a comprehensive overview or analysis of the written source material available on the Municipality which, I believe, needed to be established before any comprehensive form of oral investigation could be carried out. In this light, then, it is important to note that this work is very much preliminary in that it hopes to set up a viable research agenda upon which future oral history research may be carried out. Secondly, there were a number of practical considerations that had be taken into account from the outset, with the foremost of these being that this is a one year Masters thesis and that, although one month was spent in Apia, much of the writing has taken place in New Zealand. In consideration of these I did not feel that it would have been practicable comprehensively to identify participants, interview them, analyse, process and write up the results within the space of one

year, as well as read, analyse and process the plethora of unpublished and published material that had to be surveyed in advance. Moreover, with regard to much of this material other constraints were also to come into play with the practical reality that the bulk of archival documentation was divided amongst different institutions in Apia, Wellington, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Notably, after thirty years of lobbying, debate and discussion Samoa is still in need of basic archival infrastructure such as storage facilities, trained archivists, and microfilm equipment to be able to adequately catalogue and preserve the material that is in the Nelson Library.

Also problematic, with regard to the ethical and methodological processes concerned with research, was my growing awareness that the archives themselves are ‘cultural artefacts, built on institutional structures that erase certain kinds of knowledge, secret some, and valorise others’. 53 Regarding Samoan historical research this reality is made even more so by the fact that (aside from the practical limitations in Samoa that I have already outlined) the bulk of Samoan archival material exists outside of Samoa. In this way, our history as a country is not only more accessible to scholars working outside of Samoa but has also been organised and preserved by outsiders. This reality is particularly problematic for me as Samoan scholar. On the one hand I am aware of the lack of financial and physical resources in Samoa (at present) for us to be able to bring this material home, on the other I am troubled by the fact that by the very nature of their preservation in Australia and New Zealand, these sources remain in the preserve of the privileged and the elite.

With this in mind, it is also worthy to note that during my four weeks in Samoa (August – September 2005) apart from time spent engaging with textual sources, much time was also spent carrying out historical field research. This

research included tasks such as identifying buildings and structures from the Municipal period; tracking down old tombs and graves – the most important discovery of which was that of Thomas Trood at Fugalei (which is currently under threat due to a development that is taking place next to it); trekking up Lake Lanuto’o to find the memorial stone of Dr. Bernhard Funk; and partaking in informal discussions with the descendants of settlers from my period. Notably, during these informal discussions there appeared to be a general consensus that many of the old colonial buildings (still standing) and the foundations of the town of Apia lay solidly in what is commonly referred to as the ‘German times’. To be accurate this was only the fourteen year period, 1900-1914, and does not account for the development of the port town during the nineteenth century. Because of this, this thesis is significant because it sheds light on the period directly before this, in which the town of Apia was operated and controlled by a Municipal Board, a fact that is not generally acknowledged.

Figure 2: Thomas Trood’s Tomb, Fugalei, 2005. Original in my possession.

54 See Figure 2 opposite. There is also a plaque dedicated to the memory of Thomas Trood in the basement of the Apia Protestant Church which was the former Apia Foreign Church. The inscription on the plaque reads: ‘Erected to the Memory of Thomas Trood of Apia, Acting British Vice-Consul (1900-1914), Born 1833, Died 1915. This tablet has been erected by the old residents of Samoa in memory of one who was Samoa’s oldest settler, and who faithfully served his God by unstinted devotion to his church and the general interests of his adopted country’. Other settlers who were similarly honoured with plaques kept in the church include A.J. Tattersall, Irving Hetherington Carruthers, and Winifred Cusack-Smith. For information on the Apia Protestant Church see, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Tamaitai Samoa: Their Stories, revised edition, Carson, 1998, p.53.
Finally it is important to acknowledge that the philosophical foundation upon which this research is based and the resultant thesis has been grounded in Judith Binney’s assertion that ‘the act of historical reconstruction allows different voices to speak, it reveals people in their own times and contexts which are not our own and should not be seen like our own’. In this way, this is concerned primarily with giving context to the voices of the community resident at Apia during the municipal period of 1879-1900. It is not a chronological history nor does it purport to be one. Rather it is an engagement with an entity known as ‘the beach’, a space and community, that was both lived and constructed, and the Municipality which was established to control it.

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Figure 4: ‘Samoan Women Fishing near Apia, May 1903 in ‘Samoa, Apia: Photos from Gladys Edward’s Photo Studio, donated by John Moller’, GN671.53, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira
CHAPTER ONE

THE BEACH

They called it, simply, the Beach. It was the settlement that grew on the shores of Samoa’s Apia Bay, in the 1800s. What else would they have called it? Like the Samoan lifeblood that sustained it, two rivers flowed into the bay, where a small community grew into a town, in the interstices of the Samoan world. Perched on the edges of Samoan life, in hurricane times it threatened to go into the sea. It was almost literally a beach, a bit ramshackle at first, and the street was coral and sand. What was not Samoan had come over, or from, the sea. It was a community cobbled together from the indigenous and the foreign, built on the cusps of about half a dozen Samoan villages, around a bay that only a real-estate agent would call a harbor.


Far and wide it was known as ‘the beach’. It was a space that was (and is) both imaginary and palpable. It was born out of a timeless crossing; a crossing that resulted in the birthing and creation of a space. It was a place that was neither completely foreign, nor completely indigenous. At Apia bay it grew, absorbed, consumed, enticed, and overwhelmed. Under Vaea’s watchful gaze, tin shacks and fale sprang up side by side; a mishmash of cultural artefacts, ideas, people and products, all scattered along the curve of the bay. From Matautu to Mulinu’u a redefinition of space began to take place and upon this space ‘Apia’ the community gradually came to engage in a unique style of self-definition.

Beaches are spaces that vary in size, shape and definition. They are contested landscapes that neither belong to the sea nor the land, and being
situated on the very edge of the sea, and on the very edge of the land, they are spaces in-between. Throughout time and space, they have been poeticized, theorized, historicized, and essentialised, and their variant constructions have come to take on an existence quite separate from the very beaches upon which each of these conceptualizations evolved. Talk of ‘the beach’ and its inherent transience has loaned itself to a multitude of constructions, both spatial and ideological, and nowhere else were these processes more apparent than in the island-Pacific, where ‘the beach’ has played such an integral role in the shaping of identities, relations, and constructions of ‘self’ and ‘other’. This is a role, which has variously articulated itself throughout the nineteenth century and up until this present moment through what may be identified as the discourse of ‘the beach’. The evolution of which, in its various forms, is the primary concern of this chapter.

As in all discussions of thoughts and ideas one must never deny the essential nature of the very ‘thing’ that is being discussed. Therefore, at the heart of this discussion it would seem appropriate, then, to begin with the contested and changing shoreline upon which ‘the beach’ was formed. This was a space that spilled out and gave birth to an expression of self – a self that was unordered, ill-defined, fierce, and uncontrollable. It was a space that was (and is) self-determining. In thinking about ‘the beach’ as both a physical and ideological space one might consider the following:

A certain ambivalence is built into the Western tradition of thinking about space. On the one hand, we are accustomed to speaking of space as something real - something that exists, in which we are situated. On the other hand, theoretical or philosophical models of spatiality imply the ability to place ourselves outside of specific spaces, pretending that there is a place from which the nature of space might be contemplated free of all spatiality. As a result, philosophical models of spatiality are generally characterized by an attempt to reconcile the contradictions arising from a common sense grasp on the one hand, and the necessity of thinking about space in abstract terms on the other. Thinking about space is as a result always in dialogue with its own limits.56

These are limits, which are further complicated by distances in time, as well as extent, not to mention the inherently problematic nature of the few remaining traces of ‘the beach’ that may be found in the archives. Conversely, it would also seem that, the very ambiguity which on the one hand would appear to limit a discussion of space is at the same time the very thing which allows for such dialogue to take place. This may be seen in consideration of the fact that during the nineteenth century, discussion of ‘the beach’ found its only anchor in the term’s inherent ambivalence; in its elusive, and often, subjective nature, and in the inter-changeable use of it in dialogue with reference to both the ‘real’ and ‘abstract’ space of ‘the beach. In this way, while methodological concerns to do with the limitations of space are acknowledged, it is therefore argued that these very limitations allow for discussion of ‘the beach’ to be emancipated from the bounds of classification and categorization. By doing so, the integrity of the inherent ambivalence that underpins the nature of every beach, and every shore may be upheld.

As spaces in-between, beaches provide physical landscapes within which ‘each living thing is bound to its world by many threads, weaving the intricate design of the fabric of life’, while also providing the landscape upon which that very ‘life’ is reliant upon, and vulnerable to, the volatile and tenacious character of the sea.57 In the Pacific the practical significance of these ambivalent spaces is immeasurable. These were the spaces through and upon which we crossed into and created our island-homes; the spaces within which we negotiated our existence as people of the sea; where our identities as ‘island peoples’ were forged. Ultimately, these were also the spaces upon which our existence as ‘island people’ converged with that of the foreign; a reality which, among its many consequences, instigated the process of urbanisation in the Pacific.58

From its early beginnings, the space upon which ‘the beach’ at Apia was founded was defined and validated by its sole existence as a Samoan preserve, and more specifically by its political location within the Itu of Tuamasaga. Initially, the land upon which ‘the beach’ was formed was given meaning and definition through the fearless feats, and great deeds, of Samoan demi-gods, such as Pili and those of his children Ana and Tua, the twins Tua and Saga, and his daughter Tolufale, and shaped by sorrowful stories such as that of Vaea and his lover Apaula, and later of the aitu at Matautu Sā. Many years later, the three-mile bay was also to become the site upon which the six villages of Sagauga (which contained the pitonu’u of Apia, Matautu and Tanugamanono), Fuaiupolu, Vaimoso, Lepea, Vailoa and Vaiusu came to be established. Each with its own fa’alupega and oral traditions of migration, settlement, and occupation, and each with its own set of land, fishing, and navigation rights in the bay. In this way, the land upon which the fledgling port town of Apia was to be established was firmly rooted in an extensive history of Samoan occupation, long before the coming of the first papālagi. It is also important to acknowledge that at the same time, in traditional Samoan terms, the political nature of this space was of little importance in comparison to the greater heartlands of Samoan life. As Damon Salesa has aptly pointed out, up until 1850 ‘the epicenters of Samoa were the

59 Pili was the son of Muliovaitele and Tagaloaalagi. He married Sinaletava’e the daughter of Tui A’ana Tava‘etelala and their children were Ana (who inherited the political district of A’ana); Tua (who inherited the political district of Atua); the twins Tua and Saga (who inherited the political district of Tuamasaga) and Tolufale (who inherited Manono and Apolima). See, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, ‘Tamfaigā: Shaman, King or Maniac? The Emergence of Manono’, Journal of Pacific History, 30, 1, 1995, p.3. Sylvia Masterman, An Outline of Samoan history, Apia, 1958, p.9; I’uogafa Tuagalu, ‘Mata’aafa losefo and the idea of kingship in Samoa’, MA Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1988, p.21; Brother Fred Henry, A History of Samoa, Apia, 1979, pp.14-17; Tala o le Vavau: myths, legends and customs of old Samoa / adapted from the collections of C. Steubel, A. Krämer & Brother Herman: illustrated by Iosua Toafa, Auckland, 1995, pp.109-110. There are many versions of the tragic love-story of Vaea and Apaula. In one version of the story Vaea was an Ali‘i from the Vaimauga district, in some others he is described as a giant. The beautiful Apaula was the daughter of the Tui Fiti and upon her return from Fiji she found her love broken-hearted and half turned to stone. The tears that she shed formed the stream Loimata-o-Apaula which runs along the foothills of Mount Vaea. See, Fanaafi Ma’ia’i Larkin, Stories of Old Samoa, Christchurch, 1960, pp.31-35.


capitals of the Samoan world, ancient places such as Leulumoea, Safotulafai, Manono, and Lufilufi'. With time, the arrival of the foreigners in the late 1800s was set to change irrevocably not only the physicality of Apia bay, but also its ideological and political function within Samoa.

Within the Samoan archipelago there were only two suitable anchorages which had the capacity to cater for a large number of visiting ships at any one time. To this day Pago Pago on the island of Tutuila is renowned for its beautiful deep sea harbour and its suitability as a prime location for the docking of deep draught vessels. Apia, on the north-eastern coast of the island of Upolu, sits in a more exposed position (particularly during the hurricane season of December – March) although it is has a natural break in the outer reef which allows access between the open sea and the lagoon. In 1839 Commander Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition recorded the following description of the two anchorages:

The harbours are usually situated within reefs, but Tutuila is an exception to this rule, by the possession of the deep land-locked basin of Pago-pago. This is, of all ports, the one best adapted for the refitting of vessels; but Apia, in Upolu, in the latitude of 13° 48.56.6" S., and longitude 171° 41' 09" W., is not so difficult of egress, and in consequence of its proximity to the fertile district of Aana, the most convenient for vessels seeking only a temporary anchorage and refreshment.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, the establishment and popularity of these two anchorages was largely determined by the influx of

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63 Also on the island of Upolu were the harbours of Fagaloa and Safata, both of which were occasionally used by visiting ships throughout the nineteenth century although Apia was never ravalled in terms of its predominance as the more frequented port on Upolu. On the island of Savai’i there is also the harbour of Asau although the surrounding land proved unsuitable for the establishment of a major port town because of the high volcanic cliffs and lack of fertile land. See, Rhys Richards, Samoa’s Forgotten Whaling Heritage, Wellington, 1992, p.150; Richard Moyle (ed.) The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832, Canberra, 1984, p.219.

64 Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, during the years 1838, 1840, 1841, 1842, II, London, 1845, p.116
whaling ships that began to frequent Samoan waters from the 1820s onwards.\textsuperscript{65} The greatest number of these were American, from Nantucket and New Bedford.\textsuperscript{66} While initially larger numbers of ships called in at Pago Pago, from the 1840s onwards this began to shift, with Apia taking predominance because of its greater potential to be able to draw on resource supply links from throughout both Upolu and Savai’i.\textsuperscript{67} Significantly, much of this shift can also be linked to reports sent back to the American mainland which promoted Apia over Pago Pago as the preferred port. Take, for example, the following report published in \textit{The Daily Morning Commonwealth}, Boston, 1851:

A correspondent of the \textit{New York Herald} writes under date of 13th February from Apia Harbor, Island of Upolu, one of the Navigators. He recommends all captains of vessels requiring a refit, to touch at Apia, in preference to any other harbor in the group. There can be obtained masts, yards, rigging, casks, wood and water, at very moderate prices, and hogs, yams, sweet potatoes, fresh beef, pineapples, bananas etc., etc., are to be had in great abundance and very cheap. The best articles for trade here are muskets, powder and bullets, white and blue cloths, navy blue cloth, tobacco, etc., etc.\textsuperscript{68}

This relationship was to precede another development which was of utmost importance; the coming of the \textit{Lotu Ta’iti} to Apia. In November 1830, John Williams, of the London Missionary Society, arrived at Apia. His journal reads:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} Rhys Richards, \textit{Samoa’s Forgotten Whaling Heritage}, p. 11. The \textit{Amelia} was the first whaling ship to enter the Pacific in 1789.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Rhys Richards, p.12; Nancy Grant Adams, ‘My Seafaring Family: George Grant is born in Apia’, \textit{Historic Nantucket}, 37, 2, 1989, pp.5-12.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Cited in Richards, p.161; Anon, \textit{Daily Morning Commonwealth}, Boston, 7 July 1851.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
This morning I went with the boat to examine the harbour & see the Chief. Finding
the harbour to be good we made a signal to the vessel to stand in which she did &
came to anchor in about six fathoms of water. The harbour is spacious & convenient
& safe, easy of access & egress & will no doubt become a place much visited by
whalers as soon as it is known & as soon as it is deemed safe to anchor among the
Islanders.69

Upon his arrival, one of the first things Williams did was to meet the ali‘i of Apia
village, a chief named Punipuniolu.70 In his diary Williams wrote that during this
meeting the two men discussed the possibility of Apia becoming a more
frequented anchorage:

On going ashore I was invited into the government house where I held a long
conversation with the Chief advising him to become a Christian stating to him the
advantages of our religion. He said he had no objection to it, but had no one to
teach him. He asked me my opinion of the harbour. I told him I thought it a very fine
harbour indeed. He requested me to inform captains of ships of it and desire them to
come to it. I replied I was perfectly willing to do so, but English captains would ask
me about the Chief whether he was of our religion or not and I should reply no he is
Devolo [Tevolo], of the Devils party and then they will be afraid to come. He then
said No don’t tell them so, for I am determined to become Lotu but wait till tomorrow
by which time I shall have consulted my people.71

Significantly, this transaction between Williams and the ali‘i was to forge
the way forward for future amiable relations between foreign ships and the
Samoans of Apia village. It was also to set the scene for a close relationship
between the township and another ali‘i from this village, Seumanutafa Moe
Pogai, who was instrumental in overseeing the development of settlement.72 As
is evident in this account, Williams’ agenda in coming to Apia was to bring the
new faith to the Samoans and convince the ali‘i that this would bring prosperity to
his people. Importantly, however, without an engagement with oral testimony it is
difficult to engage with the contested ‘histories’ that would have come together to
ultimately shape not only Punipuniolu’s decisions regarding the settlement, but

information on John Williams and the London Missionary Society’s activities in the Pacific see, Niel
70 In the edited letters of John Williams, by Richard Moyle, it is noted that the identity of Punipuniolu ‘is
not known’. See, Moyle, p.171. n155.
71 Moyle, pp.168, 219.
72 Seumanutafa Moe Pogai was instrumental in the development of Apia during the nineteenth century. He
was widely respected and highly regarded by Samoans and Europeans alike. See, Gilson, pp. 89-90,175;
Beaumont Thomas Featherston, ‘Journal 1891 -1894’, Microfilm: AJCP M1134 (NLA); Anon, ‘Obituary:
Seumanutafa’, *The Times*, 30 September 1903, p.4; Ford Worthington Chauncey (ed.) *The Letters of Henry
Adams*, 1, Boston & New York, 1930, p.422. See, Figure 5.
also those of the other paramount ali‘i such as To‘omalatai Toetagata (who initially resided at Moto‘otua before the village was relocated to Matautu in 1850), and of the holders of the Faumuinā and Matai‘a titles, all of whom would have exercised matai pule over the bay. What is clear, though, is that as the settlement began to grow Seumanutafa Moe Pogai and To‘omalatai Toetagata maintained active roles in its regulation and affairs.

Figure 5: ‘Seumanutafa Pogai (d 1898), Chief of Apia, Samoa, seated with Fa‘atalia outside a Samoan building. This photograph was taken at

73 Gilson, p.166.

Nonetheless, the combination of increasing numbers of visiting ships and foreigners and their engagement with ali‘i such as Seumanutafa Moe Pogai, was to instigate another process. This was the beginning and formation of an urban settlement which was largely – although not completely – ‘brought from across the sea in ships’.75 From the 1820s onwards, an eclectic ramshackle assemblage of tin huts, stone houses, adobe churches, and fale began to spring up from one horn of the bay to another, gradually reforming and redefining both the physical and ideological landscape of the shoreline. Many visitors to Apia noted the concentration of European style houses mixed in with Samoan style fale as one of their initial observations of the township and the harbour and it was seen as an identifying characteristic in the formation of the township.76 Notably, the physicality of this ‘cultural-meshing’ testified to the underlying processes of exchange and negotiation that initially gave the fledgling township legitimization. Evidence of this may be seen in the fact that the chaotic and unplanned nature of the settlement, found a source of regularity from within the ordered and traditionally structured Samoan nu‘u of Apia, Vaiala, Matautu, Tanugamanono, and Vaimoso.77 This was an important reality which ultimately expressed itself through the very naming of the township after the village upon which it was the most dependent, Apia, and through the township’s retention of its geographical positioning according to the various pito‘u‘u (sub-villages) of Tamaligi, Tau‘ese, Mulivai, Matafele, Saleufi, Savalalo and Sogi.78

76 See for example, George Robert Charles Herbert Pembroke, South Seas Bubbles by the earl and the doctor, Melbourne, 1872, p.187; Julius Lucius Brenchley, Jottings during the cruise of H.M.S. Curacoa among the South Sea Islands in 1865: with numerous illustrations and natural history notices, London, 1873, p.62; J.W. Boddam-Whetham, Pearls of the Pacific, London, 1876, p.146; Charles S. Greene, Talofa Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle, San Francisco, 1896, pp.11-12.
77 R.P. Gilson, p.179.
Slowly, however, the burgeoning port town settlement began to take on a character of its own, with a marked distinction emerging between the eastern side of the bay at Matautu and the western side at Matafele, Savalalo and Sogi. To the east of the township was situated the British and the American Consulates, while to the west could be found the Hamburg (and later the German) Consulate, with this side of the township being commonly referred to as ‘the German part of town’. This was a term of reference which was further cemented through the establishment of the Pacific headquarters of the Hamburg mercantile house of Godeffroy & Sohn (which was later subsumed by the Deutsche Handels und Plantagen-Gesellschaft) in 1857 on this side of the bay, and the establishment of the ‘largest English trading company in the islands’ – Wm. McArthur & Co. – on the other. To give some idea of the extent to which these national divisions were apparent on entry to the harbour, one might consider the following description given by a visiting United States Naval Captain, George B. Rieman, in 1872:

To the extreme left as you enter is the American Consulate; near it is a large well-built frame store, with a red shingle roof, forming quite a conspicuous object on the beach. This is occupied by the Agent of an Australian house which does a large business among this group. Between the consulate and this store, are one or two small stores devoted altogether to the liquor business. Farther along the beach is the English Missionary Church, resembling a large barn painted white; next to it the British Consulate; then the house occupied by the English Missionary and a Church with a white spire in which the French Missionaries hold their service. Toward the right hand corner of the bay are a number of buildings used by Mr. Weber. We refer the reader to the following accounts: B.F.S. Baden-Powell, In Savage Islands and Settled Lands: Malaysia, Australasia, and Polynesia 1888-1891, London, 1892, pp.350-1; Louis Becke, South Sea Supercargo, Honolulu, 1967, p.179.

79 Gilson, p.223. Evidence that this settlement pattern was still apparent near the later part of the century may be seen in the following accounts: B.F.S. Baden-Powell, In Savage Islands and Settled Lands: Malaysia, Australasia, and Polynesia 1888-1891, London, 1892, pp.350-1; Louis Becke, South Sea Supercargo, Honolulu, 1967, p.179.

German Consul and agent for a Hamburg house, as stores and offices. The intervening portions of the beach are filled up with native huts and a few small stores, where a brisk retail trade appears to be carried on with the natives. These buildings are almost all faced toward the sea, and the road along in front of them is lined with cocoanut trees.\textsuperscript{81}

From this description and many others, it becomes apparent that life in the space upon which this township evolved was largely determined by political, economic, and religious forces, which manifested themselves in the establishment of foreign quarters at the bay.\textsuperscript{82} This was a situation which, by the 1850s, was to cement the ideological assertion among the foreign population that they were not subject to the 'law of the land' - Samoan traditional authority - but the law of their (old) land' as exercised by the consular authorities resident at the bay.\textsuperscript{83} Nonetheless, with regard to these arbitrary national boundaries at the bay, it would appear that even during periods of extreme national animosity among the foreign population, these boundaries were negotiated on a daily basis to ensure the survival of the settlement. Two primary examples of this may be seen in the forging of marriage allegiances across foreign national boundaries and also the limited employment opportunities available at Apia.\textsuperscript{84} Moreover, these boundaries were also negotiated on occasions which were of communal social and cultural importance, as may be seen in the following account given of a New Year’s Eve celebration in 1872:

\begin{quote}
On New Years Eve the band played - muskets were fired as part of the celebration - at the conclusion 200 muskets fired all at once and then the band played God Save the Queen for England, Yankee Doodle for the Americans and Fatherland for the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{81} George B. Rieman, \textit{Papalangee; or, Uncle Sam in Samoa: A Narrative of the cruise of the U.S. steamer 'Narragansett' among the Samoan or Navigator Islands, Polynesia}, Oakland, 1874, p.34. One other important company based in Apia was Ruge, Hedemann and Co., who were based at Matautu, see Chapter III, p.120 n292.

\textsuperscript{82} See also, Robert Louis Stevenson, \textit{A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa}, reprint, Auckland, 1996, p.11.


\textsuperscript{84} Marriage at Apia is discussed in Chapter IV.
Germans, who to acknowledge the compliment sent us a New Years gift of one
dozen bottles of champagne.85

By the 1850s Apia had an established system of port infrastructure with an
estimated population of about fifty foreign residents.86 The first port regulations to
be established at the bay were drafted and put in place in January 1838. The
impetus for this came largely through the initiative of Captain Charles Drinkwater
Bethune, who was the commanding officer of the H.M.S. Conway, a visiting
British naval ship that had the task of recapturing escaped Australian convicts.87
During his visit Captain Bethune organised two meetings with matai, the first
being with one on Tutuila concerning the possibility of putting in place port
regulations at Pago Pago, and the second being a meeting with the ‘chiefs of
Upolu’ in January 1838. It was claimed, that over a thousand people attended
this fono. These regulations included provisions for the gathering of revenue from
visiting ships, regulations against the consumption of liquor onshore, and
similarly against the practice of ‘prostitution’. 88 However, as R.P. Gilson has
noted, the effectiveness of this initial set of port regulations is questionable given
that more often than not foreign captains refused to endorse the code, stating
that it applied to British nationals only.89

In 1839 another naval captain, this time an American representative,
Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, who was in command of the United States Scientific
Expedition in the Pacific, arrived in Samoa and became involved in the adoption

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85 Stead sailed out from England in hope of making a fortune in the South Seas. He eventually settled at
Apia and died there. See, Augustus George Stead, ‘Papers: 1846-1884’, MS 6865 (NLA)
87 A.W. Murray, Forty years’ mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea, from 1835 to 1875, London,
1876, p. 72. For other accounts that mention the presence of escaped convicts and runaway settlers in
Samoa at this time see, Richards, Samoa's Forgotten Whaling Heritage, p.58.
88 As in any port town community the practice of prostitution was an early reality at Apia and, as Damon
Salesa has pointed out, was one of the only means through which a woman could obtain material goods and
Ernest Meheu & Bradford A. Booth, The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 - December
Trick that was played on Shirley Baker’, MS Papers 5498-1 (ATL). Prostitution is discussed at length in
Chapter III.
89 R.P. Gilson, pp.147-150.
and enforcement of those port regulations put in place by Bethune. Notably, Wilkes’ port code had more of a particular focus on the protection of foreigners and their rights rather than those of the Samoans. In his journals Wilkes recorded the following:

On the 4th of November, a fono was held, according to the appointment made with Malietoa, in the fale-tele of Apia. All the officers who could be spared from the ships were ordered to attend. Old Pea, chief of Apia, seemed to be the master of ceremonies on the occasion….All the highest chiefs of the "Malo" party were present, except Pea of Manono, and two minor chiefs of Savaii. Malietoa presided…the object I had in view, in requesting the fono to be called, was to procure the formal enactment of laws and regulations which might secure to our whale-ships a certainly of protection and security, and at the same time to prevent impositions being practiced by them upon the native government, of which, as has been stated, complaint had been made. To the breach of these laws, it was intended that the penalty of a fine should be attached, in order to secure obedience to them.  

Like the Bethune code before it, the Wilkes code was difficult to enforce. This was particularly with regard to the few isolated anchorages on the islands for these were outside of the influence and jurisdiction of the newly appointed British and American consular representatives, resident at Apia from the early 1840s onwards.  

Evidence of this can be seen in the following description of the Wilkes code made by US Consul, Jonathan S. Jenkins, in 1856, as being a ‘dead letter’:

…in the present condition of the people of these islands where every Chief rules in his own small territory, and where in every bay or harbor of any size there are never less than two and often three or four Chiefs each one maintaining the supremacy over his own few hundred yards of water frontage; the idea of framing any such regulations with the smallest faith in their being accomplished is absurd. [The] Wilkes Treaty as you may judge is to all intents a dead letter. The consent of the Chiefs whose signatures are attached to it, merely binding themselves individually

91 The first British consular representative resident at Apia was the storekeeper William C. Cunningham who was appointed in 1839 by George Pritchard, British consul at Tahiti. The first United States ‘commercial agent’ resident at Apia was John Chauner Williams (son of the late missionary John Williams) who was appointed in 1839 by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition. For further information regarding their appointments see Gilson, pp.150-151,163-164.
but in no way affecting their neighbours who are equally Chiefs, and rule in their own
dominions as they please.92

Despite this, the town’s reputation as a reliable and sustainable provisions
port flourished and a burgeoning system of infrastructure began to develop.93
Most significant in the hierarchy of this infrastructure were the various types of
accommodation that were quickly established. Boarding houses, brothels,
dancing houses and hotels were swiftly absorbed into the social web of this
diverse society and of particular note were the hotels, which were often the most
convenient premises for local gatherings and communal functions.94 As early as
1862, for example, James O’hea recalled that there were ‘two or three hotels [at
Apia] with bowling alleys together with some dancing houses kept by American
negroes’.95 Of these, the two most significant nineteenth-century establishments
were the International and the Tivoli Hotels.96

92 ‘Letter to US Secretary of State: W.L. Marcy from US Consul at Apia, Johnathan S. Jenkins, 15 August
1856’, Despatches from United States consuls in Apia, Samoa, 1843-1906, Microfilm 81-57 (USNA). For
information on Jenkins see, Gilson, pp.236-238.
93 A number of small retail and trading concerns were established at the bay in response to the influx of
whaling ships. Some of these included W.C. Cunningham, W.C. Turnbull, William Yandall, Pritchard &
Sons, J.C. Williams, and Sergent & Co., all of which were largely dependant on provisioning the visiting
whalers. See, Doug Munro, ‘Tom De Wolf’s Pacific Venture: The Life History of a Commercial Enterprise
94 For an in-depth discussion of early architectural styles experimented with at Apia see, G. Pringle,
‘Heritage assessment: Apia, Western Samoa’, MSc Thesis, University of Sydney, 1989; R.F. Watters,
95 James O’hea, ‘Journal of a Voyage to the South Sea Islands 1862-63’, ML MSS 4060 (ML)
96 The Tivoli Hotel was probably the most popular and well established hotel in Apia. Visitors passing
through Apia would often stop here for a meal and years later it was to become a popular landmark which
still spoke of the ‘old’ Apia in the ‘new’ German Samoa. See, Caroline Slade Philips, ‘Journal:
28 November 1896’, ML MSS 1432 (ML); Thomson Murray MacCallum, Adrift in the South Seas, Los
Angeles, 1934, p.102; Charles S. Greene, Talofa Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle, San
(ATL). The York Hotel burnt down on 9th February 1878 and is discussed in the following chapter with
regard to the 1877 Cochrane Lynching see, Te'o Tuvale, ‘Papers relating to the history of Samoa’, ML
MSS 39 (ML); Augustus George Stead, ‘Papers: 16 January 1878’, MS 6865 (NLA)
The International Hotel was a two storey building with a veranda that stretched around the second level. In status, it was at the top end of Apia’s accommodation range, and played host to a number of important visitors, including delegates such as the Reverend Shirley Baker of Tonga and members of an International Commission which visited Samoa in 1899. The following is a description of the hotel as given by George Egerton Leigh Westbrook:

The dwelling house of the hotel, stood right apart from the hotel, facing the beach front. Most of the rooms were in the upper storey....between and about the center of

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97 While there were a number of hotels established at Apia during this period many of them were short-lived business ventures that went under. Nonetheless, the Tivoli and the International Hotel appear to be the two that are mentioned continuously by both visitors and locals as key sites of congregation and social identification, see for example; Caroline Slade Philips, ‘Journal: 28 November 1896’, ML MSS 1432 (ML); Thomson Murray MacCallum, *Adrift in the South Seas*, Los Angeles, 1934, p.102.
the building was a passage way. The keys to the rooms hung under of the numbers of the rooms in the passage way.  

In another account, a visitor to the port, Reginald Gallop, wrote the following:

The only hotel which is even passable is Meredith's International Hotel, where the food is poor, the attendance bad, and the whole place conducted on the slovenly, happy-go-lucky style which results from an absence of competition. The other hotels are mere drinking shops, where Lager Beer is made to disappear with German rapidity.

As Apia's reputation as a reliable and sustainable provisions port began to grow, and the tiny settlement with it, changes began to take place within this space that were to supersede the physical. As the port town of Apia was gradually linked to other beaches, and other spaces that went far beyond the bounds of Samoa, this space came to be both intrinsically linked to, and shaped by, a network of knowledge systems. This was a global-network which, during the nineteenth century, in particular, ensured that the role of any port town was as much about the transference of ideas, as it was about goods. In this way the emergence of the port town of Apia was to be significantly shaped by a plethora of introduced ideologies, cultural-belief systems and traditions, which, at

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98 G.E.L. Westbrook, ‘An Embarrassing Trick that was played on Shirley Baker’, MS Papers 5498-1 (ATL)
99 Gallop was referring to Thomas Meredith who acquired the International Hotel for $13,600 at an auction held on 28th April 1892. See, Reginald G. Gallop, ‘Letters From the Pacific: 29 August 1887’, CY ML MSS 488/6 (ML); ‘Dispute over the International Hotel: Laurenson vs. Bell, 1 April 1892’, in ‘High Commissioner's Court Papers, 1881-1913’, SAMOA-BCS 9/1 (ANZ); Dirk H.R. Spennemann, Fiction published in Nineteenth Century Samoan Newspapers 1877-1900, Canberra, 2004, p.11; The Cyclopedia of Samoa, Sydney, 1907, p.103; See also, Hugh Laracy, ‘Ernest Frederick Hughes Allen (1867-1924): South Seas Trader’, Unpublished Working Paper, p.137. The other hotels that Gallop was no doubt referring to would have included the Tivoli Hotel, which was a popular haunt both day and night, Conradt’s Concordia Club & Hotel, the York Hotel (which later became the Occidental Hotel), J.W. Aull’s Pacific Hotel, the Niedringhaus Cafe or Beer Hall, Saffings Hotel, the Club Hotel, the Hotel Zur Stadt Hamburg, and the Samoa Hotel.
100 Damon Salesa, ‘Troublesome Half-Castes’, p.57. This was particularly so given the fact that by the 1870s the port town had developed into an important trading entrepôt in the Pacific and a number of firms were using the township as a base for their extraterritorial activities. See for example, Doug Munro, ‘Tom De Wolf’s Pacific Venture: The Life History of a Commercial Enterprise in Samoa’, Pacific Studies, 3, 2, 1980, pp.22-40.
any given time, were negotiated, discarded, absorbed, and challenged. This was a reality, which allowed for the discourse of ‘the beach’ to evolve in a way that was intrinsically linked to, and yet not bound to, its physical origins:

Here ended the Beach - a name signifying not only the place but also the people who lived along it...  

To the members of the small community that came to live along the shoreline of Apia bay ‘the beach’ was a multifaceted term of reference which was used at various times and in different ways throughout the course of the nineteenth century. In the Pacific references to ‘the beach’ evolved, in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, as ‘a south sea’s expression for which there was no exact equivalent’ elsewhere. Moreover, with regard to the way in which ‘the beach’ as a term of reference came to be employed in the Pacific, its connotative and associative ‘South Seas’ meanings were most likely derived from one of the earlier established Pacific port towns of Honolulu, Kororāreka, or Pape’ete where, similarly to Apia and Levuka, beach communities had sprung up along the shoreline of a particular harbour or anchorage. In its infancy, the use of the phrase was simply a term of reference used to describe the make-shift line of houses and huts that, at each of these settlements, were built according to the length and width of ‘the beach’ that fronted the harbour. In fact, the common use of this term as mode of identification and description for each of these fledgling urban settlements was in essence directly linked to the inherent

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102 In this regard, the theoretical framework of ‘cultural-hybrity’ may be a useful analytical tool that could be utilized in trying to gain an understanding of how such changes may have come about. For an example of how this has been used in other research see, Emma Kruse Va’ai, ‘Producing the Text of Culture: The Appropriation of English in Contemporary Samoa’, PhD Thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1998, p.17.
104 Robert Louis Stevenson, In the South Seas: Being an account of experiences and observations in the Marquesas, Paumotus and Gilbert Islands in the course of two cruises, on the yacht 'Casco' (1888) and the schooner 'Equator' (1889), London, 1912, p.64.
105 For an interesting discussion about the geographical relationships that help to shape port town hinterland and foreland relationships see, Guido G. Weingend, ‘Some Elements in the Study of Port Geography’, Geographical Review, 48, 2, 1958, pp.185-200.
transience that both connected and separated each of these communities. This is made particularly evident when one considers the maritime networks that necessarily linked and separated each of these settlements, with the beach at each of these serving the same function as a ‘crucial turnstile for traffic between ship and shore’. In a very real way the physical space of ‘the beach’ was at any one time coalescent and divisive.

Furthermore, the use of this term was also likely to have derived from the very early beginnings of cultural contact in the Pacific, through the experiences of the first immigrant foreign population to have been subsumed into island society through the process of acculturation – the ‘beachcombers’. This was a term in itself, which, according to H.E. Maude, was first given currency through the writings of Herman Melville in 1847, when his rugged character, Salem, said to the consul at Tahiti, ‘I’m nothing more nor a bloody beach-comber’. According to Melville (himself previously stranded on the island of Nukuhiva for four months) by the time of his writing the use of the term was:

…much in vogue among sailors in the Pacific. It is applied to certain roving characters, who, without attracting themselves permanently to any vessel, ship now and then for a short cruise in a whaler; but upon the condition only of being honourably discharged the very next time the anchor takes hold of the bottom; no matter where. They are, mostly, a reckless, rollicking set, wedded to the Pacific, and never dreaming of ever doubling Cape Horn again on a homeward-bound passage. Hence, their reputation is a bad one.

Through the experiences of this first group of foreign residents in the Pacific ‘the beach’ came to be more than simply the space upon which their survival was dependent; these were also the spaces that came to symbolize their

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107 One of the most well-known beachcombers in the Pacific was William Diaper, who was also known as Cannibal Jack. Diaper spent time in Samoa in the early part of 1840 on the islands of Ta’u and Tutuila before moving on to other parts of the Pacific. See, Christopher Legge, ‘William Diaper: A Biographical Sketch’, Journal of Pacific History, 1, 1966, pp.79-90.
‘freedom from restraint’ and upon which their identities were re-constituted.\textsuperscript{110} The beach was quite literally their means of ‘escape’ - escape from the cramped and often poor conditions aboard the ships; escape (in the case of ‘run-away convicts’) from imprisonment in New South Wales; and perhaps, most importantly, from the social mores and constraints that shaped the home societies that they had left behind them. On ‘the beach’ these men were forced to confront, ‘the relativity of everything that made them what they were: their values, their judgements and the testimony of their senses’.\textsuperscript{111}

As the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries progressed, so too did the ‘geographical distribution of beachcombing’.\textsuperscript{112} As had been noted by Maude, the beachcomber gradually ceased to be a factor of political importance such as in the earlier beach communities.\textsuperscript{113} What is not dealt with at length by Maude, however, was the reality that despite this shift, references to ‘the beach’ and ‘beachcombers’ lived on, and in fact, became synonymous. This was a reality which was made more apparent in the discourses promulgated by the nineteenth-century beach communities at Apia and Levuka, because of their later establishment. The evolution of this correlation, however, will be discussed here to demonstrate the ways in which the attributes commonly predicated of beachcombing during the nineteenth century were similarly used to characterize the beach community at Apia.

One of the most evident explanations behind such a connection lies in the fact that many of the early ‘beachcombers’ played a very significant role in the establishment of the first Pacific Island port towns.\textsuperscript{114} As the first foreign immigrants to be ‘essentially integrated into and dependent for their livelihood, on the indigenous communities of the Pacific’, beachcombers were to provide an important link between the two communities which literally came to meet on

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  \item \textsuperscript{111} Dening, \textit{Islands and Beaches}, p.129.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Maude, p.144.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
either side of ‘the beach’.\footnote{Maude, p.135.} As agents of ‘the beach’ they provided invaluable services to both their host societies and the visiting ships, by offering infrastructural services for the provisions trade, and taking on roles such as interpreters, pilots and coopers.\footnote{See for example, Christopher Legge, ‘William Diaper: A Biographical Sketch’, \textit{Journal of Pacific History}, 1, 1966, p.90.} Conversely, a number of these early migrants were also distinguished by their involvement in island warfare, their introduction of alcohol into island-society, and their backgrounds as either deserters or escaped convicts from the penal settlement at New South Wales.\footnote{Ralston, \textit{Grass Huts and Warehouses}, pp.24-5; Brother Fred Henry, \textit{A History of Samoa}, Apia, 1979, pp.128-129.} At Apia, in particular, this later reality was to form a solid connotative foundation upon which discourse of ‘the beach’ was to evolve, with early reports being made in the 1820s, that a number of escaped convicts from New South Wales had made the island of Upolu a ‘rendezvous’.\footnote{Rhys Richards, \textit{Samoa’s Forgotten Whaling Heritage: American Whaling in Samoan Waters 1824-1878}, Wellington, 1992, pp.58,66; Ralston, \textit{Grass Huts and Warehouses}, p.23. The port town of Kororāreka was also a popular resort for Australian convicts although there they came to be known as ‘beachangers’ as opposed to ‘beachcombers’. See, Ivan P. Kerbel, ‘Notorious: A history of Kororāreka and the New Zealand frontier, c.1800-1850’, MLitt Thesis, University of Auckland, 1997, pp.14-15} 

Of the two facets of beachcombing indicated, it was this second characterization of beachcombers as dissolute, degenerate and disreputable that was to predominate during the nineteenth century. Arguably, the evolution of these connotations had more to do with the ideological imperatives and agendas formed in the ‘mind-galleries of outsiders’ rather than with the actual experiences or processes occurring on the many beaches of the Pacific, and were directly related to notions of imperialism and expansion, emanating from the metropole.\footnote{Dening, \textit{Beach Crossings}, p.17.} Significant, in this regard, was the process of textualisation, through which the idea of ‘beachcombing’ was to be irrevocably transformed and reconstituted by the varying means through which the actual experience of beachcombers was to be articulated. As the editors of \textit{Exploration & Exchange: A South Seas Anthology} have noted:

\footnote{Dening, \textit{Beach Crossings}, p.17.}
The transformation of the trajectory of the journey into that of a narrative, the publishing of voyage accounts for metropolitan audiences, invoked other kinds of culture and linguistic crossings and contacts. Historically variable conditions dictated the ways in which travellers might appear as authors, and in some cases excluded them from the task. The stories of disreputable narrators such as beachcombers, whose journeys into degeneracy disturbed convention and who lacked access to the world of publication or indeed to basic literacy skills, were frequently assembled or ventriloquized by more socially acceptable compositors - for instance, William Mariner's Dr John Martin or George Vason's clergy men Solomon Pigott and James Orange...120

With this in mind, the manner in which the experiences of beachcombers and stories such as Melville's came to be told, were generally articulated through their reconstruction and popularization in the form of 'survival literature'. This was a literary genre which was inherently tied up with imperial projects of European expansionism and imperial discourse. This is revealed by the context of this literature in which these stories remained 'safe' as 'transgressive plots, since the very existence of a text presupposed the imperially correct outcome: the survivor survived, and sought reintegration into the home society. The tale was always told from the viewpoint of the European who returned'.121 Who, through the very act of writing, reconfigured the experiences of the 'beachcomber' from afar, and typified this 'character' as being of a 'disreputable' and 'degenerate' nature, thereby disassociating themselves in the present from their experiences in the past, as is evident in the case of Melville's writing and life.122 This may also be seen in the many stories of the prolific writer Louis Becke who, himself having been a wayward sailor in the South Seas, was apt to typify his beachcombing characters as dissolute, degenerate and disreputable. Illustrative of this, are the following comments made by his fictional beachcombing character Bill in the story 'In a Samoan Village':

122 This becomes evident in Melville’s reference to the beachcombers as having a bad reputation despite the fact that he himself had been a beachcomber.
What are we in our own minds? What would any of your or my countrymen think of us but that we are a pair of shameless, degraded beings, unfit to associate with; sunk too low to even think of returning to civilisation again? 123

Furthermore, beyond the realm of fiction, such assessments were also to be confirmed in a more authoritative manner. This may be seen in the following description of the ‘beachcomber’ as a ‘species’ made by the ‘Master Mariner’ Handley Bathurst Sterndale:

The conditions necessary to his existence are warm sunshine, the growth of the cocoanut and taro (Arum esculentum), and savagery, which implies simplicity on the part of the legitimate inhabitants. His normal condition is destitution; the destiny which he most willingly accepts is the climax of barbarism....There are two varieties of the species common to the Pacific, the gregarious (or associated), and the solitary beachcomber. Associated beachcombers are, generally speaking, a dangerous class of ruffians, such as for generations back have chosen to themselves convenient ports of rendezvous in various quarters of the Spanish Main, and the great islands of the Pacific, chiefly consisting of idle and disreputable seamen, who preferred a reign of unbridled liberty even accompanied by poverty and rags, to eating honest biscuit, or earning honest wages on the deep sea... 124

As is apparent from Sterndale’s portrayal, the ‘associated beachcomber’ was distinguished not only by his savage nature, destitution, and disrepute – but also by his identification with ‘convenient ports of rendezvous’ – thereby setting the stage for an implicit association between the characteristics of the ‘beachcomber’ and those of ‘the beach’ itself. Illustrative of the extent to which such connections were made is the following description of Apia made as late as 1890 (when the days of the beachcomber were long past) by the American artist, John La Farge:

...we are on the road to Apia, which, like all white men’s places in such countries, has a taint of brutality remaining from the day of the beachcomber. It is an orderly

123 Louis Becke, Pacific Tales, London, 1896, p.146. See also, K.R. Howe, Nature, Culture & History: The “Knowing” of Oceania, Honolulu, 2000, pp.16-17. For biographical information on the life of George Lewis Becke see, James A. Michener & A. Grove Day, Rascals in Paradise, London, 1957, pp.259-286. 124 Handley Bathurst Sterndale, My adventures and researches in the Pacific, Canberra, 2001, p.174. H.B. Sterndale was an Auckland business man contracted by the New Zealand government in the 1870s to ‘investigate the state of the South Sea Islands’. A similar character who contemporaneously carried out this function was W. Seed (NZ Secretary of Customs). Their reports may be found in: H.B. Sterndale, ‘Memoranda by Mr Sterndale on some of the South Sea Islands’, AJHR, 1, A-3b, 1874; W. Seed, ‘The Navigators Group’, AJHR, 1, A-3a, 1874. These are also reprinted in: ‘Confederation and Annexation. Papers relating to The Pacific Islands: The Labour Traffic: Naval Defence of the Colonies: Intercolonial Reciprocity etc. etc.’, AJHR, 1, A-4, 1884.
To La Farge and many other later observers, ‘the beach’ and beachcombing were connected. This was a relationship that was inherently characterised by its savagery, brutality and therefore implied degeneracy. La Farge, however, was but one of many in his engagement with this discourse of ‘the beach’ and its implied ‘savagery’ inherited ‘from the day of the beachcomber’. By the time of his writing, he was engaging with this construction of ‘the beach’ via a long tradition of hegemonic discursive force which, in fact, can be related to bigger imperial designs that went far beyond the bounds of Apia. These were designs, which, in the first instance, may be linked to ‘the two major, interlocking cultural paradigms of nineteenth-century Britain, religion and empire’. Both of which were promulgated in the Pacific by the primary agents of British humanitarianism, the missionaries and the naval officers, who carried with them the implicit agenda of ‘christianization and civilization’.

For these humanitarian agents of officialdom there was little tolerance for white men who had ‘gone troppo’ in the South Pacific. In the eyes of the earliest missionaries ‘the beachcomber, was, without question, a renegade, profligate and godless’, and not far off was the resident trader, who, in the early

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127 La Farge, p.97.


days of settlement, was more often than not one and the same. As Jane Samson has aptly pointed out, as the primary agents of nineteenth-century British Imperialism in the Pacific, both the English missionaries and H.M.S. naval captains found the ‘consummate expression for their humanitarian prejudice against traders in comparisons between benign islanders and ‘savage’ white men’. This was an expression which found its way not only into the private logs, letters and journals kept by these observers, but which were also promulgated and textualised in published form. An example of which might be seen in the following comments written by Captain F. Walpole of H.M.S. Collingwood, in a published narrative of his time spent in the Pacific during the years 1844-1848. In the account, Walpole commented that, ‘these gentle people [Samoans] in their relations towards each other are less savage than many white skins and [are] clothed in fine linen’. While similar sentiments may be identified in the following description given by United States Commodore Mervine who visited Apia in 1856:

A state of society existing that beggars all description; composed of a heterogeneous mass of the most immoral and dissolute Foreigners that ever disgraced humanity: principally composed of Americans and Englishmen, several of whom have been Sidney [sic] convicts.

And also in the following description given by the missionary John Williams during a visit to Tonga in 1832:

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...I was astonished to find so great a number of runaway sailors here. They are a noisome pestilence in the South Seas. They were I believe all bound to the Navigator Islands [Samoa] where at present there are enough to paralyse the effects of the most zealous Missionary labours.134

Yet, as is apparent in the description given by La Farge, discourses of ‘the beach’ and beachcombing were to be further reconstituted by visitors to these communities who were unassociated with either the church or naval justice. In particular, this reality was to influence understandings of ‘the beach’ as global shifts in technology and knowledge systems allowed for greater access to the region and brought with it, what may be described as the beginnings of tourism in the Pacific. Of note with regard to these shifts were the advent of the steamship, establishment of regular mail routes, a global cotton boom instigated by the American civil war, and the completion, in 1869, of the trans-continental railway. Yet most importantly, accompanying these shifts were also developments in the production of mass-print, thereby making a journey to the South Seas profitable, not only for its purported physical benefits, but also as an opportunity to provide the public with an account of one’s journey. This genre of travel-literature was paramount in, among many other things, cementing the conflation of ideas of beachcombing with that of ‘the beach’. To give some idea of the extent to which this was so, one might consider the following description made of Apia and given by J.W. Boddam-Whetham in 1876, in which observing the physicality of cultural-meshing, through urbanisation, leads to thoughts about ‘savagery’:

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...the land running round the bay is divided into three districts, viz., Matafele, Apia, and Matanto [Matautu], it will be simpler for the purposes of description to designate the whole town as Apia. The right is occupied by the native town, which is situated on a narrow neck of land running out into the sea, and almost hidden in a dense grove of cocoanut and bread-fruit trees. The palm groves on the extreme left are dotted with foreign residences, over one of which the American flag floats conspicuously, and the middle ground along the beach is filled up with small white houses and native cottages, savage and civilized life strangely blended together…

Such descriptions were not limited to the physical space of ‘the beach’ but were also extended in depictions of the beach community as immoral and degenerate, and therefore as has having a poor influence on the Samoans; connotations which were implicit in earlier descriptions of beachcombers. To illustrate the following two descriptions of the beach community may be considered, the first being given in 1857 by J. D’Ewes:

In fact, whatever they may have been on their [Samoans] first and early conversion to our own faith, their great admixture with Europeans of the worst class, and the present state of society at Appia, [sic] the principal port, was quite sufficient to account for their demoralization...

The second, being made almost thirty years later in 1884, was by C.E. Baxter, a visitor to Apia:

In the town of Apia resides a curious mixture of German, American, and English outcasts from society, who seem to do their share of good in the world by opening up these places for better men who come after them; but in the meantime their baneful influence is shown on the natives who come in contact with them..

Both of these illustrate the extent to which ‘the beach’ was unable to escape its construction by outsiders as being characterised by degeneracy and disrepute. This was a construction which was further substantiated by the promulgation of

136 D’Ewes, p.169
the final attribute given to the earliest beachcombers, destitution. By the end of the nineteenth century, this completed a picture of ‘the beach’ that traced its beginnings to the earliest constructions of ‘beachcombers’ through the text. Illustrative of this is the following description of Apia, which was given as late as 1902, by Llewella Pierce Churchill:

Around the next corner of the shore was the reek and pettiness of Apia; beginning at one horn of the bay with “Mary Hamilton’s husband” the evidence of the failure of the attempt to make Samoans the same as white people, and ending at the other horn with the no more deplorable evidence of the wreck that comes to the higher race in its effort to meet the conditions of the lower, the poor, miserable wretch of a box maker, John Rhode, stark, starving, raving, chattering mad.138

In this way, it becomes evident that through the process of textualisation the discourse of ‘the beach’ as a community and a space was as much shaped by outside observations, which were laden with ideological underpinnings gained from the metropole, as they were from the experiences of those who actually lived in the port town. Furthermore, given the technological advances mentioned previously, and in particular the onset of mass-printing, it is also plausible that the community at Apia was to become increasingly influenced by these outside constructions of itself, and the discourse of ‘the beach’ through the text. In particular, this reality would have been even more likely upon the opening of the Apia coffee house, reading room and lending library in 1898, and the formation of local associations such as the German Concordia Club which, by 1912, was reported to have had a library ‘of more than a thousand books, circulating free amongst its members’.139


139 The very first Apia Public Library was opened on 2 January 1892, the later Coffee House, Free Reading Room and Lending Library was an extension of this. See, ‘Diary of TB Cusack Smith 1892: 2 January 1892’ in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X2760 (ATL); ‘Visitors Book July 1898 - Mar 1900. MS. with news cuttings, visiting cards etc, inserted’, in ‘Apia Coffee House, Free Reading Room and Lending Library’, ML MSS 1912 (ML); Ralph Wardlaw Thompson, My trip in the John Williams, London, 1900, pp.187-8; Trood, pp129-130. The Opening of the Apia Public Library is discussed in Chapter IV.
Taking this into account, however, the question remains as to how exactly the community at Apia came to engage with discourses of ‘the beach’ and how this may have evolved over time. In addressing this, the following three chapters, will examine the ways in which ‘the beach’ at Apia as a community, and a space, was a contested site upon which a Municipality came into being. This was a Municipality which at any one time was under challenge from within and which, itself, lay challenge to what came to be known as ‘the riff-raff of the beach’.  

This was a construction which was inherently linked to the evolution of connotations that came to both identify and solidify references to ‘the beach’ at Apia, by the end of the nineteenth century.

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Figure 7: ‘Postcards – Panorama of Apia Harbour’. In ‘Alice Hunt Papers’, MS-Papers-6752-01, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand
Figure 8: ‘Apia from Vaisigano (ca 1905)’. In ‘Dawson Album: Samoa’, Mobile Album 154, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira, New Zealand
Figure 9: ‘Apia from Sogi (ca 1905)’. In ‘Dawson Album: Samoa’, Mobile Album 154, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira, New Zealand
Figure 10: ‘Postcards – Apia from Matautu’. In ‘Alice Hunt Papers’, MS-Papers-6752-01, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand
Figure 11: ‘Matautu from Mulivai (ca 1905)’. In ‘Dawson Album: Samoa’, Mobile Album 154, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira, New Zealand
Figure 12: ‘Vaisigano River (ca 1905)’. In ‘Dawson Album: Samoa’, Mobile Album 154, Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira, New Zealand
Colonialism shattered the reefs of our enclosed, slowly changing national world, bringing with it a bewildering farrago of new values, attitudes, ideas, conventions, impressions, images and symbols, other interpretations of reality and the universe, new technologies, doctrines and dogmas, and ever-changing art styles, fads, and fashions


Long before it was a colonial space, ‘the beach’ at Apia was a Samoan preserve. More specifically, it was defined by its geographical positioning within the districts of Faleata, to the East, and Vaimauga, to the West, and in a broader sense, its political locale within the Itu of Tuamasaga. With the coming of the papālagi, however, the political function of ‘the beach’ at Apia was set to change dramatically. It is this transformation that forms the basis for this thesis. For twenty-one years, during the period 1879-1900, this space was sectioned off from within the sovereign state of Samoa under a Municipal Convention which established Apia as an international treaty port and essentially encroached on the matai pule of the five Samoan villages within this district, and the then Samoan Government. This chapter, therefore, will engage with the politics which allowed for this re-definition of ‘the beach’ to occur and will examine the key events that preceded the signing of the Municipal Convention to shed light on its place within Samoan history.

The decade of the 1870s was a particularly tumultuous period in Samoan history. The decade was witness to massive land alienation, factional politicking, and outright war, much of which directly implicated or was centred upon the
beach community, at Apia. The increasingly politicised role of this community may be traced back to external shifts and upheavals that had begun to impact on the Pacific from the mid-1860s. During this period, the key event which was of paramount importance with regard to the Pacific was the onset, in 1861, of the American Civil War. As war raged between the Union States and the Confederacy, a world shortage in cotton caused an unprecedented demand for the product.\textsuperscript{141} In consequence, an influx of entrepreneurial settlers ventured into the Pacific, instigating the beginnings of large-scale plantation-style agriculture in the region, and reshaping the politics that had previously existed at the key Pacific Island port town communities.

In Samoa, the influx of this ambitious and fortune-seeking cohort of foreigners was to have particular consequences through the establishment at Apia of the Central Polynesian Land and Commercial Company, an American concern which was primarily concerned with land-speculation for re-sale in smaller plots.\textsuperscript{142} During the second stage of the \textit{Faitasiga} war (February 1872 – May 1873) between the two holders of the Sā Malietoā title a number of the agents of this company were actively involved as ‘agitators’ throughout the conflict, supplying arms and ammunition to both sides in exchange for land.\textsuperscript{143} While many of the claims made by this company were later dismissed as illegal and unfounded, the direct consequences of its dealings were to exacerbate a mounting distrust between the Samoan community and the growing foreign settlement at ‘the beach’. By 1873 land alienation, war, and ‘the beach’ had

\textsuperscript{141} The American Civil War also led to increases in the prices of other raw materials such as coffee and sugar. Other external influences that impacted on the Pacific included the establishment in 1869 of the trans-continental railway, and a technological shift from the export of coconut oil to copra. Gordon R. Lewthwaihthe, ‘Land, Life and Agriculture to Mid-Century’, in James W. Fox & Kenneth B. Cumberland (eds) \textit{Western Samoa: land, life and agriculture in tropical Polynesia}, Christchurch, 1962, pp.138-9; Mālama Meleiseā, \textit{The Making of Modern Samoa}, p.35; J.W. Davidson, \textit{Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa}, Melbourne, 1967, p.45.


\textsuperscript{143} Gilson, pp.280-290. Cotton was to remain as an important export for Samoa throughout this decade. In 1880, for example, it was estimated by US Consul Thomas M. Dawson that the export of this product alone would reach 2,500,000 pounds. See, Thomas M. Dawson ‘Commerce and Products of Samoa – Trade with the United States’, in ‘Reports from the consuls of the United States on the commerce, manufacturers, etc., of their consular districts’, US 48\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 1\textsuperscript{st} Session, Washington, 1880, p.179.
become synonymous in Samoa, thus leaving the way open for a seemingly influential foreign diplomat, Colonel Albert Steinberger, to exercise some influence over both communities.144

Steinberger landed at Pago Pago on 7 August 1873 as an United States Special Agent sent by President Grant 'to investigate the conditions of the islands'.145 Following a short stay on Tutuila he sailed for Upolu where he soon discovered that his arrival conveniently coincided with the cessation of five years of civil war between the two holders of the Sā Malietoā title - Malietoa Laupepa (son of the late Malietoa Moli) and Malietoa Talavou (half-brother of the late Malietoa Moli).146 It was out of this war that an unprecedented amount of Samoan land had been alienated, and Steinberger was quick to align himself with the then mālō of Malietoa Laupepa, as a self-professed prominent American representative who purported to exercise enough influence to be able to negotiate an American protectorate over Samoa.147 He was, according to Mālama Meleiseā, reportedly greeted with 'confidence and trust' by the Samoan authorities.148 Evidence of this may be seen in that by 1875 he had been appointed as Premier of the Samoan Government, and had already begun to conduct himself as the 'future arch-manipulator' of Samoan politics.149

Alongside this, the colonel was also active in his alienation of particular factions from within the beach community. By late 1876 his growing influence over the Samoan government, and reportedly under-hand business dealings with

146 This war was known as the War of Faitasiga. For details of the war and the events leading up to it see Mālama Meleiseā, Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa, pp.76-81; Mālama Meleiseā, The Making of Modern Samoa, pp.34-36; Ellison, p.49. Also for a general discussion of the relationship between Samoan titular disputes and national leadership see, Morgan Tuimaleali’ifano, ‘Titular Disputes and National Leadership in Samoa’, Journal of Pacific History, 33, 1, 1998, pp.91-103. See also, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, ‘The Riddle in Samoan History: The Relevance of Language, Names, Honorifics, Genealogy, Ritual and Chant to Historical Analysis’, Journal of Pacific History, 29, 1, 1994, p.75.
149 Davidson, p.49.
the Hamburg based D.H.P.G., had led to the exacerbation of already existent national divisions along ‘the beach’. In particular, a number of the British settlers claimed that Steinberger had ‘pretended to be a highly moral man’ while in reality (they claimed) he was a ‘drunkard and debauchee acting as a dictator and despot among the natives’. Conversely, Steinberger was popularly supported by a number of prominent American settlers such as the United States Consul Jonas Coe, as well as being backed by the Samoan Government he represented. Nonetheless, as history would have it, the events of 1876 were to culminate in the downfall of this self styled ‘arch-manipulator’ and amidst a number of intrigues and the reportedly ‘forced’ signature of Malietoa Laupepa the American colonel was eventually deported from Samoa, onboard H.M.S. Barracouta. As he sailed, the clouds of yet another civil war gathered behind him.

To compound the situation further, the decade of the 1870s was also witness to the arrival of an ‘uncommonly troublesome and litigious foreign element’. Many of these people arrived during the years 1875-1877, and were said to have been ‘fortune seeking agitators’ who had lived in Levuka before Fijian annexation. During the years following Steinberger’s deportation, the town of Apia was subject to a ‘spirit of ruffianism and utter lawlessness’ and many of the connotations associated with ‘beachcombing’ and ‘the beach’ were

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150 See Chapter I, p.38.
152 Steinberger was deported onboard H.M.S. Barracouta by Captain C.E. Stevens on 30 March 1876. For details of the subsequent war between the dethroned Malietoa Laupepa, his supporters (the Puletua) and the Ta’imua and Faipule see, Ellison pp.73-74; Davidson, p.49; John Bach, The Australia Station: a history of the Royal Navy in the South West Pacific, 1821-1913, Kensington, 1986, p.107; J. Holstine, ‘American Diplomacy in Samoa, 1884-1889’ PhD Thesis, Indiana University, 1971, pp.34-36.
153 Gilson, p.358.
154 Fiji was annexed by Great Britain in 1874. Caroline Ralston, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’, PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1970, p.252; Trood, p.79.
reinforced as these unruly new arrivals from Levuka engaged with licentiousness, treachery and fraud.155

Nonetheless, this situation was set to change, and it was from within the beach community itself that a challenge was laid. By 1877, the ruffianism and violence that was being practiced by a number of the ‘troublemakers’ from Levuka, had proved itself inimical to the efforts of many of the old-established foreign members of ‘the beach’ who had endeavoured, since the 1850s, to enforce a modicum of ‘law and order’.156 In response to the prevailing state of lawlessness, a number of these prominent settlers sent a petition to the British Consul, Edward Liardet, in June 1877, requesting that he take action and have the worst offenders deported.157 Yet, despite the petition, the chaotic state of affairs continued, and it was decided amongst a number of the principal residents of Apia that they would be justified in undertaking dire methods to regain control over the township. This decision was to lead directly to the implementation of ‘Samoa Justice’ and the lynching of Charles Cochrane in November 1877, an account of which follows.

In the papers of the late Augustus Stead, a one time regular of ‘the beach’ at Apia, there exists a photograph of Charles Cochrane, hanging from a noose, tied to a coconut tree, at Matafele, main-street Apia.158 In his own account of this incident, Stead wrote the following:

155 To compound the situation even further, it was also well-known throughout the Pacific at this time that notorious figures such the infamous Bully Hayes and hoteliers such as Black Tom and Black Bill had christened the port town ‘home’. See, Louis Becke, Bully Hayes: buccaneer, and other stories, Sydney, 1913, pp.11-12; Basil Lubbock, Bully Hayes: South Sea Pirate, Boston, 1931; G.E.L. Westbrook, Gods who die: the story of Samoa’s greatest adventurer as told to Julian Dana, New York, 1935, p.28; Anon, ‘Bully Hayes’, Samoa Times, 26 August 1921, p.3; ‘Hayes Collection’, MS Papers 0859 (ATL); T.J. Hearn, ‘Hayes, William Henry’, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (1769-1869), 1, Wellington, 1990, pp.180-181; Frank Clune, Free and easy land, Sydney, 1945, pp.284-309; Trood, pp.56-59; A. Grove Day, South Seas Supercargo, Honolulu, 1967, pp.176-179.

156 The most pronounced of these attempts may be seen in the establishment of a Foreign Residents’ Society in 1852, the evolution of which has been discussed at length by R.P. Gilson. See, Gilson, pp.222-245.

157 Caroline Ralston, ‘Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century’, pp.252-253.

158 An English sailor, Augustus George Stead (1818-1883) was resident in Apia from 1869 until his death in 1883.
I now enclose a photo of the execution of the murderer which you will kindly show to all to give them an idea of Samoa justice….You will notice how this man (enclosed) got a short strive and a long rope through this melancholy affair. I need not say things have been very quiet -nevertheless it struck terror in the hearts of some of the natives, when they saw what the foreigners who live here would do with any one who committed such a dastardly deed. The block on the tree still hangs there and no native will go past that tree after dark….You will see many figures there one in a white coat and a broad hat closest to the tree whose features you cannot discern and natives round him. I leave you to judge who he is.\footnote{Augustus George Stead, ‘Letter to my dear boy: 16 January 1878’, in ‘Papers: 1846-1884’, MS 6865 (NLA)}

Figure 13: ‘Lynch Law in Samoa’, b50469, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia
In a later, second-hand, account written by James Cowan the event is described as follows:

In the absence of any settled form of government lynch law was resorted to on at least one occasion in Apia. In 1877 there was a murder in a grog-shop; an American coloured man named Cochrane stabbed a sailor. The knife-user was taken aboard an American vessel, ostensibly for trial in the United States, but the residents of Apia doubted whether he would be punished as the crime demanded, or even tried. So a party of traders and others, decent men who were determined to have something like law and order on the beach - my old acquaintance Frank Cornwall was one of them - went off to the ship, took the man on shore, and having adjudged him guilty of murder hanged him on a tree. Apia settlement was a model of behaviour for a long time after that 'necktie party'; at any rate the drinking-shop frequenters kept their hands off their sheath-knives.160

Both Stead and Cowan were describing the same 'dastardly deed', a murder that had resulted from a knife fight in the saloon of the York Hotel in late November 1877.161 Upon the finding by the American consular court that the sailor Charles Cochrane was guilty of the murder of another sailor, James Fox, a meeting was held and attended by 'more than eighty per cent of the foreign population' where it was decided that the immediate punishment of Cochrane onshore – through the implementation of 'Samoa Justice' – would 'have a salutary effect on the disorderly beach elements'.162 Evidence of this, may be seen in the following 'open letter' written by a number of prominent residents in Apia, and published in the Samoa Times. The letter was addressed to W.J. Hunt, a key protagonist in the lynching incident:

W.J. Hunt Esq., Apia

Dear Sir - We, the undersigned residents in Apia, feel it to be our duty to state the under-mentioned facts in relation to your trial and sentence in Her Britannic Majesty's High Commissioner's Court at Apia in February, 1878, upon a charge laid against you by US Consul Griffin, for conspiracy with others to murder Charles Corcoran [sic], a citizen of the United States.

The act with which you were charged was the act of the foreign residents in Apia, and was carried out under the firm conviction that it was absolutely necessary for the

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protection of life and property against a number of lawless and desperate persons, who, living in Apia believed themselves to be beyond the range of lawful authority competent to punish crime; that the punishment for the crime of which Corcoran [sic] had been found guilty by the US Court should be rigidly enforced by the public.

We hereby place on record that the act for which you suffered was one of public necessity, and, although, stringent, had a most beneficial affect in the interests of law and order, and we express our sympathy with you in that the punishment for the act of the community, fell upon you alone.

We remain dear sir,

Yours sincerely,


As is apparent from the letter, the lynching incident provided the settler community’s upstanding proponents of ‘decency’, ‘respectability’, and civility’, with the necessary impetus to bring law and order to this unruly port town. With reports at the time that ‘there were some twenty similar characters to the murderer upon the beach ready to do anything whatsoever rather than work for their living’ the implementation of ‘Samoa Justice’ served both the purpose of bringing these characters into line, as well as actively challenging the ‘dissolute, degenerate and disreputable’ connotations associated with living on ‘the beach’ in the South Seas.164 This was a challenge, which was to have long-term implications, through the later enforcement of particular standards and codes of behaviour at Apia which were to be condoned and enforced by a consular-controlled Municipal Board after 1879.

In a broader sense the Cochrane affair was also to have much wider repercussions, in that it was to provide the newly established Western Pacific High Commission (in Fiji) with the impetus to become involved in the affairs of Samoa. In the year following the lynching incident, Samoa was made subject to the jurisdiction of the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, under the Pacific Islands Order in Council (1878) and, in that same year, the Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Alfred P. Maudslay, was appointed to the

islands. On 10 February 1878 the port town was visited by the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Arthur Gordon, who arrived with the intention of investigating the current state of affairs in the port town, while also with the politically motivated task of dissuading the Ta’imua and Faipule from the proposed course of securing an American protectorate over Samoa.

In 1879, Apia was again visited by Sir Arthur Gordon who arrived with the intention of officially putting in place the appropriate structures for bringing order into the unruly port town. Gordon’s official visit could not have occurred at a more strategically placed time. By 1879 the three Great Powers of Germany, the United States and Great Britain were vying for commercial and political supremacy over Samoa, and the two former powers had already established formal treaty relations with the Samoan Government. Officially, then, Sir Arthur Gordon’s primary task, as far as the Foreign Office was concerned, was to negotiate a formal treaty with the Samoan Government, similar to those previously signed with Germany, and the United States.

Nonetheless, while this task was carried out, and a treaty negotiated, it is clear from the consular minutes and from Gordon’s correspondence that his primary concern was to negotiate a Municipal Convention for the governance of the town and port of Apia. The purpose and function of this convention was to

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165 For an account of Maudslay’s time in Apia see, A.P. Maudslay, *Life in the Pacific Fifty Years Ago*, London, 1930, pp.251-256; See also, Gilson, pp.358-9
166 C.E. Baxter, *Talofa: letters from foreign parts*, London, 1884, pp.107-124. Sir Arthur Gordon’s actions in this regard were largely in response to the fact that the Samoan Secretary of State M.K. Le Mamea Faletoese had travelled to Washington in September 1877 to discuss the possibility of establishing an American protectorate over Samoa. While the protectorate did not eventuate, a treaty between America and Samoa was concluded on 17 January 1878 which granted the United States rights to use Pago Pago as a naval base. See, Ellison, pp.89-98; Holstine, pp.39-40; Rigby, p.87; Grattan, p.126.
167 Rowe, p.79. See also, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, *Tamaitai Samoa: Their Stories*, revised edition, Carson, 1998, pp.20-22. The Western Pacific High Commission (WPHC) was established in 1875 under The Pacific Islanders Protection Act (Great Britain). The WPHC was based in Fiji and held its jurisdiction over all British subjects resident in the Western Pacific. See, Ellison, p.68; Gilson, p.361.
168 Germany signed a treaty with Samoa on 24 January 1879. While at Apia Sir Arthur Gordon successfully negotiated a treaty with Malietoa Talavou between Samoa and Great Britain which was signed on 28 August 1879. See, Meleisea, p.48; Ellison, pp.101, 105.
169 Minutes of a meeting at which HCWP informed national representatives that he had been commissioned to visit Samoa and negotiate a treaty between Great Britain and Samoa similar to those entered into with the USA and Germany. Minutes of the meeting also concern recognition of Malietoa
provide the legal framework for the establishment of a consular-controlled Municipal Board that would officially exercise its jurisdiction over both the foreign settlers and Samoans resident within the Municipal territory. Pertinent to this end, the convention was also to be instrumental in the official laying down of boundaries and territorial zones that were to be known as both the Municipal territory of Apia, and the Neutral territory of Apia. This was an act that essentially made way for a re-definition of both the physical and ideological space that had come to form ‘the beach’ at Apia.

In essence, the signing of this convention served a number of functions with regard to many of the grand political designs and local intrigues that were being engaged with by the Great Powers. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this thesis the Municipal Convention will be discussed in the light of two of its primary functions, both of which were inherently linked to a re-definition of ‘the beach’. The primary function of the Municipal Convention was to provide official sanctioning for the establishment of an international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa. This was an encroachment which was negotiated and condoned by the then mālō of Malietoa Talavou and later challenged by the subsequent mālō of Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and his German advisor Eugen Brandeis. Through the establishment of the extra-territoriality of Apia, the physical space of ‘the beach’ was, in a literal sense, re-defined, and severed from the sovereign state of Samoa.

The second function of the Municipal Convention was to pave the way for the official determination of which forms of social and cultural behaviour it was

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Government and proposed establishment of a municipality for Apia, August and September 1879’, in ‘Various records of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul Samoa 1874-1890’, WPHC 1/II/11 (ANZ)


appropriate to practice within the bounds of this extra-territorial space. It was, essentially, about re-defining the ideological standards, and acceptable modes of behaviour, that were to be practiced by the beach community, at Apia. This function was of crucial importance, in that it was quite clearly linked to the same discourses of ‘respectability’, ‘civility’ and ‘propriety’ that had been used to justify the 1877 lynching of Charles Cochrane, and therefore, was to be built on a precedent that had been set by members of the beach community itself. Nonetheless, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, despite this earlier drive to set standards of behaviour at ‘the beach’, the Municipal regulations that were to be put in place were to be consistently challenged from within the community.

Formal discussion with regard to the proposed control of ‘the beach’ began on the 25th August 1879 at a meeting held in the Imperial German Consulate.\textsuperscript{172} At this meeting Sir Arthur Gordon put forward a proposal to the various representatives of the foreign powers for the establishment of the Municipality of Apia. The following is a record of this:

\begin{quote}
His Excellency then informed the meeting that he and Mr Maudslay were instructed to propose to the representatives of other States, that they should in concert with the British plenipotentiaries propose to conclude a convention with the Samoan Government for the establishment of a Municipal Government for the district of Apia. The rough draft of such a convention was read by His Excellency, who said that he would have the honor of forwarding copies to the Consuls of Germany and the United States for their more careful consideration.\textsuperscript{173}
\end{quote}

While the original draft of the Municipal Convention did not accompany the minutes of this meeting three subsequent sets of minutes indicate that (dependant on the official sanction of their various governments) the foreign representatives were collectively unanimous in their support for the proposal of

\textsuperscript{172} Present at this meeting were: Sir Arthur Gordon (High Commissioner for the Western Pacific High Commission), Alfred P. Maudslay (Deputy High Commissioner for the WPHC), R. Chandler (Captain of the US Navy, Commanding USS \textit{Lackawanna}), Theodor Weber (Imperial German Consul for Samoa & Tonga), Thomas M. Dawson (United States Consul, Apia), J. Hicks Graves (Her British Majesty’s Consul, Apia), F. Mensing (Imperial German Navy commanding HIGM \textit{Albatross}), Commander James Bruce (British Navy, HBMS \textit{Cormorant}).

\textsuperscript{173} ‘Minutes: 25 August 1879’, in ‘Various records of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul Samoa 1874-1890’, WPHC 1/II/11 (ANZ). It is worthy of note that the American spelling adhered to in the minutes was insisted upon by the US Consul Thomas M. Dawson. See, Maudslay, p.253.
the establishment of a Municipal government and territory. Any disagreement and debate appears to have taken place solely with regard to the logistical details for the establishment of a Municipal Board and regulations.

Significantly, the next meeting of import was that attended by the Samoan chiefs Afamasaga Le Auauna, Malietoa Laupepa, and the Reverend George A. Turner of the London Missionary Society, who acted as the official interpreter. Similarly to the last, this meeting was held at the Imperial German Consulate on 29th August 1879. At this meeting, those articles hitherto discussed and proposed were presented to the Samoan government representatives who then ‘pressed their own approval but requested time to present them to Malietoa [Talavou] and his government before signing them’. Importantly, at this time the Pulefou government was in power at Mulini’u and Malietoa Talavou held the ‘kingship’ (Tupu) while Malietoa Laupepa was the Sui Tupu, or vice-king. This situation was to be short-lived, however, as following Malietoa Talavou’s death in November 1880, Malietoa Laupepa succeeded his uncle.175

Following this meeting, one more conference was held between the foreign representatives and Sir Arthur Gordon on 1st September 1879 (one day before the convention was given official sanction) where a letter sent to each of the three consuls by Malietoa Talavou was discussed. According to the official minutes this letter asked each of the leaders of the three Great Powers to help ‘the Samoans in the government of their country’.176 Whether the translation of this letter was correct or Malietoa’s true message was understood remains unclear, due to the absence of the source, but what is apparent is that following the receipt of these three separate letters the foreign representatives then found the impetus to push through the Municipal Convention based on their unanimous

174 ‘Minutes 28 August 1879’, in ‘Various records of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul Samoa 1874-1890’, WPHC 1/II/11 (ANZ)
175 Gilson, pp.360-372.
176 ‘Minutes: 1st September 1879’, in ‘Various records of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul Samoa 1874-1890’, WPHC 1/II/11 (ANZ). In Maudslay’s account Sir Arthur Gordon met with Malietoa and fourteen high chiefs at the British Consulate where he was ‘offered a formal and unconditional Cession of Samoa’ which was refused. See, Maudslay, pp.255-6.
agreement that ‘every effort should be made to prevent the outbreak of civil war among the Samoans until the three great Governments to which Malietoa and his Government have written for assistance can be heard from’. 177 Moreover, the receipt of this letter and its role in the establishment of the Municipality would appear to fit well with R.P. Gilson’s analysis of the matter. He contends that Malietoa’s support of the Municipal Convention as well as the treaty signed with Great Britain set the stage for the three Powers’ ‘provisional recognition’ of his regime, over that of the ousted Ta’imua and Faipule.178

On 2nd September 1879 the Municipal Convention for the town and district of Apia was signed at Mulinu’u. On behalf of the Samoan Government it was signed by Afamasaga Le Auauna and Malietoa Laupepa. 179 On behalf of each of the foreign governments the convention was signed by Sir Arthur Gordon and Alfred P. Maudslay (Great Britain); Captain F. Mensing and Consul Theodor Weber (Germany); and Captain R. Chandler and Consul Thomas M. Dawson (United States). In total, the Municipal Convention consisted of thirteen articles, the structure of which essentially laid the legal groundwork for establishment of the extra-territoriality of the town and district of Apia, essentially re-defining this space as a ‘neutral’ territory, (the politics of which will be discussed below). At its heart, though, the weakness of the Municipal Convention lay in its inherent impermanence, as a temporary arrangement. This is made apparent in Article X which allowed for a revision of the convention on the part of either the Samoan Government or any of one of the three Great Powers at the conclusion of each four year period. The terms laid out in the article state that:

177 ‘Minutes: 1st September 1879’, in ‘Various records of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul Samoa 1874-1890’, WPHC 1/II/11 (ANZ)
178 Gilson, p.361. There is no evidence to suggest that Malietoa was coerced into signing the Municipal Convention nor that his signature was extorted by intimidation.
179 It is significant to note here that the Convention was signed by Malietoa Laupepa not Malietoa Talavou under whose mālō the Samoan ali’i were signing. The Convention was ratified at Mulinu’u on 27 August 1880. ‘Mr. Becker to Mr. Sewall: 14 October 1887’, in ‘American rights in Samoa: Message from the President of the United States, with inclosures, in response to the resolution of the House of Representatives in relation to the affairs in Samoa’, US 50th Congress, 1st Session, 28, House Executive Document 238, 1888, p.132.
The present Convention shall be revised at the end of four years from its date, and if the internal state of Samoa at that time will happily admit thereof, without prejudice to the interests of foreign residents in Samoa, the powers conferred by the present Convention upon the Municipal Board of Apia shall cease and determine, and the district again pass under the control and authority of the Samoan Government, or such other authority as may be agreed upon between the Samoan Government and the High Contracting Parties.\footnote{180}

This impermanence was consistently to undermine the very premise upon which the Municipal Convention was based, and would lead to the convention’s eventual demise in January 1888.

In the years that it was active, however, the Municipal Convention was to have a huge impact by way of re-defining both the physical and the ideological landscape of the township. Of its defining features, the convention allowed for the official sectioning off of the town and district of Apia as firstly a ‘Municipal territory’ and secondly a ‘Neutral territory’. Moreover, with regard to the implementation of its function of ‘preserving peace and good order’ in the township, the Municipal Convention also allowed for the establishment of a Municipal Board which was to meet on the first Friday of every month, and which was involved in the drafting and implementation of a series of Municipal Regulations concerned with taxation, public offences, policing, public works, health regulations and quarantine among many others.

On 6\textsuperscript{th} September 1879 a full copy of the Municipal Convention, in both English and Samoan, was published in the \textit{Samoa Times}.\footnote{181} A week later, the following editorial comment was published in the same periodical:

\begin{quote}
The issue of the Convention providing that that portion of this island, comprised inside the boundaries of what is now known as a neutral territory, should be framed into a Municipality, has created considerable discontent in certain quarters. The
\end{quote}

\footnote{180} ‘Convention between Her Majesty and the King and Government of Samoa for the Government of the Town and District of Apia. (Signed at Apia, 2nd September 1879)’, in \textit{British Foreign Office Confidential Prints}, London, 1881, pp.1-5. (See Appendix A) After the initial four year period (29 September 1883) the revision was postponed and the Convention renewed on the basis that ‘the Samoan government had expressed no wish for any revision in accordance with Article X’. See, ‘Convention between Great Britain, Germany, the USA and Samoa as to the revision of the Convention of September 2nd, 1879, relative to the Municipal Board of Apia, September 29th, 1883’, in ‘Prints relating to the affairs of the Samoans, 1875-1918’, WPHC 1/IV/6 (ANZ)

\footnote{181} ‘Convention between Her Majesty and the King and Government of Samoa for the Government of the Town and District of Apia’, \textit{Samoa Times}, 6 September 1879, p.3.
causes assigned for the discontent are, in the first place, that such an important step should be taken and the Convention concluded without those who are interested pecuniarily in the matter having been consulted, or an opportunity having been given to them to offer some suggestions as to what would be the best course to take. In the second place, and the complaint which seems to be made the most of, there appears to be a fear that not only have they not been allowed a word to say as to how they should be taxed, but that when taxes have been levied they are not to be permitted to say a word in the matter of their expenditure. That work, the impression is, will be monopolised by the three representatives of the countries which have entered into treaty relationships with Samoa.\textsuperscript{182}

As is apparent from the above, initial support for the Municipal Convention was not unanimous from within the foreign community, with taxation and lack of consultation being of primary concern. Nonetheless, the first public meeting of the residents of Apia was held at the Rarotonga Church at Matafele (which was opposite the Hotel zur Stadt Hamburg) on Tuesday 23\textsuperscript{rd} December 1879, and at this meeting they elected three people to fill the positions of Assessor, Collector and Treasurer.\textsuperscript{183}

In the first instance, the convention allowed for the first official political attempt by the settler community to section off the town and district of Apia as an international port town within the independent nation of Samoa.\textsuperscript{184} Cartographically and politically this was achieved through sectioning of the district into two overlapping yet distinct political zones. The first of these was to be known as the Municipal Town and District of Apia, and under Article I of the 1879 Municipal Convention was defined as:

The space comprised within the following limits, that is to say, commencing at Vailoa, passing thence along the coast to the mouth of the Fulnasa [Fuluasou] River, thence up the course of the River Fulnasa [Fuluasou] to the point at which the Alafuula road crosses such river, thence along the said road to the point where it reaches the River Vaisigo [Vaisigano], and thence, in a straight line, to the point of

\textsuperscript{182} Anon, ‘Editorial Comment’, \textit{Samoa Times}, 13 September 1879, p.2.
\textsuperscript{183} Anon, ‘Public Meeting’, \textit{Samoa Times}, 20 December 1879, p.3.
\textsuperscript{184} F.M. Keesing, \textit{Modern Samoa: A study of Dependency Government and of Racial and Cultural Change}, Honolulu, 1934, p.70
According to the subsequent articles contained within the Municipal Convention this area comprised that upon which the Municipal Board, not the Samoan Government, was given the authority to pass regulations and by-laws, levy taxes, and carry out legal jurisdiction through the appointment of a Municipal Magistrate. Illustrative of this was the reality that through Malietoa’s signing over of ‘the beach’ as a political concession the very nature of the convention in its ‘debarring of the exercise of the Samoan Government’s sovereignty’ ensured that control of ‘the beach’ lay firmly in foreign hands.\textsuperscript{186} While more specifically, it placed the Municipality in the hands of the three consuls, setting the scene for what Gilson has termed a ‘consular oligarchy’.\textsuperscript{187}

The second politically distinct zone established by the Municipal Convention was the area that was to be known as the ‘Neutral territory of Apia’. Provision for the establishment of this zone was given under Article IX as follows:

In the case of civil war, the town and district of Apia, and the adjacent districts comprised between the boundaries of the town and district of Apia and Letogo, Tiapepe Point and Siusega shall be considered as neutral territory, and the Municipal Board may frame and issue such regulations as may be considered necessary for the support and maintenance of such neutrality.\textsuperscript{188}

The Samoan version, an accurate translation, states:

\textit{A tupu se tana o Samoa latou e ilogaina le aai ma nuu o Apia ma nuu i ona talane e pau mai Letogo, pau mai foi tolotolo i Tiapepe ma Siusega e fai ma lauelele sa. E}

\textsuperscript{185} ‘Convention between Her Majesty and the King and Government of Samoa for the Government of the Town and District of Apia. (Signed at Apia, 2nd September 1879)’, in \textit{British Foreign Office Confidential Prints}, London, 1881, p.3.
\textsuperscript{186} Gilson, p.361.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p.367. The predominance of the foreign consuls over the Municipal Board will be discussed in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{188} Gilson, p.386. Earlier attempts to enforce the ‘neutrality’ of Apia during the 1870s had consistently failed and were often instigated under the initiative of various naval captains along with the consuls. See for example, ‘Copy of letter sent from Captain Harsenfly of H.M.S. Augusta on his departure to Sydney, 16 July 1877’, in ‘Great Britain. Foreign Office: Pacific Islands: Correspondence’, FO58/157, Microfilm G1704 (AJCP)
In this way, under the terms of the Municipal Convention the ‘neutral’ territory of Apia as an extension of the Municipal district and town of Apia was only to be given legitimization during periods of civil war. This was a situation which given the instability of Samoan politics from 1879-1888, leant itself generously to the advantage of the foreign controlled Municipal Board. To illustrate this one might consider Figure 14 which is a map of the Neutral and Municipal territory of Apia in 1886. By clearly defining two separate districts this map illustrates the extent to which the Neutral territory of Apia not only encompassed a much greater zone of jurisdiction but also, perhaps more importantly, strategically encompassed three major tracts of plantation land – that of Vaivase and Vailele to the east and Vaitele plantation to the west. In this way the map clearly illustrates the motivation behind the establishment and maintenance of the second territorial zone. It was primarily to protect foreign economic interests at Apia.  

Significantly, the establishment of the Municipal Board and the two districts under the Municipal Conventions carried out two separate and distinct functions with regard to the control and maintenance of ‘the beach’. The first of these was as an informal colonial body designed to maintain and uphold the interests of the foreign community over that of the Samoan community. This was a function which simultaneously discriminated against the five Samoan villages located with the Municipal district; the pule of the Samoan Government within the district; and Samoan national autonomy, in general. This function of the Municipal Convention has received little scholarly attention from historians, particularly with regard to its relationship to the establishment of precedents in relationships and policies for later formal colonial administrations in Samoa. In
this chapter, I will discuss two examples of the ways in which this function was carried out under the authority of the Municipal Convention. The second function, which has been the primary focus of my research, can be seen in the control of ‘the beach’ through the official laying down of boundaries, establishment of regulations, and judicial authority carried out by the Municipal Board during this period.
Figure 14: ‘Map of the Neutral territory in and about Apia, 1886’. In ‘Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands’, **Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints, Part X, October-December 1886**, p.202a
A major reason behind the establishment of the ‘Neutral territory’ of Apia lay was a foreign drive to protect and uphold settler economic and political interests at Apia. The extent to which this was the case becomes most evident in the inapplicability of Article VIII in the Municipal Convention – which speaks of upholding the ‘territorial integrity’ of Samoa – to the Neutral territory of Apia. Under the terms and wording of the Municipal Convention this Article was only applicable to the preceding articles, including the establishment of a Municipal town and district, while notably it is directly followed by, but not applicable to, Article IX which makes provision for the establishment of a Neutral territory during times of civil war. Article VIII states as follows:

The foregoing Articles shall in no way prejudice the territorial integrity of Samoa, and the Samoan flag shall be hoisted at such place of meeting of the Municipal Board as may be permanently adopted.

The Samoan version of this article states:

_E atoatoa pea le pule a Samoa i le lauelele uma o Samoa e le faalavelaveina i tulafono nei. E sisi foi le fua o Samoa i le mea ua iu ma filifilia e fai ai potopotoga o Alii ua tofia e pulea le faiaai nei._

Notably, given the fact that the legal use of the term ‘territorial integrity’ is associated with upholding notions of national sovereignty, the inapplicability of this term to Article IX (allowing for the establishment of the Neutral territory) belies the colonial objectives that underpinned its inclusion in the Municipal Convention. Taking this into account, it would seem plausible to surmise that

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194 Ibid, p.4. This loosely translates to mean that the authority of the Samoan Government still resides with that Government and that this convention/law (tulafono) does not infringe on that authority. It also allows for the Municipal Board to hoist the Samoan flag. I am indebted to my cousin Jude Kohlhase for his advice and assistance with regard to the analysis of the Municipal Convention. ‘Private Correspondence between myself and Jude Kohlhase, Principal Planner, Samoan Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure’, 7 March 2006, original in my possession.
ultimately the inclusion of this article in the Municipal Convention was a means through which the consuls were able to achieve the goal of ‘maintaining a fiction of Samoan territorial integrity as part of the national policy of each of their countries’. In this way, the inclusion of the term ‘territorial integrity’ along with the subsequent article (Article X) which made provision for a four year revision of the convention acted as a political sedative through which the consuls were able to uphold the rhetoric of Samoan national sovereignty while simultaneously compromising it. The very irony in this juxtaposition belies the extent to which the Municipal Convention was designed first and foremost to suit the needs and interests of the foreign consuls, not the Samoan Government. In this way its colonial function becomes evident.

With regard to Samoan sovereignty and autonomy it is undeniable that the official severance of ‘the beach’ at Apia was an act of colonial encroachment. The extent to which this was so can be seen in the very fact that the five Samoan villages located within the Municipal zone were subject not to their own Government’s jurisdiction – but to that of the Municipal Board. In accordance with this, one of the most pronounced means through which the Municipal Board exercised its jurisdiction over these villages was through the levying of taxes. Evidence of the extent to which this was so can be seen in the census of 1880 (published in the Samoa Times) which listed all of the eligible Samoan men from the villages of Vaiala, Matautu, Tanugamanono, Apia and Vaimoso who were liable for taxable duties on their labour. In this same year the following Municipal Regulation was passed:

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195 With regard to advice and assistance on this point I am greatly indebted to Guy Powles. ‘Private Correspondence between myself and Guy Powles’, 11 January 2006, original in my possession.
197 Vaiala, Matautu, Tanugamanono, Apia and Vaimoso.
...a Poll Tax of One Dollar per Annum payable in advance shall be levied on all male adult Samoans or other male adult Islanders of the Pacific Ocean resident within the Municipality.\textsuperscript{199}

It is likely that this poll tax would have placed a huge burden on each of these villages particularly given that many of the \textit{aiga} within these \textit{nu'u} were solely reliant on the value of the yield of their copra which was determined by the foreign traders. In this way, the Municipal poll tax perpetuated a cycle of economic dependency between the Samoan villages within the Municipal district and the foreign settler community. This regulation also set a precedent for a similar (although unsuccessful) attempt to introduce a national poll tax in October 1887 which again cemented an already existent hierarchical relationship of trade between Apia and the rest of Samoa.\textsuperscript{200}

The Samoan term for the Municipal district was \textit{ele'ele}sā a term which loosely translated means the ‘forbidden or sacred land’, a place where only certain people were allowed to go, not everyone.\textsuperscript{201} What is questionable though is the extent to which this term was taken literally or whether it was simply a term used by the Municipal Board to indicate the jurisdictional differentiation between the Municipal territory of Apia and the rest of Samoa. Furthermore, the existence of five Samoan villages within the Municipal territory along with the transient Samoan population that would have consistently come into the town for a multitude of purposes such \textit{malaga}, \textit{fa'alavelave}, and trade negates the very notion of this territorial zone being inaccessible or ‘forbidden’ to Samoans.\textsuperscript{202}

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\textsuperscript{199} ‘Municipal Regulations: Concerning Taxes: 5 July 1880’, in ‘Prints relating to the affairs of the Samoans, 1875-1918’, WPHC 1/IV/5 (ANZ)

\textsuperscript{200} This tax was introduced under the regime of Tupua Tamasese Titemaea and Eugen Brandeis. See, Jocelyn Linnekin, ‘The Teacher and His Copra: Debts, Taxes and Resistance in Colonial Samoa’, \textit{Ethnohistory}, 41, 4, 1994, p.544.

\textsuperscript{201} My own translation. See also, G.B. Milner, \textit{Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English/English-Samoan}, London, 1966, p.41; Davidson, p.74; Albert Wendt, ‘Guardians and Wards: A study of the origins, causes and the first two years of the Mau in Western Samoa’, MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1965, p.47; Robert Louis Stevenson, \textit{A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa}, reprint, Auckland, 1996, pp.11-12; Charles S. Greene, \textit{Talofa Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle}, San Francisco, 1896, p.31. This was the term used to refer to the Municipal District in all of the notices and regulations printed by the Municipal Board during the period 1879-1900.

\textsuperscript{202} Further research needs to be carried out by Samoan historians with regard to the use of this term more generally, however from my own enquiries I have found no evidence to suggest that this is a term used to refer to contemporary Apia.
\end{flushright}
this way, one would suggest that this term was used by the Municipal Board to legitimize its jurisdictory functions within the Municipal district. However, this ploy (apart from its linguistic use) was not and could never have been effective as, for Samoans, the very notion of severing Apia from the rest of Samoa as an inaccessible territorial district was (and is) culturally abhorrent and incomprehensible.203

Nonetheless, this reality did not deter the Municipal Board in its quest to cement and enforce the notion of ele’elese’a particularly with regard to the second distinct political zone of the Neutral territory of Apia. During times of civil war this territory encompassed the town and district of Apia, and the adjacent districts comprised between the boundaries of the town and district of Apia and Letogo, Tiapaepe Point and Siuesega.204 During the period of Municipal governance (1879-1900) the boundaries of this territory and regulations to enforce it were put in place during the civil wars of 1880-1881 (between Malietoa Laupepa and Tupua Tamasese Titimaea, Matā’afa Iosefo);205 1887-1888 (between Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and Malietoa Laupepa);206 May 1893 (between Matā’afa Iosefo and Malietoa Laupepa);207 and 1899 (between Malietoa Tanumafili I and Matā’afa Iosefo).208 While these same boundaries would not have been applicable during the war of 1888-1889 between Matā’afa Iosefo and the Tamasese/Brandeis regime (due to Tupua Tamasese’s dissolution of the Municipal Convention in January 1888) negotiations were held between Matā’afa Iosefo, Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and the foreign consuls as to the possibility of re-establishing

203 For a similar case study where the indigenous people’s access and activities in an urban area were restricted by law see, Edward P. Wolfers, Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea, Sydney, 1975, pp.96-97.
204 See Figure 14: Map of the Neutral territory of Apia.
206 For details of the immediate events leading up to this war see, Holstine, pp.143-44; Peter Hempenstall, Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A study in the meaning of colonial resistance, Canberra, 1978, pp.27-28.
207 For details of the immediate events leading up to this conflict see, I'uogafa Tuagalu, ‘Mata’afa Iosefo and the idea of Kingship in Samoa’, MA Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1988, pp.35-42. Following his defeat in July 1893 Matā’afa was exiled to Jaluit and did not return to Samoa until 1898.
208 For a general overview covering all of these wars see, Mālama Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa, Suva, 1987, pp.38-42.
a ‘neutral zone’. Through these discussions Apia was again defined as a ‘Neutral territory’ although the result favoured the German Consul’s determination to ‘neutralize Apia but not Mulinu’u’ thereby ‘insulating Tamasese from attack’. 209

With regard to attempts by the Municipal Board to enforce the legitimacy of the Neutral territory the following Municipal Regulation was in force during the period 1879-1886:

If the Consuls receive information that a violation of the Neutral Territory has been committed they shall inquire into the matter, and if after inquiry they are of opinion that such violation has been committed they shall summon the person or persons accused of committing such violation before them and try him or them in conjunction with the Native Judge. Any person convicted of a violation of the Neutral Territory shall be punished by a fine not exceeding Two Hundred Dollars, or imprisonment not exceeding Six Months with or without hard labour, or by both fine and imprisonment not exceeding the above-mentioned penalties... 210

Nonetheless, despite the Municipal Board’s attempts to enforce the integrity of ele’elesā, this concept and the colonial motives upon which it was founded were continually tested by various Samoan factions. This reality being directly attributed to the fact that to get to the seat of Government, Mulinu’u, armed parties had to cross through the so-called Neutral territory at Sogi. 211 Neither the fine nor the threat of imprisonment acted as a deterrent in any of the civil conflicts that ensued during the period. This becomes particularly evident in the fact that inevitably Apia was almost always the primary site of armed conflict. Furthermore, the very reasoning behind the establishment of the ‘Neutral territory’ with the purpose of protecting foreign property and settlers appears only to have exacerbated the extent to which the township was almost always the site of conflict.

Moreover, as mentioned, the Municipal Convention was flawed as a temporary arrangement that was given a form of legitimacy by the mālō of

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210 ‘Municipal Regulations 1879-1886: Concerning Violations of the Neutral Territory of Apia’ in ‘Prints relating to the affairs of the Samoans, 1875-1918’, WPHC 1/IV/5 (ANZ)
211 Gilson, p.361. Significantly while on paper Mulinu’u was included within both the Municipal and Neutral Territory, in practice it was generally excluded.
Malietoa Talavou, and was based on a delicate tripartite agreement between the three great powers. In this way, the ultimate paradox that underpinned the Municipal Convention was that it automatically became the catalyst in both the fight for Samoan titular supremacy, and for foreign influence over the sovereign state of Samoa. As l’uogafa Tuagalu has pointed out ‘the convention did not solve the political turmoil of Samoa, it exacerbated it’.212 In short, Malietoa Talavou’s sanctioning of the Municipal Convention ensured that, for his enemies (and consequently, also, the enemies of Malietoa Laupepa), the very existence of the Municipality was provocative. This was a reality which was exacerbated even further through the meddlesome involvement of each of the foreign consuls in Samoan factional politicking, and the continual assertion of their own national agendas.213 This later point leading to ‘the working of the whole municipal organization coming to a standstill’ in August 1887 over a jurisdictional disagreement that arose over a mere assault case.214

From this time onwards, relations in Apia were set to deteriorate. With the Municipal Board unable to convene for day-to-day business, armed men in the capital, and the heightening of national factionalism through the German claim that followers of Malietoa had ‘attacked German people on the ending day celebrating the anniversary of the His Majesty the Emperor’, civil war loomed large.215 With the Municipal Board rendered ineffectual calls for the ‘recognition

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213 This becomes clear in an observation made in December 1886 by United States Special Agent George Handy Bates who noted that the only authority exercised by the Convention was its ‘delegated authority under King Malietoa, who was the party with whom the agreement of extension was made…’ ‘Report of George H. Bates Special Agent of the State Department to Samoa to the Secretary of State, 10 December 1886’, in ‘George Handy Bates Samoan papers’, Microfilm: MF 687 (UDL)
214 The disagreement arose between the United States Consul Harold Sewall and the German Consul Becker over the German defendant’s (Marquandt) refusal to be tried in the court of the Municipal Magistrate. The English plaintiff (Gurr) requested that the case be brought before the three consuls in a court of appeal but the German Consul refused, halting the operation of the operation of the Municipal Board by refusing to attend the monthly meetings. ‘Mr. Sewall to Mr. Porter: 15 August 1887’/ ‘Proceedings in the case of Gurr v. Marquandt: 29 July 1887’, United States. Department of State, American rights in Samoa: Message from the President of the United States, with inclosures, in response to the resolution of the House of Representatives in relation to the affairs in Samoa, 50th Congress: 1st session, 28, House Executive Document 238; Holstine, pp.143-44.
215 ‘Consul Becker to His Majesty Malietoa Laupepa: 23 August 1887’, United States. Department of State, American rights in Samoa: Message from the President of the United States, with inclosures, in response to
of the neutrality of the territory of the town and district of Apia' held little weight, and in January 1888 the following proclamation was made under the mālō of Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and his German advisor Eugen Brandeis:

I Tuiaana TAMASESE the King. The Imperial German Government has given notice of withdrawal from the convention of 2 September 1879, concerning the Municipality. Through this notice the Municipality has ceased to be in force. The former municipal district passes again under the control of My Government. The municipal regulations 8 to 20, 25, 28, 30 to 37, 39 to 42, 59, 61, 62, 64 to 71, 74 to 76, 83, 97, 108 to 111, 114 to 116, 118, to 120, 122, 124, 127 to 129, 131 to 138, are hereby declared to be laws of Samoa and continue to be in force for all persons residing within the former municipal district, with the exception of those foreigners, who are under foreign jurisdiction.

In the aforementioned regulations the judge appointed by Me takes the place of the 'magistrate' and 'chief of Police' and My Government the place of 'consuls' and of the 'municipal board'

Capital of Samoa, Mulinu'u, 18 January 1888

I Tuiaana Tamasese, King of Samoa.216

As a temporary foreign document, validated under the mālō of Malietoa Talavou, the Municipal Convention of 1879 ensured its own demise. The delicate tripartite consular arrangement which had been the basis upon which the Municipal Convention was established had failed and for twelve months (1888-1889) ‘the beach’ was brought under the jurisdiction of the Brandeis-Tamasese Government.217 This in itself, however, was not to be the end of Samoan civil strife, for before long the forces of Matā’afa Iosefo came to lay challenge to the
Brandeis-led government, and the struggle for Samoan titular supremacy was again played out within the vicinity of ‘the beach’.

Nonetheless, despite its initial demise and failed record the Municipal Board of Apia was to be resurrected once more under the auspices of the Berlin Conference signed on 14 June 1889. Under this Conference Samoa was once again recognised as an independent nation with Malietoa Laupepa reinstated as ‘King’ and the reconstitution of the Municipality as an ‘international concession’ along with the establishment of a Supreme Court at Apia which would be presided over by a Chief Judge. This was a fragile tripartite arrangement, which, when again tested in 1898 by civil conflict and the fight for titular supremacy, again proved itself to be no more than a foreign intervention, provocative rather than consolidatory, and ineffectual as far as peace in Samoa was concerned.

In conclusion, it may be surmised that although the Municipality was relatively ineffective as an instrument of colonial rule, and unsuccessful in its attempts to enforce the extra-territoriality of Apia, the Municipal Era in Samoan history still holds significance in the very fact that such audacious attempts were made. For a period of twenty-one years Apia was ‘formally cleaved from the rest of Samoa’ in the ‘most pronounced concession of Samoan sovereignty’ of the nineteenth century. As an agreement designed to re-define the space and community of Apia, the 1879 Municipal Convention was significant in that it was to have lasting impact on the development of ‘the beach’ through the laying down

218 The war was fought between the followers of Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and Matâ’aafa Iosefo. This was also the war in which the famous hurricane of 11 March 1889 took place sinking five men ‘o war in Apia harbour. See, J.A.C. Gray, *Amerika Samoa: a history of American Samoa and its United States Naval Administration*, Annapolis, 1960, pp.83-87; P.M. Kennedy, ‘Bismarck’s Imperialism: The case of Samoa 1880-1890’, *The Historical Journal*, 15, 2, 1972, pp.277-281; Holstine, pp.149, 158.


of boundaries intended not only to shape the physical landscape of the township, but also, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, its ideological terrain.
CHAPTER THREE

CONTROL OF ‘THE BEACH’

THE MUNICIPAL BOARD & REGULATION OF APIA

1879-1888 /1891-1900

A PUBLIC MEETING of the residents of the town and district of Apia will be held at the Rarotonga Church, Matafele, opposite the Hotel zur Stadt Hamburg, at 7.30 o’clock on TUESDAY Evening, December 23rd, 1879 for the purpose of electing three Supervisors, an Assessor, a Collector, and a Treasurer for the Municipality, according to Articles VI and VII of Municipal Regulations No.1, concerning Public Officers.


Pertinent to the signing of the 1879 Municipal Convention was the need to establish a Municipal body in the form of a council or board. The purpose of this was to put in place regulations and an infrastructure designed to carry out the objectives of making ‘better provision for the good government of the town and district of Apia alongside of the preservation of peace and good order therein, and the maintenance of its neutrality’ during periods of civil strife.221 The role and function of the Municipal Board of Apia, which was promptly established on 23 December 1879, was to bring order to the internal workings of the township. It would thereby carry out the second function of the 1879 Municipal Convention, which was essentially to ‘control’ the ideological landscape of ‘the beach’. That is, the re-working of the features that had come to be associated with ‘the beach’.222

Under the 1879 Municipal Convention the establishment of a consular-controlled Municipal Board was authorised by Article II, which stated that:

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222 I have employed the term ‘ideological landscape’ as a metaphor for the broad spectrum of negative connotations and types of disreputable behaviour that had come to be associated with ‘the beach’ in the nineteenth century.
Such town and district shall be placed under the government of a Municipal Board, consisting of those foreign Consuls resident in Apia, whose nations have entered into Treaty relations with Samoa. Representatives of every such nation, having a Consul in Samoa, shall at a future period, be added to the said Board, and shall be chosen in such manner, and exercise such functions, as may be provided by regulations to be hereafter agreed upon and published by the said Board. 223

At the time of its signing the countries to which the Convention was explicitly referring (with regard to treaty relations) were the three Great Powers of Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. Each of these had been a signatory to the 1879 Convention. Also, subsequent to the signing of the Convention provision was made under the Municipal Regulations of 8 March 1880 for the consular appointment to the Municipal Board of one representative from each of these nations. These positions were to be in conjunction with three elected supervisors, who were to fulfill the roles of Assessor, Treasurer and Collector (although these appointments were not ‘by virtue of election’ full members of the board); 224 and the positions of Health Officer, Pilot, Municipal Magistrate, Chief of Police and Police Sergeant, which were contracted appointments, allocated and paid for by the Municipal Board. 225

To a large extent, therefore, given the provisions made in the Municipal Convention and also the consular appointment of three foreign representatives on the Board, the Municipal Board was essentially an instrument of tri-partite control. In this regard, it fulfilled the foreign consuls’ aspirations of forging a self-governing enclave within the sovereign state of Samoa. Through that they were


224 The first Municipal election was held in the courthouse on 29th December 1880. At this meeting Mr. H. Martin Ruge was elected as treasurer, Mr. Henry G. Hayes was elected as collector, and Mr. James Laurenson was also elected to the to be a representative on the Municipal Board.

able to orchestrate the maintenance of a ‘consular oligarchy’ which was in effect instrumental in bringing about its own demise. 226 To illustrate this, one might consider for example the following observations made by United States Special Agent, George Handy Bates, in 1886 as civil strife loomed large:

While this municipal arrangement has been, to some extent, a success, so far only as the preservation of peace and order was concerned, its history emphasizes the objections to tripartite government rather than encourages the extension of it. It has been distinguished by constant differences between the consuls; and in the appointment of officers, the international distinctions have been strictly observed, the nationality of a candidate having often more to do with his selection than the question of his capacity and fitness for the duties of the office…. [there are] two essential defects of the system; one, that nationality, rather than capacity and fitness is made the test of selection for office; and the other, that the principle of requiring each nationality to be represented at a meeting at which any business is transacted, puts it in the power of the representative of any one nationality to obstruct the transaction of business; and yet this principle would be almost a necessary component of any tripartite or international government. 227

As is apparent from Bates’ observations the operations of the Municipal Board were compromised on more than one occasion because of the inescapable predominance of the three foreign consuls, and the exercise of their own national avarice. 228 Conversely, there were also occasions upon which the consuls were apt to act as a united body against the elected members from the community. This may be seen in that as early as December 1879 the consuls decided to meet alone, as the Municipal Board, on account of a disagreement with the elected members over a matter of expenditure. 229 This was an act which was heavily resented from within the community and perhaps, along with other antagonisms, may have led to the passing of a Municipal Regulation ‘Concerning Assaults Upon Public Officers’ which stated that ‘anyone assaulting or in anywise [sic] molesting any member of the Municipal Board shall be fined … $200’. 230

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226 R.P. Gilson, p.367.
227 ‘Report of George H. Bates Special Agent of the State Department to Samoa to the Secretary of State, 10 December 1886’, in ‘US Dept. of State Communications received by the Department of State from special agents of the Department of State, 1794-1906’, George Handy Bates Samoan papers, University of Delaware Library, Microfilm: MF 687.
228 ‘Private Correspondence between myself and Guy Powles’, 11 January 2006, original in my possession.
229 ‘Anonymous letter, 24 March 1880’, in ‘Correspondence and despatches of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul, Samoa’, WPHC 1/I/3 (ANZ)
Nonetheless, despite its internal flaws, the Municipal Board was active during the years 1880-1886, and again (after the signing of the Berlin Conference in 1889) during the period 1891-1900 (although its structure was revised considerably during its second incarnation). During both periods the Board was prolific in its attempts to bring some order and control to ‘the beach’. The primary mechanism through which this was carried out was by issuing a series of Municipal Regulations.

The Municipal Regulations of Apia were concerned with a whole spectrum of behaviour that had henceforth been associated with living on ‘the beach’ in the South Seas. Through the promulgation of these regulations the Municipal Board was active in determining the standard as to what was to be considered as ‘respectable’ and orderly conduct within the vicinity of the Municipality. During the course of the Municipal Board’s existence, Municipal Regulations were issued on a monthly basis (coinciding with the Board’s regular meetings on the first Friday of every month) and published in the Samoa Times. Members of the community were also able to order copies of individual regulations for 25c (per regulation) or $1.50 per quarter in advance upon application to the Levuka based printing company of George Lyttleton Griffiths and Co. It was this company, in fact, who were also responsible for the publication of at least two of the three official booklets containing all of the Municipal Regulations of Apia produced throughout the period. These were published in the years 1879-1883, 1879-1886, 1891-94 as well as one booklet concerning Regulations for the Port of Apia (1880-1894).


232 See, Appendices B, C, D, E.
Through an examination of the Municipal Regulations it quickly becomes apparent that their purpose was to fulfill a number of functions. Firstly, they were designed to put in place the necessary infrastructure for the operation of the Municipality. In this regard, regulations were passed that were concerned with taxes, the operation of the Port of Apia, the Municipal elections, and trading licenses. Concerning the latter, this regulation was to have a significant impact on the foreign community resident within the town. Under Regulation XVII ‘Concerning Trades and Professions’ (1879) five classes of licenses were outlined, each them determined by the amount of annual revenue generated by any one store. For example under Class I of this schedule any store whose monthly sales exceeded $2000 was required to pay a rate of $100 per annum to the Municipal Board. While under Class V any store whose monthly sales were below $250 was required to only pay a rate of $12 to the Board.\(^{233}\) Furthermore, there were also a number of ‘Special Licenses’ granted by the Municipal Board to residents who carried out particular functions within the township. For example, an Attorney, Barrister, or Solicitor was required to pay a fee of $60 per annum to obtain a license, while a Tailor was only required to pay a fee of $6 per annum.\(^{234}\)

A second function carried out by the Municipal Regulations was the legislative one of maintaining the neutrality of the Municipal district during periods of civil strife. As has been discussed already these regulations were largely ineffectual, although their existence illustrates the inclinatory desire of the consuls to secure Apia as a foreign preserve. The key regulations in this matter were Regulation LXXXVIII ‘Concerning Samoan Warriors’, which was endorsed by Malietoa Laupepa on 4 December 1880, and Regulation XXIX ‘Concerning Public Gatherings’ which stated that:


\(^{234}\) Notably from this license scheme may be found important lists of settlers, their occupations, and the licenses obtained by them which are of significant genealogical value. See, Appendix F.
Public assemblies of Samoans from districts outside the Tuamasaga territory will not be allowed within the Municipality of Apia without special permission from the Municipal Board. And on all such occasions the discharge of firearms is hereby prohibited, when other than blank cartridges are used.235

Finally, the third and most pronounced function of the Municipal Regulations was their employment as a means through which to bring order and civility to the community resident at Apia. That is, the control of ‘the beach’. In this regard a number of different regulations will be discussed. Firstly, examination will be given to those regulations aimed at determining what was to be considered as culturally and socially ‘respectable’ behaviour at Apia, and also the challenges to this that arose from within the beach community. Secondly, attention will also be given to attempts to reign in and control the physical lay-out of ‘the beach’, as a growing urban space, and the relevance of this to the re-definition of the ideological landscape of Apia.

Arguably, the underlying tensions between discourses of respectable and disreputable behaviour are fundamental to any understanding of an urban community. The varying types of activities and social/cultural norms condoned or condemned by a community provide the historian with a unique insight into the fundamental ideological premises by which that community both operates and evolves. In this way, attempts made by the Municipal Board to regulate and control already existent and prevalent types of behaviour at Apia cast light on the extent to which ‘the beach’ was to become a contested site. Through an examination of the regulations passed by the Municipal Board, which were designed to re-define existent notions of appropriate social and cultural behaviour at Apia, and the challenges to this, it is possible therefore to gain some insight into how the very notion of ‘the beach’ was an idea that was given legitimacy because it allowed for contradiction and plurality.

Vividly capturing the extent to which this ideological plurality governed behavioural norms at Apia was the conflict over whether or not public exposure, while bathing, should be condemned or condoned at Apia. Evidence to suggest that this type of behaviour had become relatively common-place in Apia by 1879 may be seen in the following editorial comment published in the *Samoa Times*, in late 1879:

We have upon one or two previous occasions had to call attention to the want of decency on the part of certain white men in bathing in a perfectly nude state in public places. On Tuesday last some twenty men were thus exhibiting themselves where the ferry boat crosses the Vaisigano to the utter disgust of all decent people, and to the prohibition of some ladies from crossing the river who were desirous of doing so. As soon as the Municipal Board is in full working order we hope one of their first acts will be to pass a regulation making it a punishable offence for parties caught bathing in a public place between sunrise and sun-set.

As can be seen from the extract, prior to the official establishment of the Municipal Board, public exposure or nudity, was a contested form of behaviour which was being practiced and condoned on the one hand, by members of ‘the beach’; while simultaneously being condemned as a disreputable form of behaviour by others. In this regard, the establishment of the Municipal Board must be seen as reflecting an ideological power shift which legitimized one of these discourses, but not the other. In other words, prior to the Municipal Board’s establishment the very nature and identity of ‘the beach’ had been one of

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236 For an interesting discussion about the dynamics that guided early contact exposure and undress in the Pacific and Australia see, Michael Sturma, ‘Dressing, Undressing, and Early European Contact in Australia and Tahiti’, *Pacific Studies*, 21, 3, 1998, pp.87-104.

237 Anon, ‘Bathing in Public Places’, *Samoa Times*, 20 December 1879, pp.2-3. Notably, ten years earlier public exposure while bathing had also been an issue of concern at the port town of Levuka. See, J.M.R. Young, ‘Frontier society in Fiji, 1858-1873’, PhD Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1968, pp.267-8; John Young, ‘Evanescent Ascendancy: the planter community in Fiji’, in J.W. Davidson & Deryck Scarr (eds) *Pacific Islands Portraits*, Canberra, 1970, pp.156-157. At this time there was a small foot-bridge that spanned the Vaisigano river although it was occasionally washed away which meant that either the settlers had to swim their horses across or wait for the ferry-boat which ran infrequently. See, John La Farge, *An American Artist in the South Seas*, London & New York, 1987, p.95; Gilson, p.242. See, Figure 15 opposite.
contradictions; a place where boundaries and frontiers were ‘assertive, contested and dialogic’ and certainly not fixed.\(^{238}\)

Notably, in response to the above editorial comments and no doubt similar discourses linked to notions of propriety, respectability, and civility, the Municipal Board passed Regulation XXVIII ‘Concerning Public Exposure’ in 1879, which stated:

The police are hereby authorised and instructed to warn any one when necessary against the indecent exposure of his person in public, and against committing any nuisance in any public place under penalty of being fined [sic] not to exceed Five Dollars for each such offence or of being imprisoned with or without hard labour not to exceed Six Days.\(^{239}\)

As can be seen, this regulation was to be enforced by the Municipal police and was initially worded in a very general manner with no specific references to time or place. Yet, despite this particular form of sociability being identified as illegal, evidence exists to suggest that it continued to be engaged with by members of ‘the beach’. This is shown by the fact that this same regulation was revised and re-issued by the second incarnation of the Municipal Board in 1891 with a harsher punishment and more specific wording. Under ‘An Ordinance for the Suppression and Punishment of Various Offences within the Municipality of Apia’ (1892) the following were outlined as offences, with regard to public exposure:

Indecently exposing the person or committing any nuisance in any public place or in view thereof (with a maximum fine of $30).

Bathing or swimming the Vaisigano or Mulivai River between the hours of six in the morning and seven in the evening in view of any public place, without wearing bathing trousers or drawers or lavalavas (with a maximum fine of up to $30).

Being in any public place insufficiently clothed - that is to say - not being clothed so as to cover the body from above the naval, and extending down to the knees; children of both sexes of tender years excepted (with a maximum fine of up to $30).240

From this it becomes apparent that, despite the previous efforts of the Municipal Board, this particular type of disreputable behaviour was still being practiced in the 1890s. It may be surmised, therefore, that there were those from within this community who were unwilling to conform, and who were also prepared to lay challenge to the attempts being made by the Municipal Board. 241 This particular form of behaviour and its connotations of living on ‘the beach’ may therefore be seen as a contested site for power relations amongst the foreign settlers. This instance clearly demonstrates the cracks that existed within this community and the extent to which it cannot be seen as one-dimensional in its values and actions.242 This disreputable form of sociability and the regulations designed to control it, therefore illustrate the complexities and incongruities that underpinned this community.

Furthermore, in a consideration of these particular regulations, questions remain as to whether or not the regulation concerning ‘public exposure’ was applicable to the Samoan communities resident within Apia. With regard to the format of the regulation itself this would not appear to be so. This is given the fact that it was standard practice on the part of the Municipal Board to have a Samoan translation next to the regulation if that particular regulation was written


241 Notably, during the Brandeis-Tamasese period (1887-1888) this particular regulation was also promulgated under the Western Pacific High Commission’s Queen’s Regulations. ‘Bathing & c. penalty’, in ‘Queen’s Regulations 1888, No’s 1-4 of 1888, Authenticated Copies’, in ‘Western Pacific Archives Records 1877-1978’, WPHC 10/III/40 (UOASC)

specifically for the Samoan community. In the case of this particular regulation this is not the case. Additionally, there was also at least one regulation, passed in August 1886, which referred directly to the ‘white’ population resident at Apia. This stated that:

No white person shall be allowed to bath within sight of the Main Road on the Beach or in the Mulivai or Vaisigaga [sic] Rivers: under penalty of a fine not exceeding Five (5) Dollars, or imprisonment for not more than Six days. 243

Furthermore, without an engagement in oral tradition it is difficult to ascertain whether the regulation may also have been applicable to Samoans resident within the Municipality. However, taking into account the existent court records and newspaper references it would seem plausible to suggest that had Samoans bathed naked in either the Vaisigano or Mulivai this would have been tolerated to a greater extent over the public exposure of white male settlers. 244 Notably, it would have also been likely that each of the nu’u within the Municipality would have had its own watering hole and bathing place. 245

243 ‘Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1886’, in ‘Prints relating to the affairs of the Samoans, 1875-1918’, WPHC 1/IV/5 (ANZ), p.22. That this type of behaviour was also condemned by the missionaries may be seen in that upon settling at Apia the only thing that the Marist Brothers had to complain of was that the Mulivai river (which was next to their accommodation) was ‘very popular in the evenings with bathers of both sexes’. See, Brother Edward Clisby, ‘Chapter Seven: First draft’, Unpublished Working Paper, 15 May 2006, p.7. Also, see Appendix B.

244 In an account given by a J.W. Boddam-Whetham in the early 1870s it was noted that both the Mulivai stream and Vaisigano river were popular bathing places for Samoans at this time. See, J.W. Boddam-Whetham, Pearls of the Pacific, London, 1876, pp.151-153.

245 Such as the one, for example, at Tufuiopa below the meeting place of the Teine o le Vineula.
With regard to other Municipal Regulations designed to control forms of social and cultural behaviour at Apia, it is notable that in both incarnations of the Municipal Board a Schedule of Offences was issued. These Schedules of Offences were essentially tables which set out the nature of the offence and the penalties associated with it, which consisted of both a fine and a term of imprisonment. In the 1880 Municipal Regulations, this Schedule of Offences came under Regulation LXXVI ‘Concerning Offences’ which stated that:

Any person who shall commit any of the offences specified in the schedule hereto annexed shall be deemed to have committed a breach of this regulation, and shall be liable to punishment by fine or imprisonment or both of such penalties within the limits prescribed and set opposite to such offence in the said schedule.

Under this 1880 Schedule of Offences the following forms of behaviour were classified as illegal:
Burglary or housebreaking, Breaches of the Peace or rioting, Language or conduct calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, Assault, Challenging to fight, or two or more persons fighting, Keeping a disorderly house, Petit larceny or theft and receiving stolen goods, Malicious injury and cruelty to animals, Malicious injury to property, Contempt of Court, Obscene or profane language in a public place, Perjury, Illegal detention of animals or personal property. 246

From this, it therefore becomes apparent that disreputable forms of behaviour would not be tolerated within the vicinity of the Municipality. In this regard then the function of the Municipal Regulations was essentially to identify these types of behaviour, classify them, and to lay out clearly the associated punishments for each offence. From here the Municipal Regulations were then to take on a legislative function by being used by the Municipal police and the Municipal Magistrate in the identifying of this type of behaviour and imposing punishment. 247

Importantly, however, under the 1891-1894 Revised Ordinances and Regulations the Schedule of Offences was to become even more overtly directed to controlling ‘the beach’. According to these ordinances the 1892 Schedule of Offences came under ‘An Ordinance for the Suppression and Punishment of Various Offences within the Municipality of Apia’, with the short title as ‘The Police Offences Ordinance 1892’. Under this Ordinance the following was stated:

Any person who shall be guilty of any of the offences specified in the following Schedule A shall, upon conviction thereof, be liable to be punished by fine, or in default of payment of such fine, by imprisonment, or by imprisonment without the option of a fine, or by fine and imprisonment, according to the penalties prescribed in said Schedule A. 248

A number of significant differences exist in the nature and wording employed by the Municipal Council in the 1892 Schedule of Offences, as opposed to the earlier version. 249 Included within this Schedule of Offences

247 Under the 1879 Municipal Regulations the Magistrate’s Court was open every day of the week except Sundays, Christmas, New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Boxing Day, Kaiser’s Birthday, Queen’s Birthday and 4th July. See, ‘Concerning the Magistrate’, Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1883, Levuka, 1883, p.8.
249 In its second incarnation the Board was referred to as a Municipal Council to differentiate it from its earlier existence.
were seventeen offences which were far more detailed in their wording over those of the 1880 Schedule. Under the 1892 Schedule of Offences the forms of behaviour identified encompass a broad spectrum of disreputable behaviour which included all of the aforementioned offences and many more. For example, some of those offences were:

- Playing cricket, marbles, or any other game on any public road, street, path or thoroughfare within the Municipal District of Apia, or so near thereby as to cause annoyance or danger to the passers by.

- Willfully extinguishing any street-lamp.

- Riding or driving across the Mulivai or Vaisigago [sic] bridges at other than walking pace.

- Riding or driving horses along the public roads, streets, or pathways, with unsafe or inadequate bridle or harness.250

- Riding or driving along the main road of Apia between the abutment of the old Vaitele Road on the said main road at Savalalo and the abutment of the Mototu- Tanumamanono [sic] Road on the said main road at Apia, at other than walking pace, at any time between the hours of 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.251

Importantly, this Ordinance also contained a clause for the punishment of those who could be identified as being ‘guilty of attempting to commit any of the offences’ under this Schedule.252 This meant that, any person could be brought before the Municipal Magistrate on the basis of pre-emption rather than having actually incited a breach of the peace.

The common feature which guided the principals underlying both the 1880 and the 1892 Schedule of Offences was a drive, on the part of the Municipal Board, to ‘preserve peace and good order’ in Apia through the control of disreputable forms of behaviour associated with living on ‘the beach’.253 In this


regard, then, breaches of the peace committed within the Municipality during this period, shed light on the extent to which these attempts to control the disreputable, dissolute, and degenerate forms of behaviour associated with ‘the beach’ were contested. This was because while on the one hand there were members of the community who were active in the promulgation of the Municipal Regulations, and the identification of people who were in breach of these, there was also a significant cohort within the community who were in constant breach of them. Therefore, the Municipal Regulations were simultaneously upheld and challenged by members of this community.

Testimony to the contested nature of these Regulations is found in the court records of the Deputy High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. Within these files there are multiple civil and criminal court cases concerning breaches of Municipal Regulations. Importantly also, the courthouse itself, as well as the regulations was viewed as a haven for those who sought to ensure that the Regulations were upheld. Take, for example, the following case where Mr. John Herbert Penn, went directly to this court after being threatened with assault:

Mr Carruthers appeared for [the] prosecutor and presented a letter written by the accused to the Prosecutor threatening to horsewhip him….Mr John Herbert Penn, clerk, called and sworn knows Mr Carr and his handwriting…. This letter produced was written to me and it is in Mr Carr's handwriting...the accused admitted the letter...Mr Carr has publicly stated today that he would wait until 3 o'clock and that then he would horsewhip me and it was in anticipation of that threat being carried out that I came to the court for protection.254

The Municipal Regulations not only provided Penn with protection under the law, but also the space of the courthouse was seen a neutral place to which he could turn. In another case that draws on the experiences of women resident within this community, it also becomes apparent that the Municipal Regulations could also prove useful in balancing power relations within the male-dominated settler society. This is made apparent, in a case brought before the court by Isabella Decker who laid a charge against Mr. Robert Chatfield for ‘using insulting words and behaviour calculated to provoke a breach of the peace’, despite Chatfield’s

reported attempts to apologise. Here, the Municipal Regulations made provision for Miss Decker to be able to take up a position of power within this community, and right the injustice that had been committed against her.

In another example of a form of behaviour condemned by the Municipal Board and challenged from within the community, consideration should also be given to the use of ‘language or conduct calculated to provoke a breach of the peace’. In this case, an example exists in the court action of Henry Simaele vs. Thomas Pollock Murray (1896). Here, Murray was prosecuted for both committing an assault against Simaele (a Samoan) but even more interestingly for using profane language in a public place (outside the Club Hotel, across the road from Saffings Hotel). What is significant in this case is that in the records of the court Murray is reported to have used a reference to ‘the beach’ in his profanity. While the exact words of this conversation cannot be relayed here the context of the abuse (in Samoan) was ‘You go to the beach and….’ Notably, the use of the beach as a derogatory term through which Simaele is insulted is significant in that it demonstrates the ways in which the discourse of ‘the beach’ at Apia was a malleable concept that could be used in both an identifying and exclusionary fashion.

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255 Chatfield was fined 30 shillings. ‘Decker vs. Chatfield, 21 February 1896’, in ‘Western Pacific High Commission HBM High Commissioner's Court for the Western Pacific’, WPHC 2/II/2 (ANZ)
256 See Figure 16 opposite which shows the location of the Club Hotel.
257 Murray was charged with assault and fined 10 shillings as well as court expenses. ‘Henry Simaele, a Samoan vs. Thomas Pollock Murray, 21 April 1896’, in ‘Western Pacific High Commissioner HBM High Commissioner’s Court for the Western Pacific’, WPHC 2/II/3 (ANZ)
Figure 16: Alfred John Tattersall, ‘Samoa. Street scene, Apia, which includes the Club Hotel’. In ‘Tattersall Collection’, PAColl-3062-1-09, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

With regard to the enforcement of the Municipal Regulations the role of the police, fines, and Municipal Magistrate were instrumental. Along with each regulation issued there was an associated fine, as well as a term of imprisonment. Upon being arrested or accused of any such offence, the defendant was expected to appear before the Municipal Magistrate at the courthouse at Matafele, where their punishment would be decided. Notably, provision for the role of the Municipal Magistrate was made for under Article V of the Municipal Convention. Although the jurisdiction of the Magistrate was to be complicated by Article VI of the same Convention which stated that:

If a subject or citizen of any of the Contracting Parties in Apia be charged with an offence against the laws of his own country, he shall be tried according to the jurisdiction provided therefore [sic] by the legislation of the nation to which he
In the light of this, the politicking and involvement of the consuls in the operations of the Municipal Board was to lead to an extremely complex state of affairs. This was a situation which was to be further complicated by the second re-incarnation of the Municipal Board in 1891 under the auspices of the 1889 Berlin Conference. Under this agreement Samoa was once again recognised as a sovereign nation and the Municipality was reconstituted as an 'international concession'. However, in its second reincarnation the structure of governance for the Municipality was significantly revised with the establishment of a Supreme Court, which was to be presided over by a Chief Justice, and the appointment of a President to the Municipal Council, who was to be elected biennially by the taxpayers of Apia. The Chief Justice was to be named by the three signatory powers, or, if there was any disagreement, by the King of Sweden and Norway.

Under the Berlin Treaty, the structure of the Municipal Council itself was also significantly revised. From 1891 onwards the Council was made up of six local residents who were elected by the taxpayers of Apia. Importanty, under this new system the foreign consuls were not eligible to be elected as councillors. Rather, they were able to exercise their influence under a stipulation of the Berlin Treaty which stated that all regulations passed by the Municipal Council were subject to the approval of consuls of the three Great Powers. In the case of any disagreement the matter was to be referred to the Chief Justice for a final

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260 The first President of the Municipal Council was Baron Arnold Senfft von Pilsach. He did not arrive in Samoa until May 1891.
261 Trood, p.3. The first Chief Justice sent to Samoa was Otto Conrad Waldemar Cedercrantz who was nominated in October 1890 by the King of Sweden and Norway. He arrived in Samoa in December 1890.
decision. In this regard, therefore, the power and authority of the foreign consuls was not diminished by the restructure, but rather increased by the establishment of a Consular Board that oversaw the law making powers of the Municipal Council. In short, the restructuring of the Municipality and the re-establishment of dual government in Samoa led only to further complications and increased conflict in Samoa.

Nonetheless, if there could be one advantageous consequence of this system of litigation, it would certainly have to be related to the large amount of documentation for this later period. In particular, one extremely valuable source of information may be found in the existence of at least one complete set of court records from this period, in the form of the minutes of the civil court of the High Commissioner’s Court for the Western Pacific, at Apia. Through a perusal of these court records, a striking finding to emerge was the existence of the Samoan voice in engagements with the Municipal Council and its regulations. From the following two cases it is soon made apparent that at least some of the Samoans resident within the Municipality were well aware of their rights under the Municipal Regulations, and were also prepared to call into responsibility the foreign members of ‘the beach’ for Municipal breaches. To give an indication of this one might consider the following charges brought against a British resident named James MacDonald by two Samoans, Apelu and Filo, in October 1889:

Filo a Samoan woman sworn charges James MacDonald British subject that he the said James MacDonald did at Matautu in the township of Apia in Samoa on Saturday the 19th day of October 1889 unlawfully assault her the said Filo by presenting at her body a loaded pistol.

Apelu a Samoan sworn charges James MacDonald [a] British subject that he the said James MacDonald at Matautu in the township of Apia in Samoa on Saturday the 19th day of October 1889 on the public and common highway and road there situate did unlawfully, willfully, wickedly and scandalously expose to the sight and view of diverse...persons then and there passing... and to diverse other persons

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263 Masterman, p.149; Peter Hempenstall, Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A study in the meaning of colonial resistance, Canberra, 1978, p.29.
inhabiting houses along the said highway and road his body and person naked and uncovered to the great scandal of the inhabitants of Matautu.264

James Macdonald was convicted and charged with assault and indecent public exposure, and was subsequently imprisonment for 84 days. To a large extent this case is illustrative of the extent to which Samoans (in this case from the village of Matautu) were not only aware of their rights under the Municipal Convention and Regulations, but were also active in implementing the regulations to ‘control’ the foreign beach community.

Evidence also exists to suggest that the Samoan Government was inclined to encourage Samoans resident within the Municipality to use the court’s jurisdiction to their advantage. This may be seen in ‘Samoan Government vs. Hall’ (1895) which consisted of eighteen pages of cross-examination. In this case Hall was charged with giving alcohol to Samoans while on a picnic at Papase’ea. This was a serious offence which was not only in breach of the Municipal ‘Liquor Prohibition Ordinance’ (1891) but also Act II of the Laws of the Government of Samoa (1880) which stated:

If any person in Samoa sells, gives, or otherwise supplies to any Samoan, or any native of any island in the Pacific Ocean, resident in Samoa, any wine spirits, or any other intoxicating liquor, he shall, on conviction, be liable to the penalties provided in such cases by the Regulations of the Municipality of Apia….This section shall not apply to persons giving wine or spirits bona fide for medical purposes.265

As becomes apparent in this case, the laws passed by the Samoan Government (under the mālō of Malietoa Laupepa) were in some instances complementary to those of the Municipal Board. With regard to the case, the following is a record of a statement given by a woman called Lalo from Matafele:

Lalo a Samoan called and sworn…I live at Matafele…I know Hall [and] I remember going to a picnic on September 8th. Mr Hall and Tuivale gave the picnic. Tuivale is a Samoan woman…..There were also present the Taupou of Safata….Some other girls whose name she does not know…. She does not know the people who were there….They had beer to drink and two bottles of strong liquor. A boy called Willy opened the bottles….Another boy now on Savaii helped to open the beer. Mr Hall

first told Willy to open the beer. The first bottle opened was drunk by Hall....The next was taken by the Taupou of Safata and another girl. Mr Hall told them to open the beer and distribute it among the girls. After the Taupou had the beer it was distributed generally around and drunk by the others....Hall and Kuckuck were the only white men at the picnic. I am a Samoan. The Taupou of Safata and her friend were Samoans. Will is a Samoan also.266

Other evidence to illustrate the extent to which Samoans resident with the Municipal district were engaging with the Municipality, may be seen in their engagement with the Harbour Doctor of Apia, Dr. Bernhard Funk. Originally from the town of Neubrandenburg in the European duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Funk was a prominent Apia personality.267 After arriving in Samoa in early 1880 under the auspices of the Hamburg-based mercantile shipping firm of Godeffroy & Sohn, as both a company doctor and a private practitioner, Funk came to be well-known throughout the township as the ‘Apia doctor’.268 This was a term of reference, which in fact, was given legitimacy by Funk’s appointment as ‘health officer’ for the town of Apia after the death of the Municipal Board’s first health officer, Dr. Donald Ross, in late July 1886.269

Importantly, as the primary medical practitioner for Apia from 1886 onwards (a position which continued under the mālō of Tupua Tamasese Titimaea) Funk was responsible for not only the well-being of the foreign residents, but also that of the Samoans resident within the Municipality.270 Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that this relationship was not one that was imposed upon the Samoan villages, but rather that they actively engaged in it. This is made apparent by the multiple references in different accounts, where

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266 ‘Samoan Government vs. Hall: 30 October 1895’, in ‘Western Pacific High Commission HBM High Commissioner’s Court for the Western Pacific’, WPHC 2/II/2 (ANZ)
267 Thomas Trood, Island Reminiscences: A graphic detailed Romance of a Life in the South Sea Islands, Sydney, 1911, p.70.
269 According to a letter held in the Archives of the Western Pacific High Commission, Ross died on 23 July 1886 while on a voyage to Sydney. See, ‘Letter to Mrs Ross, 15 October 1886’, in ‘Correspondence and Despatches of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul, Samoa, 1876-1900’, WPHC 1/1/5 (ANZ)
270 In the WPHC Queen’s Regulations (1888) the ‘health officer’ is identified as being the ‘duly qualified person appointed by the Samoan Government’. See, ‘A Regulation for the preservation of good order in the town and harbour of Apia: 31 July 1888’, in ‘Authenticated Copies of 1879-1891 Queens Regulations’, WPHC 10/III/ Items 36-41 (UOASC)
Funk was initially called upon as the primary practitioner.²⁷¹ It is apparent that when the two cultural paradigms of medical practice and indigenous belief intersected power negotiations regulated these relationships. While Funk would be called on initially to perform an operation, post-operative care was often given to a traditional Samoan healer, a *fofō.*²⁷²

Most importantly what becomes apparent through the experiences and references to Dr. Funk’s medical practice is the fact that his services, as a Municipal representative, were actively solicited by many Samoans resident within the Municipality. This was particularly so during times of civil war.²⁷³ Thus, it becomes apparent that while on the one hand the Municipal Convention was an imposition and encroachment on Samoan sovereignty, some of the infrastructural services offered by the board and its regulations were utilised by Samoans to ‘control’ the resident foreign community, as well as to further their own needs and interests as active members of the beach community.

Importantly in relation to the ‘Samoan Government vs. Hall’ case, the mass consumption of alcohol at Apia was a prevalent form of disreputable behaviour. It was also one that was closely tied up with the agenda of the Municipal Board’s attempts to control ‘the beach’. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, trade in alcohol had played an important part in, not only the provisions trade of the port town, but also in the social life of the township, along with other pastimes such as billiards, bowling, and gambling.²⁷⁴ By 1879 alcohol was also a significant economic factor which added to the diversification of trade. This may be seen, for example, in various hotel advertisements of the period.


²⁷² This was the case, for example, in both the treatment of Lafaele and also an unnamed Samoan woman mentioned in the archives of the British Consulate. See, M. I. Stevenson, *Letters from Samoa*, p. 70; ‘Funk vs. Hills’, 24 February 1888, in ‘Archives of the British Consulate, Apia’ Samoa-BCS/9/1 (ANZ)


which regularly promoted their ‘constant supply of the best wines, beers and liquors’. 275 One old time settler Thomas Trood recalled in his 1912 Island Reminiscences the importance of ‘beer and skittles’ as a social pastime and the predominance of brandy as a favourite beverage, at Apia. 276 Also, by 1874 there were reportedly, six or seven public-houses within the township, while a similar number was given in an estimation of grog-shop numbers for 1887. 277

Upon its establishment one of the first acts of the Municipal Board was to pass a regulation to control not only the hours of business but also the nature of operations carried out by publicans resident in Apia. That there was concern over the nature and sale of particular types of alcohol by certain members of the community may be seen in the following editorial comment published in the Samoa Times:

We would advise those persons who are in the habit of bottling inferior brandy, and trying to pass it off as Hennessy’s "one star", to take care and not use bottles that have previously held kerosene without first thoroughly washing them; and further, not to place a key brand gin capsule on top of the bottle, for such things make the fraud too palpable, and may [be] the means of getting the sellers into trouble. 278

Moreover, that drunken behaviour was to be an issue of foremost concern may be seen in the following notices published a week prior to the Municipal Board’s establishment:

276 Thomas Trood, Island Reminiscences: a graphic detailed romance of a life spent in the South Sea Islands, Sydney, 1912, pp.30-32. Thomas Trood (1833-1916) was a well-known British Trader and Plantation Owner in Samoa. After the German Annexation of Samoa in 1900 he became British Vice-Consul and upon his death he was buried at Fugalei. See the Figure 2.
277 H.B. Sterndale, ‘Memoranda by Mr. Sterndale on some of the South Sea Islands’, AJHR, 1, A-3b, 1874, p.10; Maturin M. Ballou, Under the Southern Cross or travels in Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Samoa, and other Pacific Islands, 2nd edition, Boston & New York, 1887, p.59.
DRUNKENNESS - On Tuesday last a Samoan named Nalu was fined $2.50c by the local magistrate for the week, Captain Zembseh, H.I.G.M Consul-General, for being drunk.

VIOLATION OF LIQUOR REGULATIONS - A Frenchman named Frank Louis was fined by the same magistrate on Wednesday last, the sum of $5 for breaking the Liquor Regulations.

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY - On Thursday last, before the local magistrate for the week, Rainbow, a coloured seaman of the Auckland schooner Gael, was fined in the sum of $10 for being drunk and disorderly. Yesterday Frank Thomas a seaman from the same vessel was fined in a like amount in a similar offence.279

Under the 1879 Municipal Regulations the first regulation passed in an attempt to regulate the consumption of alcohol at the port town was Regulation VIII ‘Concerning Public Houses and Intoxicating Drinks’. Under this regulation provision was made for a license system under which publicans whose sales were below $250 obtained a quarterly license for $10, while those whose sales exceeded this amount were expected to pay $12 each quarter. Under this regulation public houses’ times of operation were also specified with the following being established in 1881:

No licensed public house shall be opened to the public before 5 a.m. nor after 11 p.m. on week days; nor before 1 p.m. nor after 11 p.m. on Sundays unless a special license has first been obtained for the occasion. Any breach of this regulation shall be punished by a fine of Ten ($10) Dollars and such breach thereof shall be endorsed on the offender’s license which may be cancelled for the third offence.280

Significantly, the enforcement of this regulation was to be carried out by the Municipal police who came under the authority of the Chief of Police, a resident contracted to the Municipal Board. Yet as may be seen from the following Municipal Regulation passed in 1884, this may not have always been particularly effective:

Any person supplying intoxicating liquor to a policeman while on duty shall be punished by a fine or not less than $10 and not exceeding $50, or by imprisonment of not less than twelve days and not exceeding sixty days. Any policeman who shall

279 Anon, ‘Drunkenness etc.’, Samoa Times, 20 December 1879, p.2.
280 ‘Concerning Public Houses and Intoxicating Drinks’, Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1883, Levuka, 1883, p.2. Publicans were also expected to keep a burning bright light at he main entrance of the bar from sunset until they closed, see ‘Part V: Public Houses: A Regulation for the Preservation of Good Order in the Town and Harbour of Apia, Samoa’, in ‘Queens Regulations 1888, No’s 1-4’, WPHC 10/III/Item no. 40 (UOASC)
drink intoxicating liquor while on duty shall be liable to be dismissed from the municipal police force and to forfeit all wages then due to him. 281

Despite this regulation, the fact that public servants, such as police officers, continued to be enticed by publicans’ wares may be seen in G.E.L. Westbrook’s account of Edward Duffy, the night watchman of Apia, during the 1890s:

There were a half-dozen hotels on the beach that were allowed to keep open until midnight - and even all night, provided they closed their front doors at twelve o’clock. The indefatigable Duffy made it a special point to inspect these hostelries every night. If patronage was meager and the various hotels closed early, Ed would resort disgustedly to the Police Station and write his report….But if the hotels were busy it was an entirely different story. The hotel-keepers and their guests would shout several rounds of drinks for the law’s consumption; later, the guardian of the peace would stagger away, incapable of writing any report, and in the morning he would be found asleep on somebody’s verandah or sprawled among some packing cases. 282

Yet despite the law’s consumption of ‘liquid pleasure’ on this occasion, the 1890s were the period in which the Municipal Ordinances concerning this type of disreputable behaviour were to become more stringent. 283 This was particularly so given the issuing of the following three regulations: ‘The Liquor Prohibition Ordinance’ (1892), ‘The Habitual Drunkards’ Ordinance’ (1893), and the ‘Compiled Regulations and Resolutions concerning Intoxicating Liquor’ (1894), each of which laid out clear terms and greater fines and terms of imprisonment than those of the earlier regulations.

This is not to say, however, that the members of the Municipal Council were exempt from the behaviour that was condemned by the Municipal Regulations. Take for example the following description of Dr. Funk, who was renowned for his beer parties, and later for the famous cocktail that he devised:


I went to Apia to see Dr. Funk and this time found him and he promised to come out. He had not arrived by mid-afternoon so I went again to Apia to see him. He said he had not come because the fellow he sent for his horse came back and reported the river was too high to cross. I explained that I had just crossed it but he made several worse than useless excuses and remarked, "Oh, the lady will be all right", etc. Said if I would call for him on the morrow with the boat he would come. He offered me a drink of liquor, and when I refused it he said the climate demands a man drink. Said I did very wrong in abstaining. And he did not come....At about noon one Friday in May our co-worker, Mr Bailey, arrived at Fagalili from Siumu. Having suffered considerably from a toothache, he had come down the coast to get his tooth out. His face was badly swollen. I let him take my horse to ride to Apia where the doctor lived, but he returned to Fagalili and reported that the M.D. was too drunk to pull his tooth.284

With reference to Funk and the consumption of alcohol at the port town there was also another important type of disreputable behaviour which, as a Municipal representative, the doctor was responsible for controlling. This was the practice of ‘prostitution’ at the port town and the spread of venereal disease. As was the case in each of the port town communities of the Pacific the exchange of sexual favours for goods and money was a reality at Apia during the nineteenth century. This was particularly so because, as Daws has demonstrated in the context of Honolulu, ‘prostitution’ was as much an economic concern as it was a moral one.285 It was one means through which women at the port town were able to gain access to goods and money.

Whether or not the term ‘prostitution’ is the most appropriate way of describing this type of commerce is questionable. As Caroline Ralston has argued, in her discussion of the lives of ‘ordinary’ women in early post-contact Hawai’i, descriptive terms such as ‘prostitution’ and ‘promiscuity’ are extremely problematic in that they are imbued with westernized Christian overtones and are heavily weighted in a discussion of cross-cultural exchange.286 Similarly, Marshall Sahlins has also presented cogent arguments against the use of this term given that, particularly with regard to early post-contact sexual encounters, it assumes


285 Daws, pp.204-206.

too much and does not account for what he terms the multiple ‘structures of conjecture’ that are always at play. Within this framework, Sahlins argues that:

Trade does not imply the same solidarities or obligations as communion. On the contrary, trade differentiates the parties to it, defines them in terms of separate and opposed, if also complementary, interests.287

Indeed, commercial sexual exchanges across cultures allowed for ‘the beach’ to be constructed and understood in a number of different ways. From the outset sex had given ‘the beach’ new contours. While the work of Ralston and Sahlins holds true in an analysis of early post-contact encounters, questions remain as to how these commercial exchanges might be dealt with in the more modern and later stages of the nineteenth century. A particular conundrum is posed in the reality that by 1879 the heavily weighted westernized concept of ‘prostitution’, as an immoral and disreputable form of commercial enterprise, had been strongly propagated by the missionaries within the vicinity of the port town. In short, the terms ‘prostitute’ and ‘prostitution’ were in currency at the time of the establishment of the Municipality and were used by members of the community. In this manner, one would have to concur with Damon Salesa on his point that in the context of Apia, particularly during the later years of the nineteenth century, the term prostitution remains adequate, although extremely problematic.288

With regard to the regulation of this type of commerce and ‘disreputable’ behaviour, it was to be reigned in and controlled under the guise of public health. Under ‘An Ordinance for the Better Prevention of Contagious Disease in the Municipality of Apia’ the Apia Health Officer (Funk) was given the authority to establish a Lock Hospital and a Public Female Gaol for the treatment and the detainment of any woman suspected to be a ‘prostitute’. That these women were particularly targeted under this regulation may be seen in the following:

Where an information on oath is laid before the Municipal Magistrate by the Superintendent of Police or other Police officer charging to the effect that the informant has good cause to believe that a woman therein named is a common

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prostitute and is resident within the limits of the Municipality of Apia or has within fourteen days before the laying of the information been within those limits for the purposes of prostitution, the Municipal Magistrate shall order that the woman be subject to a periodical medical examination by the Health Officer for the purpose of ascertaining at the time of each such examination whether she is affected with a contagious disease, and thereupon she shall be subject to such a periodical medical examination...

In this manner, therefore, the practice of ‘prostitution’ within the vicinity of the Municipality was framed within an agenda concerned with public health. Nonetheless, the fact that a Public Female Gaol was to be established points to the reality that ‘prostitution’ was essentially a crime within the bounds of the Municipality. With regard to the voices and stories of these women there exists little textual evidence, although one account given by the settler G.E.L. Westbrook does give some insight into the experience of at least one. In a story titled ‘An Embarrassing trick played on the Reverend Shirley Baker’, Westbrook recalled:

The dwelling of the hotel, stood right apart from the hotel, facing the beach front. Most of the rooms were in the upper story[,] between and about the center of the building was a passage way. The keys to the rooms, hung under the numbers of the rooms in the passage way. Shirley Baker arrived by the steamer from Auckland, engaged his room, and after having his luggage deposited in the room locked the door and hung the key under its number in the hallway, and went out to spend the rest of the day with some friends. Towards evening Hall [the barber] got hold of a well known prostitute, and told her that a new arrival had asked him to secure for him a sleeping companion, and he would be back shortly if she would go to his room and wait for him. Hall took her to Bakers room, locked the door, and hung the key on its place in on the wrack. The woman awaiting the new arrivals return layed [sic] down on the bed and went to sleep. Shirley, after dining out, returned to the hotel about 9 o’clock. Took down the key from where it was hanging, went to his room and started to undress, it was then he realised he was not alone. It was then the music started and the following conversation took place.

‘What are you doing here, you get out of my room immediately’

‘You pay me first’ said Saleaga

‘Get out vixen, got out of my room immediately’

Taking into account the fact that the story is recounted third hand and is seen through the cultural and gendered eyes of Westbrook a number of problems are presented in trying to engage with Saleaga. Nonetheless, two significant features of the story do shed light on the way in which this commerce was practiced at Apia. Firstly, it is significant that Hall, the barber, acts as an intermediary in asking Saleaga to join in the activity. It would appear from the manner in which Westbrook casually relates this fact that it was not unusual for such arrangements to be instigated by an outsider. Secondly, although Westbrook’s intentions in relaying the story are made clear through his choice of title (An embarrassing trick played on the Reverend Shirley Baker) it would appear from the telling of the story, that in fact Saleaga is the protagonist upon whom the trick is played. In this manner, she is the victim because she does not get paid. In this way, although Westbrook’s intentions of juxtaposing the reverend with the prostitute are clearly tied up with ideas of morality and repute, the financial injustice carried out against Saleaga appears to outweigh Baker’s mortification. In short, Saleaga is not portrayed as an immoral or out-of-place member of the community, but rather as a valid participant with a trade who deserves to be paid.

From this rare, although admittedly problematic, account we are able to gain some insight into the experience of one of these women. Through this story the complexity of categorisation and analysis is clearly made apparent, while also Saleaga’s right to exist as an active member of this community is given

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legitimacy. Nonetheless, what is clear is that the Municipal Council wanted to control this type of behaviour and clearly associated it with the disreputability of ‘the beach’. In this manner, the regulations that were constructed to control ‘prostitution’, under the guise of public health, shed light on the extent to which the extra-territoriality of Apia was as much about re-defining standards of propriety, as it was about the physical.

With reference to the corporeal landscape of ‘the beach’ this, too, was to occupy a particular place of importance in the Municipal Board’s agenda of ‘control’. In this regard, the Municipal Regulations were also to play an important part. That the beach’s connotations of degeneracy and disrepute were expressed in the physical state of the township and were believed to be in need of ‘reform’ may be seen in the following editorial published in December 1879:

"CLEANLINESS is next to godliness;" so says an old and oft quoted adage. If visitors to our town judge us by this quotation they cannot possibly arrive at any other conclusion than that we must be a very godless community. Our streets are in a most filthy state, being overgrown by rank vegetation, the back roads are strewn with decayed vegetable matter, and the refuse from the various kitchens and back yards which abut on to them. The beach and vegetable growth that borders our main street are used by the native population in the place of water-closets, and are frequently the recipients of dead pigs, dogs, cats, and other animals, the odour arising from which is anything by agreeable to a person's olfactory organ whilst travelling along the street.  

It is not surprising, therefore, that within the various sets of Municipal Regulations issued throughout the period, the agenda of ‘control’ that was directed towards behavioural norms, was similarly targeted at the actual space of ‘the beach’. This may be seen in the 1879 Regulation ‘Concerning the City Front’ which stated:

Since it is desirable for the Public Health that the sea-breeze should circulate freely through the town and not be intercepted by buildings near the water along the shore of the harbour, all persons are hereby warned against Erecting or Repairing buildings or structures of any kind whatever on the north or sea-side of the present public road between the store of Thomas Trood in Matafele, and the store of Messrs Ruge, Hedemann and Co., Matautu, without special permission from the Municipal Board, which permission will only be granted for the erection of boat houses and similar small structures near the water. Any violation of this regulation shall be

punished by a fine not exceeding One Hundred ($100) Dollars, or three months; imprisonment with or without hard labour.\textsuperscript{292}

As is apparent, the erection of such buildings on the beachfront was viewed to be a serious offence. Importantly, this regulation was clearly tied up with not only discourses of control and order but also with racial ideologies and health. It was widely believed that the tropical climate of Samoa (and the Pacific at large) was inherently connected to the degenerate behaviour and state of being that was associated with living on ‘the beach’. The humid climate was believed to have contributed to the state of ‘going troppo’ in the South Seas, and the combative effect of the sea breeze was integral in carrying out the agenda of control on the part of the Municipal Board.\textsuperscript{293} Therefore, this regulation was double-edged in that it while it was overtly concerned with the physical lay-out of the beach-front, it was also implicitly tied up with the broader agenda of bringing order to the ideological landscape of the beach community.

There were also several other regulations which were designed to re-define both the physical and the ideological landscape of ‘the beach’. Of these the most revealing are the regulations ‘Concerning Weeding’ and the regulations ‘Concerning the use of Dynamite’. In particular, these two regulations were significant in that they were designed to regulate not only the actions and behavioural norms of the foreign residents, but also the Samoans resident within the Municipality. In Regulation CXX ‘Concerning Weeding’ for example the following was stated:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{293} For an in depth discussion of these ideas and their relevance to the Samoa see, Leilani Burgoyne, \textit{Going “Troppo” in the South Pacific: Dr Bernhard Funk of Samoa, 1844-1911}, Working Papers of The Research Centre for Germanic Connections with New Zealand and the Pacific, 6, University of Auckland: Department of Germanic and Slavonic Studies, 2006.
\end{quote}
All occupiers of houses in the town and villages of the district of Apia have to weed and keep clear the space between their houses and the public roads. They shall also keep in sanitary condition their entire premises...  

This regulation was designed to control not only the aesthetic nature of the foreign houses but also the appearance of the five Samoan villages situated within the district. Whether or not in practice the regulation was implemented in such a manner is unclear but what is apparent is that certainly the desire to re-define and control the lay-out of the villages featured in the agenda of the Municipal Board. This may also be seen in the various regulations passed throughout the period concerning the use of dynamite in Apia harbour for fishing. According an account given by John Dunn King in the 1890s the use of dynamite in the harbour was one means of bringing out many varieties of small fish that otherwise were difficult to catch. Nonetheless, from 1881 onwards this practice had been deemed to be illegal under the Municipal Board who stated that:

The use of Dynamite or other explosives within the waters of the Municipality of Apia for the purpose of killing fish is hereby prohibited. Any violation of this Regulation will be published by a fine not to exceed Twenty Five ($25) Dollars, or thirty days' Imprisonment with or without hard labour.

That this regulation was clearly directed at the Samoan community, as well as at the foreigners, may be seen in that the regulation was translated into Samoan. This is also confirmed in a letter of recommendation written in May 1880 by J. Hicks Graves (British Consul at Apia) to the Western Pacific High Commission. In this letter, Graves petitioned the WPHC to pass a regulation banning the use of dynamite under the Western Pacific Orders in Council on the basis that following

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295 A later case study of this kind may be seen in the attempts that were made under the New Zealand Administration by Major General George Richardson to remodel Samoan villages. See, I.C. Campbell, ‘New Zealand and the Mau: Reassessing the causes of a colonial protest movement’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 33, 1, 1999, p.97.
its introduction it had already caused ‘numerous and serious accidents’ amongst the Samoans.\textsuperscript{297} In consequence, a regulation was quickly passed.\textsuperscript{298}

Finally, there also existed one more genre of regulations directed at controlling both the physical and the ideological space of ‘the beach’. These were the various regulations passed during the period with respect to the control of animals within the Municipality. Under the broad spectrum of different regulations passed throughout the Municipal Era the control and detention of animals was consistently of major concern. Encompassed within these regulations were punishments for tying up animals inappropriately, riding on horseback without a bridle, allowing animals to stray throughout the Municipality, and for not having obtained an appropriate license to own a dog.\textsuperscript{299} To enforce these regulations the Chief of Police was given full responsibility, and in 1892 allowance was made under ‘An Ordinance relating to trespass and the impounding of cattle’ for the establishment of a Public Pound within the Municipal district. That the impounding of stray animals was on occasion an issue of contention may be seen in one court case between William Barron and the Chief of Police. After having his horse impounded, Barron called the chief of police a ‘damned liar’, along with other insults, and was then taken to court for inciting a breach of the peace.\textsuperscript{300}

That the control of animals was of such predominant concern in the Municipal Regulations testifies to the Municipal Board’s agenda of control. The control of the animal population present in Apia was to play an important role in

\textsuperscript{297} ‘Letter from J. Hicks Graves to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific: 25 May 1880’, in ‘Correspondence and despatches of HBM Deputy Commissioner and Consul, Samoa’, WPHC 1/I/3 (ANZ)
\textsuperscript{298} Notably also, in 1885 a similar regulation was passed with regard to the letting off of fireworks within the Municipality. See, ‘Concerning fireworks: Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1886’, in ‘American rights in Samoa: Message from the President of the United States, with inclosures, in response to the resolution of the House of Representatives in relation to the affairs in Samoa’, 50\textsuperscript{th} congress, 1\textsuperscript{st} session, 28, House Ex. Document 238, 1888, p.254.
\textsuperscript{300} ‘Chief of Police vs. Barron: 10 March 1896’, in ‘Western Pacific High Commission HBM High Commissioner’s Court for the Western Pacific’, WPHC 2/II/2 (ANZ)
the Municipal Board’s over-arching agenda of controlling ‘the beach’. In its attempts to bring order and civility to Apia, the Municipal Council was firm in its desire to maintain guidelines and regulations which kept animals in their place, and held individual owners accountable for their behaviour. As the epitome of the human degenerate state, the control of the beast at Apia was integral in bringing order and control to ‘the beach’. Nonetheless, as with many of the other regulations, challenges to these attempts to control were to come from within even the most ‘respectable’ quarters of the township. Take for example the following recollection given by Robert Louis Stevenson of his horse ‘Jack’:

Jack is a bit of a dandy; he loves to misbehave in a gallant manner, above all on Apia street; and when I stop to speak to people, they say (Dr Steubel the German Consul said, about three days ago) ‘O what a wild horse! it cannot be safe to ride him.’ Such a remark is Jack's reward, and represents his ideal of fame.301

In conclusion, the ultimate function of the Municipal Board of Apia was to bring order and control to ‘the beach’, thereby re-defining both the physical and the moral landscape of Apia. In this respect, the Municipal Regulations were essential in, at the very least, establishing the status quo with regard to what would and should be determined as respectable and reputable forms of behaviour at Apia. Importantly also, these regulations were a contested topic for this growing community, with some members using them to their advantage and others consistently challenging them. In this regard, therefore, the Municipal Regulations cannot be seen as ‘successful’ in bringing either order or respectability to this community, but rather as important in playing a key role in determining what was to be deemed as ‘respectable’ forms of sociability within the township. Of the actual implementation of this status quo it was the community itself, in conjunction with these official attempts, that put in place the means through which the re-definition of ‘the beach’ was finally achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DAWN OF QUASI-RESPECTABILITY

Within the memory of man, the white people of Apia lay in the worst squalor of degradation. They are now unspeakably improved, both men and women. Today they must be called a more than fairly respectable population, and a much more than fairly intelligent.

Robert Louis Stevenson, A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa, reprint, Auckland, 1996, pp.13-14

By the time of his writing, in 1890, Robert Louis Stevenson fervently believed in the unflattering connotations conventionally associated with living on ‘the beach’.302 He also, however, held little faith in the activities and politicking of the Municipal Board, and certainly did not attribute the moral progress of this community to the official attempts that had been made to control it. Rather, in Stevenson’s view it was through his own efforts along with those of other members of this community that this transition was partly achieved. This chapter will examine the decade of the 1890s, and the extent to which the re-definition of ‘the beach’ was finally achieved through the informal efforts of a number of members of this community, in conjunction with the official attempts of the Municipal Board. It will examine the bringing about of a dawn of ‘quasi-respectability’ to Apia and the expression of this through sociability.

Prior to the establishment of the Municipality, in 1879, Apia had a lively social scene and it was renowned throughout the Pacific for its dancing houses, bowling alleys, and billiard rooms.303 In one account given by George B. Rieman, an American naval officer visiting the group in 1872, the activities of the residents

302 Stevenson arrived at Apia in December 1889. He was accompanied by his wife Fanny and step-son Lloyd Osborne. In 1890 they purchased land at Vailima and built a house there. Their property lay just outside the bounds of the Municipality and because of this the writer did not have the right to vote in the Municipal Elections.

303 James O’hea, ‘Journal of a Voyage to the South Sea Islands’, ML MSS 4060 (ML)
‘appeared to be in a very primitive state’. In his recollections, Rieman recalled that:

The American jig, the Scottish reel and Highland fling is danced here, and as a Frenchman remarked to me, "you Americans wherever you go carry your games with you", and I feel certain that when I pass to another world if it should be my bad fortune to be cast into the bottomless pit, I shall find a Yankee dancing a jig down there….A ball at Port Apia is a sight not to be met with in any other place. The assembly generally consists of eighteen or twenty ladies, and perhaps thirty gentlemen, and dancing is kept up with vim unknown in colder regions. 304

This was the manner in which sociability at Apia was perceived by outsiders in the early 1870s. The social activities of ‘the beach’ were deemed to have been, if not of a ‘most primitive state’, then ‘strange and fantastic’. 305 Such descriptions denoted degeneracy and savagery as being tied up with living on ‘the beach’.

This is not to say, however, that the community itself necessarily perceived itself or its sociability in such a manner. Rather, it would seem that the organisation of social activities at the township played an important role in bringing community groups together, and tackling the ‘boredom’ that was so frequently associated with living in the South Seas. This is made particularly apparent in the sporting activities that were organised during these early years. Sports days were often organised to mark days of public celebration, such as Boxing Day or New Year’s Day, and were often made up of competitive activities such as horse, foot, donkey, and boat racing. These events would then be followed by a public dinner hosted at one of the leading hotels. 306 Alongside of these, formal clubs were also established at the bay with, for example, the Apia Cricket Club being established in September 1880. 307 Picnics, too, were an important way in which events were celebrated. This was particularly so when a

304 George B. Rieman, Papalangee; or, Uncle Sam in Samoa: A Narrative of the cruise of the U.S. steamer ‘Narragansett’ among the Samoan or Navigator Islands, Polynesia, Oakland, 1874, pp.34-35.
307 Anon, ‘Notice’, 25 September 1880, Samoa Times, p.3; Anon, ‘Apia Cricket Club’, 30 July 1881, p.2. Cricket clubs and bowling clubs were also formed much later in 1919, see ‘Local and General’, Samoa Times, 8 November 1919, p.5.
foreign warship happened to be docked at the bay. In one letter an old time settler, Augustus Stead, recalled:

> We have been very gay having had a French Man of War, Russian and American crew picnicking has been going on at a famous rate among the upper ten thousand.  

Similarly, in another, he wrote:

> We have been very gay here lately - we have had two weddings and several picnics especially when the ship of war was here - there are a few whites here compared to the Feejees and only a few ladies wives and daughters of the principal store keepers. Yet the officers of the frigate....with them in a free and easy manner all ride was laid aside and it was very pleasant to see them all dancing under the shade of the orange trees owned by Mrs. McFarlane on whose grounds the principal picnic took place.

In this manner, therefore, there were those from within this community who were active from before the establishment of the Municipality in their attempts to bring respectable intercourse to the bay. With the decade of the 1880s, however, racked by civil conflict, and the disestablishment and subsequent re-establishment of the Municipality, it was not until the early 1890s that these objectives were truly realised and 'a dawn of quasi-respectability' brought about. This is why, capitalising on the existent outside constructions of ‘the beach’ and its implied degeneracy, Stevenson was able to write in 1890 that ‘within the memory of man, the white people of Apia lay in the worst squalor of degradation’.

The 1890s was a significant period in the history of Samoa. The beginning of this decade was marked by the onset of the 1889 hurricane, and it was this event that set the scene for the following years. Out of the devastation of this hurricane, Samoa came to occupy centre stage at the Berlin Conference (1889), and it was from these discussions that the Municipality was reconstituted and an International Land Commission sent to the islands. In addition the port town was

308 ‘Augustus Stead to Lotte, 30 August 1871’, in ‘Augustus Stead: Papers’, MS 6865 (NLA)
309 ‘Augustus Stead to Lotte, 3 July 1871’, in ‘Augustus Stead: Papers’, MS 6865 (NLA)
also detrimentally affected by the onset of a global depression in the early years of the decade. Nonetheless, out of the ruin that had been the beginning of the decade there emerged a cohort from within the community that was adamant in its attempts to introduce and maintain respectable forms of sociability.

In a perusal of the *Samoa Times* for this decade, along with various personal accounts and photographic materials, it quickly becomes apparent that despite the many difficulties that beset the port town, its social scene was well and truly alive. In the early years of the 1890s, respectability and civility lay at the heart of every communal gathering and social function, and played a key role in complementing the attempts being made by the Municipal Board to re-define ‘the beach’. Of these activities, the organisation of fancy dress balls, picnics, race days, and sporting events were at the forefront.

The organisation of respectable forms of sociability at Apia was integral in the re-definition of ‘the beach’. This was particularly so given that it allowed for a site of negotiation within the realm of the social and cultural which were perceived to be outside of the township’s tumultuous political climate. That these attempts were seen as complementary and integral to the re-definition of ‘the beach’ may be seen in the fact that the decade saw their protection become a municipal concern. For example, in the 1892 Schedule of Offences it was stated that ‘disturbing any public meeting or any meeting for any lecture, concert, dramatic or other entertainment’ was a punishable offence.

In this manner, therefore, the 1891-1894 Municipal Regulations marked a shift in terms of the civilizing role of the Municipal Council. As opposed to the earlier 1879 Municipal Regulations, these later ordinances may be seen as actively taking on the role of identifying acceptable forms of sociability and of

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312 Damon Salesa, ‘Misimoa: An American on the Beach’, *Common-Place*, 5, 2, January 2005, cited 15 March 2006, http://www.common-place.org/vol-05/no02/salesa/index.shtml. This depression was linked to a number of factors, among them a collapse in international wool prices, the end of the gold era, industrial strife and the collapse of a number of Australian banks.

putting in place structures to protect them. Alongside this officialdom, the attempts that were being made by the community at this time were even more important in the re-definition of ‘the beach’. Foremost in these attempts were the activities and efforts of Robert Louis Stevenson and his family.

As a leading member of this community Stevenson was to have a huge impact on the re-definition of ‘the beach’. In a revealing comment, about the way in which he positioned himself within this community, Stevenson wrote the following to his friend Sidney Colvin in 1890: ‘we left the lights of Apia and passed into limbo’.314 To Stevenson, Apia was the closest thing to the metropole from where he had originated, and because of this ‘the beach’ was to him both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand his letters express disdain for the politicking and intriguing that took place within the township, and on the other they reveal the extent to which Apia provided him with crucial infrastructure, entertainment, and a sense of being connected to those lights.315

In his search for a space in-between, Vailima was Stevenson’s conceptual limbo. Perched just outside of the township and just out of the bounds of the Municipality, his place of residence allowed him to engage with ‘the beach’ without feeling as though he was a part of it. As the best-known writer resident in the Pacific during the nineteenth century, Stevenson was integral in shaping outside constructions and opinions about this community and in constructing a scene that placed him apparently outside of it. In his writing, ‘the beach’ is only mentioned with reference to disreputable characters living out a state of wretchedness in the South Seas, and who were inimical to any efforts to bring order and civility to Samoa. This is evident, for example in his description of the following two characters, Grevsmühl and Skelton:

315 A key reason behind Stevenson’s choice of Samoa lay in the regular and reliable mail steamers that ran between San Francisco, Honolulu, Sydney and Auckland. Once a month these ships would drop off and pick up mail in Samoa. See Bradford A. Booth & Ernest Mehew (eds) The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 - December 1892, p.3; Dirk H.R. Spennemann, Steam to Tonga and Samoa: the Norddeutscher Lloyd mail service 1886 to 1893, Albury, 2002; Jack R. Hughes, ‘The John Davis Post: 1886-1900’, in Richard Burge (ed.) A Postal History of the Samoan Islands, Wellington, 1987, pp.68-75.
Skelton has been tabued four years on the beach for swindling at his work; by common consent, he has been given this job by trial; and I knew his future hung by it... 316

There is on the beach one Grevsmühl, a German Jew, better known by his native name of Matafa - four eyes, spectacles -; he is notorious in the whole Line Island district; it was he who flooded the Marshalls with counters as guineas; and we have had a long dependent difference with him 'about a window'... 317

As disreputable members of the community resident at Apia both Grevsmühl and Skelton were identified by Stevenson in relation to their association with 'the beach'. In this regard, then, reference to 'the beach' and its associations of disreputability and degeneracy acted as a means through which a clear distinction could be made between acceptable notions of sociability in the present and those of the past. In short, by the 1890s 'the beach' had come to be used as a term of exclusion. By the time of Stevenson's writing 'the beach' was a term used to refer to a particular cohort from within this community. This was a group that was by no means fixed in its membership, and which was primarily defined by the practice of particular types of behaviour; the same behaviour that was simultaneously being deemed as disreputable and illegal by the Municipal Board.

Nonetheless, in the writing of Stevenson, not even the members of the Municipal Board were immune from this type of criticism, or from being associated with 'the beach'. This may be seen in the writer's description of the elected members as 'beachcombers':

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...They have now been months here on their big salaries - and Cedercrantz, whom I specially like as a man, has done nearly nothing, and the Baron [Arnold Senfft von Pilsach], who is a well-meaning ass, has done worse. They have those huge salaries and they have all the taxes; they have made scarce a foot of road, they have not given a single native a position - all to beachcombers, they have scarce laid out a penny on Apia and scarce a penny on the King.318

In this way, the complexity of these terms of reference and the official attempts being made by the Municipal Board are brought to light. Similarly to the members of the Municipal Board, Stevenson was as much a part of ‘the beach’ as any other resident living with the vicinity of the township. He simply sought to disassociate himself from this reality, by re-defining it. Furthermore, he was not alone. The 1890s was a period in which a significant number of residents from within this community actively sought to bring about some form of ‘quasi-respectability’ to their township. In this process, the re-definition of the concept of ‘the beach’ was integral.

Importantly, this process of re-definition was two-fold. It involved on the one hand a continuation of the literary tradition of the construction of ‘the beach’ as being inherently endowed with pejorative connotations. On the other, it involved the introduction of more genteel forms of sociability to Apia, and the active exclusion of certain members of the community from them. With respect to the former, the writing of Stevenson was integral. During his time in Samoa he was consistent in his re-assertion that ‘the beach’ was a term that was and should be justifiably associated with a particular cohort of settlers who were in a state of degradation. This is most clearly seen in his overt references to ‘the beach’ in his descriptions of individuals (as in the case of Grevsmühl and

318 My emphasis. Bradford A. Booth & Ernest Mehew (eds) The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 - December 1892, pp.152-153. Similar references to disreputable behaviour and characters via the use of the term ‘beachcomber’ may also be found in the writing of Fanny Stevenson. See, Fanny & Robert Louis Stevenson, Our Samoan Adventure: With a three-year diary by Mrs. Stevenson now published for the first time together with rare photographs from family albums, London, 1956, pp.35, 99. Also see a similar comment made years later by Hanna Solf the wife of the German Governor of Samoa, Wilhelm Solf (1900-1910): Peter Hempenstall & Paula Tanaka Mochida, The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History, Wiesbaden, 2005, p.80. The Baron that Stevenson was referring to was Baron Arnold Senfft von Pilsach, the first President of the Municipal Council. See Chapter III, p.107 n.260.
Skelton). It is also made apparent in his descriptions and references to the township itself:

...and I am home again, and only sorry that I shall have to go down again to Apia this day week. Curses on it, I could, and would, dwell here unmoved; but there are things to be attended to....

I have gone high and far since old days: thousands of miles, from any human institution - unless Apia counts.319

Apia, the port and mart, is the seat of political sickness in Samoa.320

To Stevenson the urban settlement of Apia epitomized the physical manifestation of the squalor of ‘the beach’. The town was not only the seat of ‘political sickness’ in Samoa but was also a haven for vice and degradation. This was a reality which he was unable to escape for throughout his time in Samoa the activities of ‘the beach’ consistently encroached on his conceptual limbo and imagined sanctuary at Vailima. This was most apparent in the activities of his household staff. In an account of the activities of his German chef, Paul, Stevenson wrote:

Paul came home drunk last evening from Apia, falling off his horse at the door... [he is] a dr[unk] well, don't let us say that - but we daren't let him go to town, and he - poor, good soul - is afraid to be let go.321

Similarly, of the wife of trusted employee Lafaele, Stevenson recalled that:

Lafaele is absent at the deathbed of his fair spouse; fair she was but, not in deed; acting as harlot to the wreckers at work on the warships, to which society she probably owes her end, having fallen off a cliff - or been thrust off it - *inter pocula*....322

Nonetheless, the ultimate encroachment of ‘the beach’ on the haven of Vailima was to be carried out by a member of the Stevenson family, Joe Strong. Strong was the son-in-law of Robert and Fanny and had come to Samoa with the family

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as the husband of Fanny’s daughter, Isobel. In her diary entry of 23 December 1892, Fanny wrote the following of the incidents involving Joe:

> About the time I stopped writing we found Joe Strong out in various misdeeds: robbing the cellar and store-room at night with false keys. In revenge, when he found that he was discovered, he went round to all our friends in Apia and spread slanders about Belle. We turned him away and applied for a divorce for Belle, which was got with no difficulty, as he had been living with a native woman of Apia as his wife ever since he came here – an old affair begun when he was here before.323

Hence, the connection between the disreputable actions of Joe Strong and the vices of ‘the beach’ were to be firmly cemented in the view of Robert Louis Stevenson.324 As far as Stevenson was concerned many of the white residents of Apia were ‘degraded beyond description’ and he was quick to ensure that this reality was set to change.325 In this manner, the writer was to become actively involved in the second means through which ‘the beach’ was to be established as a thing of the past and Apia was to become a township of quasi-respectable make-up. That is, the re-definition of ‘the beach’ through the introduction of respectable forms of sociability to Apia, and the active exclusion of certain members of the community from these.

Through their attendance at and organisation of ‘respectable’ forms of sociability, such as fancy dress balls, theatricals and picnic excursions, the Stevenson’s played an important part in attempts to re-define this community. Regardless of whether or not the writer imagined himself to be in a profound state of limbo being situated on the outskirts of the Municipality, the reality was that the Stevenson family were active participants in the re-definition of the beach community through sociability.

In this endeavour, there were a number of activities and functions organised by the family which were designed to promote respectable intercourse

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323 Joe Strong was also known as Malosi in Apia. Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson, *Our Samoan Adventure: With a three-year diary by Mrs. Stevenson now published for the first time together with rare photographs from family albums*, London, 1956, pp.208, 158.

324 I am indebted to Roger Neill for his advice on this point. ‘Email Correspondence between myself and Roger Neill’, 4 May 2006, original in my possession.

at Apia. In a description of some of these entertainments, Fanny Stevenson wrote the following:

...we had afternoon teas, evening receptions, dinner parties, private and public balls, paper-chases on horseback, polo, tennis parties, and picnics. My husband joined in all these festivities...  

Of these one of the most interesting examples is the family's involvement in the establishment of a ‘Half-Caste’ Club. This club was also known as the Royal Vine Ula Club and was founded by the Stevenson family at the request of Laulii Willis. The purpose of the club was to ‘teach the Half-Caste’s European manners and dress codes’ and weekly meetings were hosted at Vailima by Robert, Fanny, and Belle.

In this manner the desire to bring ‘respectability’ to these ‘afakasi was closely tied up with ideologies of race and gender. These were discursive structures which manifested themselves years later, under both the German Administration and the New Zealand Mandate, as ‘The Half-Caste Question’. In a discussion of the importance of dress and the ways in which it is tied up with structures of power and ideology, Ann C. Colley has examined Belle Strong’s sketches of some of the women who took part in this club. In her analysis Colley cogently noted that:

...the half caste woman is not allowed the plunging necklines and corseted waist of the European women...her dress, while in one way conforming to European standards, in another way registers the limits of her power; it is a badge of her bondage to the Europeans. Her position is tailored into her costume.

This was a reality which was also made evident in the segregation of colours assigned to a woman attending a fancy dress ball, which was dependant on her

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326 Fanny & Robert Louis Stevenson, Our Samoan Adventure, p.15.
327 According to H.J. Moors, it was also known as the Vailele Club. See, H.J. Moors, Some recollections of early Samoa, Apia, 1987, p.99.
‘race’. Take for example the following description of a ball given by Marie Fraser in 1895:

During the first couple of hours it was a remarkably pretty sight; the few white women present all dressed in pure white or very pale tints; the native girls and half-castes in bright colours, and especially the former, wearing wreaths and garlands of sweet-scented flowers; all the men in the ordinary white evening dress of the tropics, their only touch of colour being the gay cummerbunds wound around their waists.  

Furthermore, the Stevenson’s training of these ‘afa kasi women also fit within the family’s broader agenda of fostering respectable sociability. This is particularly so because at Apia there was never an influx of European women as in Levuka and Honolulu. Rather, both Samoan and ‘afa kasi women predominated in the port town and to this end were the key power brokers in marital arrangements. What is more is the fact that at the communal events organised by the Stevenson’s and others, such as fancy dress balls, these women were to play a key role in the program, particularly with regard to dance.

The organisation and hosting of fancy dress balls during this later period was integral in the attempts that were being made to re-define ‘the beach’. According to Fanny Stevenson, due to his ill health Robert Louis Stevenson had never learnt to dance and it was not until he came to Apia that he began to learn. In hosting these balls at Vailima the Stevensons sought to promote and introduce respectable codes of conduct and civility to the community. Their entertainments were often held in honour of a birthday or a special occasion and they would always ensure that the appropriate dignitaries were invited. Ironically, despite their best attempts to orchestrate a respectable function, it would seem

331 Marie Fraser, *In Stevenson’s Samoa*, London, 1895, pp.184-5.  
333 From a list of male residents who attended the 1896 Queen’s Birthday Ball it may be surmised that some of the following may have been present at this dance: Richard Hetherington Carruthers, J. Ah Sue, James Stowers, S. Meredith, E.F. Allen, J.W. Swann, Thomas Trood, J.D. Chatfield, T.P. Murray, W.E. Dean, William Cooper, J.B. Hay, and E. Cohen. The only female residents listed are Rose Soley, Mrs Betham, and Fanny Stevenson. See, ‘The Queen's Birthday Ball, 1896: Names of Subscribers to a Ball on the 4th June in the Public Hall’, in ‘Archives of the British Consul, Samoa, 1847-1916’, SAMOA-BCS 7/3f (ANZ)  
that even a disagreement over a square dance could easily erupt into a dispute. This is seen in the following account given by Stevenson of one fancy dress ball held at Vailima in June 1893:

There arose a dispute as to place in a square dance between Ahrens with Mrs. Biermann on one side and the new German vice consul and Funk's Theresa on the other. Mrs. Biermann carried on like a termagant in the middle of the hall, raging in German and stamping her foot. Funk, finding nothing better to do, came up and put his oar in by informing Ahrens that he was [a] damned idiot. And the parties separated for the evening under the most murky clouds.

The next day brought wisdom and repentance; Funk apologised to Ahrens, Biermann I hope boxed his wife's ears, and the whole affair passed off bloodlessly! But what a pretty pair Sparrowhawk Ahrens and Beerbarrel Funk would have made on the field of blood and glory!  

Nonetheless, it could alternatively be argued that with regard to the heightened political tensions at Apia during this time, these occasions of sociability did, to a certain extent, provide a neutral space for the community. This is because they were generally upheld to be occasions where ‘hostilities, public and private, were suspended’ and national jealousies could temporarily be put aside. This may be seen in the following account of a ‘Cinderella Dance’ hosted by the Spinsters of Apia in 1892:

On Wednesday, the Spinsters of Apia gave a ball to a select crowd. Fanny, Belle, Lloyd and I rode down, met Haggard by the way, joined company with him, and as we neared his house - passed Joe [Strong]. Neither Belle nor I recognised him till he was actually up to us; it is strange, I never recognise him now. Dinner with Haggard and thence to the ball. The Chief Justice appeared, looking cropped, genial and squinty; it was immediately remarked, and whispered from one to another, that he and I had the only red sashes in the room, - and they were both of the hue of blood, sir, blood. He shook hands with myself and all the members of my family, which was infinite bad taste, but of course, in a ballroom not to be refused. Then the cream came, and I found myself in the same set of a quadrille with his honour. We dance here in Apia a most fearful and wonderful quadrille, I don’t know where the devil they fished it from; but it is rackety and prancing and embrace-atory beyond words; perhaps it is best described in Haggard's expression of a gambado.

Similarly Graham Balfour recalled a ball where:

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337 Bradford A. Booth & Ernest Mehew (eds) *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 - December 1892*, pp.367-8. See also, ‘Diary of TB Cusack Smith 1892: 8 September 1892’, in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X2760 (ATL). This ball was held in the Apia Public Hall.
Another time, during the fiercest moments of Anglo-German animosity, Osbourne, by the adroit use of a bow and arrow, secured the hand of the German Consul's wife for a cotillion; and at a Fourth of July dance given by the American Vice-Consul, all that gentleman's enemies might have been seen joining hands and dancing round him, while they sang, "For he's a jolly good fellow."  

Marie Fraser also recalled a ball where:

[At] about 2.30 A.M. the musicians were 'dissolved almost to jelly' with their untiring efforts, and so the entire company - Samoans, Germans, Americans, English, and a few who were hardly certain to what nationality they belonged - all joined hands and sang 'Auld Lang Syne'. Then an enthusiastic patriot started 'God Save the Queen', which was heartily sung, though much independence was shown in the choice of words, hardly anyone appearing to be cognisant of the real ones.  

Importantly also, from these recollections a number of key insights into how these events were organised may be discerned. In the first, Stevenson’s reference to the hosting of the Spinster’s ball for a ‘select crowd’ reveals the extent to which these occasions were exclusionary in nature. This is further revealed when one considers his later reference to coming across Joe Strong, who by this stage had come to be completely affiliated with ‘the beach’ – to the point where Stevenson no longer recognises him, and he is of course not welcome, nor likely to have been invited, to the event at hand. These events therefore, despite the fact that they provided a ‘neutral space’ for the participants, were not neutrally positioned within the society. They carried out the function of not only upholding respectable standards of behaviour for the participants, but also excluding certain members of the community from these.

Particularly illustrative of the extent to which this was so were the events and functions organised for occasions of national allegiance. On the birthdays of Queen Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm I and the celebration of the Fourth of July, a full day’s events were usually organised. The activities to mark these days of celebration often included events such as racing, swimming, and a regatta. While

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339 Fraser, p.185.
in the evening the occasion would be marked by a ball which would be held at either the Apia Public Hall or one of the consulates.\textsuperscript{340}

With regard to the organisation of these events along ‘respectable’ and exclusionary lines, a file on the preparations for ‘The Queen’s birthday ball, 1896’ is quite revealing. In this archive there exist receipts, lists of materials obtained, and the minutes of the ball committee. Being an occasion of national patriotism it is stated in the minutes that only British subjects were to be invited to the ball with the exception of the Chief Justice, President, Consuls, Vice-consuls, and other officials.\textsuperscript{341} British subjects were also given the option of requesting that ladies and gentlemen of other nationalities be allowed to attend, but this was only at the discretion of the Committee. Importantly, there are no Samoans listed as subscribers to the event, although it is likely that a number of the high-ranking Samoan women from the villages of Apia, Vaiala, Matautu, Tanugamanono, and Vaimoso would have attended. One such woman who was a frequent attendee at each of these occasions was Fanua, the daughter of Seumanutafa Moe Pogai, and the Tāupou of Apia village. Fanua was a well-respected and well-liked Samoan woman who was frequently mentioned by visitors to Apia. In one account of the Tāupou, a visitor even commented that ‘few picnics or merrymakings of any kind were complete without this pretty and bright-witted Samoan girl’.\textsuperscript{342} Nonetheless, the reality was that, as had been the case in the 1870s, these later occasions were intended for the ‘upper ten thousand’ and they were organised at the exclusion of those who were known to be of disreputable and unfortunate circumstance.\textsuperscript{343}

This is not to say however that even the attendees of these events were free of the beach’s ill-repute. As was the case with Seumanutafa Moe Pogai’s

\textsuperscript{340} According to Richard A. Bermann, Robert Louis Stevenson was the Chairman of the managing committee for the Apia Public Hall. See, Richard A. Bermann, \textit{Home From the Sea: Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa}, Honolulu, 1967, p.131.

\textsuperscript{341} ‘Queen’s Birthday Celebration 1896, Meeting at British Consulate, May 9 1896’ in ‘Miscellaneous papers, 1869-96’, SAMOA-BCS 7/3f (ANZ)

\textsuperscript{342} Marie Fraser, \textit{In Stevenson's Samoa}, London, 1895, p.179. See Figure 20.

\textsuperscript{343} ‘Augustus Stead to Lotte: 31 August 1871’, in ‘Augustus Stead: Papers’, MS 6865 (NLA)
wife Fa'atalia, the Protestant missionaries were apt to excommunicate a member of their church should they be convinced that their attendance at the ball did not fit their Christian ideals of civility:

The condemnation of the dance had gone from the white missionary to his brown brother, the local Polynesian clergyman or deacon; and when we arrived we learned that even our excellent Sunday-school, church-keeping friend, Faatulia [sic], the wife of the chief Seumanu, himself also a most excellent and worthy member of the church, had been excommunicated for having danced a European cotillion at the Fourth of July ball given by our American Consul.344

Figure 17: ‘T.B. Cusack-Smith Diary 1893: Queen’s Birthday Ball tickets, 1893’. In ‘Cusack-Smith, Thomas Berry (Sir) 1859-1929’, MSX-2761 (ATL)

Importantly the Stevenson family was not alone in its attempts to bring respectability to Apia. In fact, there was at least one other family that was particularly proactive in their efforts to introduce gentility to the port town. This was the Cusack-Smith family. Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, his wife Winifred and

344 La Farge, p.119. A comment with regard to the missionaries disapproval of the dances held in the Apia Public Hall may be found in one of Stevenson’s letters to Sidney Colvin. See, Bradford A. Booth & Ernest Mehew (eds) The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 – December 1892, p.20. See Figure 5.
their daughter Maia came to settle at Apia in May 1890. As the appointed British consular representative to Apia, and the Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific, during the period 1890-1895, Cusack-Smith was to play an important role in the re-definition of ‘the beach’ and the promotion of respectable forms of sociability at Apia.345

As both a consular and a municipal representative, the activities organised by Cusack-Smith during this period may be seen as fulfilling a number of functions. In the first, his activities will be examined with regard to their patriotic association and the ways in which he sought to ensure that the British Consulate was a small bastion of British cultural heritage within the social web of Apia. Secondly, they will be examined with regard to an effort to secure an elite class system within the small port town community resident at Apia, and finally his activities in conjunction with the Stevenson’s will be examined with regard to the re-definition of ‘the beach’.

Through a perusal of the photographic albums and diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, it quickly becomes apparent that the British Consulate at Apia fulfilled more than a political function during his term of office. In these photographs and diaries the consulate is the site upon which British cultural imperialism is nurtured through sociability. The photographs, for example, show the Cusack-Smith’s playing lawn fives in the backyard, partaking in theatrical performances, and playing polo. Not surprisingly the diaries are also filled with constant references to the family’s attendance at and hosting of a number of public dinner and balls. In a description of Cusack-Smith, Stevenson wrote:

I had the pleasure of meeting in Apia the English consul general, J. Cusack-Smith. Had a chat with him and enjoyed it. He is a very well educated man, punctilious in dress and Chesterfieldian in deportment. His wife, too, was educated and intelligent and was the leading spirit among the better element in Apia in promoting matters...

345 Sir Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith (1859-1929) was British Consul for Samoa and Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific at Samoa from May 1890. He then went on to serve as Consul-General in Chile 1897-1905. He was created K.C.M.G. in 1898 and succeeded his cousin as 5th Baronet in 1919. See, Bradford A. Booth & Ernest Mehew (eds) The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson: September 1890 – December 1892, p.20.
along amusement and educational lines. They were both fond of physical sports too...  

Being among the ‘better element in Apia’ the family was therefore viewed to be on par with the Stevenson’s in their quest to bring respectability to the township. Foremost among the Cusack-Smiths’ activities at Apia was their desire to bring decorum to Apia through sport, and in particular polo. In a portrayal of Cusack-Smith at this time, the historian Dirk Spennemann has described the British Consul as ‘a man...who was for most of the time most certainly preoccupied with matters of teaching polo to the Samoans, pomp and circumstance, and British cultural imperialism’. Yet what is not so clear in this portrayal is the extent to which Cusack-Smith’s efforts were in fact only one part of a broader effort to bring respectability to Apia. Furthermore, while it is true that Cusack-Smith spent much of his time training two Samoan polo teams, what is not stated was the fact that he did so in conjunction with the Sui Tupu Malietoa Laupepa. From Figure 20 opposite, it is made clear that Malietoa Laupepa was equally involved in promoting this sport. In this image the Sui Tupu, who stands equally upright in status and power next to Cusack-Smith, belies his own agenda, himself engaging with British Cultural Imperialism. Dressed in a white top hat and suit with a cane in hand, in appearance at least Malietoa Laupepa testifies to the extent to which the Sui Tupu was also engaging with a re-definition of ‘the beach’ in his support of Cusack-Smith and the bringing of some fa’apālagi ways to Apia. As Ann C. Colley has noted in her discussion of Robert Louis Stevenson’s various forms of dress:

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...clothes can be prophylactic as well as vectors or cultural contagion, for they shield one from the outside at the same time as they register what has crossed the boundary from the outside to the inside, and reveal to what extent one has been contaminated by the surrounding society.

Therefore, it is clear that through his own engagement with the foreign residents of the Municipality and his allegiance with the British (in particular) during times of past civil conflict, the boundaries that guided the day to day activities and dress code of the Sui Tupu were being negotiated on a regular basis. Furthermore, through his support of Cusack-Smiths two Samoan polo teams (one was a single team, the other a married) the Sui Tupu was also willing for these boundaries to be transformed and shaped beyond the realms of his own experience. Whether or not he was aware of the connection between the playing of the game of polo in Great Britain, as an elite class-based sport, is unclear, although it may be safely assumed that Cusack-Smith was fully conscious of this fact. To this end, therefore, it would seem plausible to suggest that through his training of two Samoan polo teams and his co-operation with Malietoa Laupepa in this endeavour, the British Consul sought to lay down the foundations for an elite class system within Samoa that built upon the already hierarchical nature of this society.

349 All of the polo matches were played at a place called Desolation Point (Cusack-Smith does not provide the Samoan name for this place). The polo rules were translated into Samoan in 1893 by Charley Taylor with the help of Apelu. See, ‘TB Cusack-Smith Diary 1893: 20 January 1893’, in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X2761 (ATL)
Within this framework of securing the foundations for an elite class system in Samoa, Cusack-Smith also sought to ensure that the British Consulate was a small bastion of British culture within the social web of Apia. During his term of office he and his wife Winifred were constantly involved in organizing amusements and entertainments that were based at the consulate. Of particular note was their involvement in the organisation of ‘private theatricals’ at the consulate. In the following report, from the *Samoa Times* one of these events is described:

Private Theatricals at the British Consulate: A really excellent amateur dramatic performance took place at the British Consulate last Saturday evening. The piece selected was a one-act comedy entitled "Betsy Baker", and the cast was as follows: Mr Marmaduke Mouser a young and decidedly uxorious husband Mr TB Cusack Smith HBM Consul; Mrs Anastasia Mouser his wife, Miss Gurr; Crummy, the gruff and misanthropic cousin of Mrs Mouser, Mr T Maben; and Betsy Baker, a pleasing young person of the dressmaking persuasion, Mrs Cusack-Smith. The plot is very simple. Mrs Anastasia has become satiated with domestic bliss, and her husband's fond attentions cloy upon her, and the observant Crummy, seeing that a drastic remedy is required in order to preserve harmonious relations between the youthful couple, persuades Betsy to endeavor to divert the husband's affections from Anastasia to herself. The scheme succeeds; Anastasia's jealousy is aroused, and she comes to the conclusion that it is better to have a fond husband than a faithless one. Crummy explains, and everything ends satisfactorily. Of the manner in which
the comedy was performed, we can only speak in terms of warm commendation. Miss Gurr interpreted her part very satisfactorily, Mr Cusack-Smith sustained the character of the amorous, and too susceptible husband admirably, leaving nothing to be desired, Mr Maben's part was evidently a congenial one; he was suited to the character, and the character was suit to him. The chief honours of the performance, however, must be awarded to Mrs Cusack-Smith in the title role. The verve and abandon which characterised her delineation of the charming and vivacious Betsy showed that she possesses considerable histrionic powers. The interest of the audience was sustained throughout, and at the close of the entertainment the performers received an imperative and well-merited call before the curtain, when they bowed their acknowledgments. 

To this end the Cusack-Smiths were integral in not only the organisation of these events, but also as participants. This is further made clear through the constant references in their diaries to other preparatory roles carried out by them such as, the weeding of the tennis courts at the back of the consulate, and the decoration of the consulate during times of patriotic celebration. Of particular note is the fact that Winifred Cusack-Smith was equally involved in the organisation of attempts to bring respectable and civil intercourse to Apia. This is made particularly apparent not only through her involvement in the organisation of private theatrical performances, but also her involvement in activities that were independent of her husband such as her participation in a ‘Bereavement Society’ and her meticulous planning of cuisine for private dinner parties at the consulate. She was also the primary caregiver for the couple’s only child, Maia, who was only a toddler at this time. 

Another initiative instigated by the Cusack-Smith’s was the establishment of the Apia Public Library which opened on 2 January 1892. This library was

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350 This clipping was cut out and pasted into the diary of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith. See, ‘Diary: T.B. Cusack Smith 1891:10 October 1891’, in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X 2759 (ATL).
352 In the basement of the Apia Protestant Church there is a plaque dedicated to the memory of Winifred Cusack-Smith. It reads: ‘To the tender memory of Winifred Cusack-Smith who arrived in Samoa 4th January [1890/1?] and died in the British Consulate, Apia, 19 Nov. 1894 aged 32. To set ones feet towards the highest ideals of our race is to make it easier for others to follow. This tablet is erected by her husband Sir Berry Cusack-Smith K.C.M.G. formerly H.B.M. Consul and Deputy Commissioner at Samoa.’
the first of its kind in Apia and received the patronage of Robert Louis Stevenson, among others, who within a week of its opening had donated books. In a letter to *The Standard*, Cusack-Smith wrote of the library:

> There are, in the Isles of the Pacific, Englishmen, who pass year after year, seldom seeing any human beings except the natives – solitary among a crowd. They almost forget their mother tongue from long disuse. Even books they cannot get, and the long evenings are dull indeed. A year ago we started a public lending library, and what with purchases and gifts from Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and others, we have got together over one thousand three hundred volumes…

This initiative was crucial in the British Consul’s desire to bring about civility and respectability to Apia. As indicated in his letter, the purpose of the library was to combat the implied degenerate state of living on ‘the beach’ that (in his eyes) was prevalent among many of the Britishers living in the South Pacific. The establishment and maintenance of this library therefore was strongly tied up with the broader agenda of the re-definition and reform of ‘the beach’.

In a similar attempt to bring respectability and formalized amusement to Apia, Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith was also involved in the establishment of the Apia Sports Club in 1892. The activities of this club were primarily concerned with the organisation of communal sports days, many of which were held at Fagali’i. For example, on 28 May 1892 the Sports Club hosted a day of racing which included events such as Post Scurry, Tent Pegging, Ball and Bucket Stakes, and Tilting at the Ring. It is interesting that Cusack-Smith was involved with introducing this type of sociability to Apia, for, as has been argued by John Pinfold in his discussion of nineteenth century race-days in Liverpool,

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354 ‘A Library in Samoa’ in ‘Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith Photographic Collection’, PAI-q-274-40 (ATL) This newspaper clipping was cut out and pasted into the album of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, it is undated.
355 The club was formed on 19 April 1892 at a meeting in the Apia Public Hall. See, ‘Diary of TB Cusack Smith 1892: 19 April 1892’ in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X2760 (ATL)
356 The Apia Sports Club printed programmes for its racing meets which were sold for one shilling. See, ‘Diary of TB Cusack Smith 1892: 5 March 1892’, in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X2760 (ATL)
horseracing and betting were generally upheld to be unrespectable activities.\textsuperscript{357} What would seem to be a plausible explanation, however, may be that despite its disreputable connotations, racing was seen to be an important part of fostering cultural heritage amongst the ‘Britishers’ at Apia and that through Cusack-Smith’s involvement (particularly as the Deputy High Commissioner for the Western Pacific) it was highly regulated and all betting was controlled.

Also apparent in the diaries of the Cusack-Smiths are the family’s regular expeditions outside of the boundaries of the Municipality for the purposes of sport. Illustrative of this is that during the year 1891 the couple would go out and explore different parts of Upolu on an average of three times a week. In these pursuits they would ride or walk to different waterfalls, plantations, mountains and rivers.\textsuperscript{358} Furthermore, within the framework of these activities they would often partake in the institution of the picnic. The organisation and hosting of picnics at Apia was integral in the desire to re-define and control ‘the beach’. As Isabella Mitchell has demonstrated in her study of nineteenth-century picnics in New Zealand, picnics were not only social rituals that brought communities together, but were also integral in the process of cultural colonization. In respect of this, the institution of the picnic was a means through which the foreign settlers, resident within the Municipality, were able to develop an intimacy with the landscape of Samoa by ‘domesticating’ the natural environment.\textsuperscript{359}

\textsuperscript{357} Pinfold also notes that in Liverpool ‘Sports Clubs’ were also set up for betting. See, John Pinfold, ‘Dandy rats at play: the Liverpulian middle classes and horse-racing in the nineteenth century’ in Mike Huggins & J.A. Mangan (eds) \textit{Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play}, Oxon & New York, 2004, pp. 71,76.

\textsuperscript{358} This is made particularly evident in the 1891 Diary of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith. See, ‘Diary: T.B. Cusack Smith 1891’, in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X 2759 (ATL)

\textsuperscript{359} Isabella Mitchell, ‘Picnics in New Zealand During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: An Interpretive Study’, MA Thesis, Massey University, 1995, p.53. Importantly it was during this time that the tourist spots of Papase’ea (Sliding Rock), Lake Lanuto’o and Papaloloa Waterfall came to be popular locations for day excursions. See, Charles S. Greene, \textit{Talofa Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle}, San Francisco, 1896, p.49.
Also important in the re-definition and control of ‘the beach’ was the organisation of communal events such as weddings and funerals. Weddings were a huge focal point for the community and were, of course, significant in forging allegiances. Marriage allegiances between European traders and high-ranking Samoan women were common in Samoa, particularly in the latter part of the nineteenth century. ³⁶⁰ Many of these allegiances were strategic on both sides. As Apia increasingly became the economic hub of Samoa, the need to secure strong ties with the growing ‘town’ and the traditionally powerful villages became ever more pertinent. It was no coincidence that Fanua, the high-ranking daughter of Seumanutafa Moe Pogai, married an equally prominent pālagi.

banker, Edwin William Gurr. Moreover, this marriage was not the exception, for there were a number of other strategic marriages of this nature, that may be traced back through the lineage of a number of prominent ‘afakasi families. In fact, the marriage of E.W. Gurr and Fanua was a highlight for the community resident within the Municipality in the year 1891. In an account of the wedding B.F.S. Baden-Powell recorded the following:

Another interesting event, which I had the luck to witness was the marriage between Mr Girr [sic], an Englishman, and one of the leading business men in the place, and Miss Fanua, the Taupo of Apia, and daughter of Suamana [Seumanutafa], the chief of Apia. The ceremony took place in the British Consulate…Later on we attended the wedding breakfast, or breakfasts, for there were two. The first was of European fashion at Mr.Girr's [sic] house…

In his account Baden-Powell, like many other guests who later wrote about this wedding, went on to describe Fanua's wedding dress, the great Samoan feast that was provided and the celebrations that took place afterwards. In this manner, therefore, the orchestration of a wedding at Apia, during this period, along respectable lines that followed both Samoan and pālagi traditions was integral in re-defining ‘the beach’. While it is true that it would be expected that


363 The couple had at least one daughter who was named Teuila and who married a man called Lloyd Halliday. See, C.G.A. McKay, Samoa: A personal story of the Samoan Islands, Wellington, 1968, p.3.


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Fanua, as a high-ranking Tāupou would be given the greatest honours fa’asamo'a, it is significant that her wedding was also held in the British Consulate, was followed by a pālagi style breakfast and was celebrated in the evening with a ball in the Public Hall. In this way the allegiance between Apia village and the growing township was expressed in the parallel agenda of re-defining ‘the beach’ and ensuring that particular codes of conduct and traditions were upheld in the process. This is not to say, that ‘the beach’ did not find its way into such ceremonies. As the following recollection of Stevenson demonstrates, disrepute was never far away:

...the best part was poor old drunken Joe, the Portuguese boatman, who seemed to think himself specially charged with the reception, and ended by falling on his knees before the Chief Justice on the end of the pier and in full view of the whole town and bay. The natives pelted him with rotten bananas; how the Chief Justice took it I was too far off to see; but it was highly absurd.366

Of particular note here, were the actions of the Samoans, who, according to Stevenson, pelted drunken Joe with rotten bananas. These actions must be seen as significant in that this type of behaviour, which had once been common-place at Apia and had strongly been connected with ‘the beach’ in the past, was now not to be tolerated. By 1891 any behaviour associated with ‘the beach’ in all of its manifestations was beginning to become the exception rather than the norm.

Alongside of weddings, funerals, too, were significant in bringing this community together and re-defining ‘the beach’. At Apia during this period, the deceased would have to be buried as soon as possible out of necessity due to the tropical climate. Nonetheless, if the person was held to be of particular regard and esteem within this community all efforts would be made to ensure that they were duly honoured. Of particular note during this period was the death of the well-respected Apia pilot Elijah Hamilton who died on 23 March 1891. In an acknowledgement of Hamilton’s death all the flags of the ships docked in the harbour were half-masted and a full service was given at the LMS Church where

the old Captain’s ‘virtues and vices’ were relayed by the Reverend Claxton.367

Writing of this Stevenson recalled:

I walked around to the US Consulate…as I got round to the hot corner of Matautu I heard hymns in front. The balcony of the dead man's house was full of women singing; Mary (the widow, a native) sat on a chair by the doorstep, and I was set beside her on a bench, and next to Paul the carpenter; as I sat down I had a glimpse of the old Captain [who] lay in a sheet on his own table.368

Nonetheless, that the disreputable behaviour of ‘the beach’ could encroach on even these solemn events may be seen in Fanny Stevenson’s recollection of Dr. Bernhard Funk’s behaviour on this same day:

I think he had recoiled from Dr. F[unk] since the day of Capt. Hamilton's burial. There seemed to be some doubt as to whether Hamilton were really dead, so before the coffin was finally closed, the doctor came in to have a final look at the body. Louis had been there for some time and was talking in subdued tones to the widow and friends of the deceased man, when a loud cheery voice was heard, that of Dr. Funk. The gentleman…came pounding in with a lighted cigar in his mouth, and filling the room with his strident voice.369

By the time of Stevenson’s death in late 1894 the writer, together with many other members of the community at Apia, was satisfied that through his own efforts and others, a dawn of 'quasi-respectability' had been brought to Apia.370 Through the organisation of activities such as fancy dress balls, theatricals, sporting events and picnics, greater opportunities to partake in ‘civilised’ intercourse were available. In addition, within this agenda the idea of ‘the beach’ came to be used as a term of exclusion that was inherently linked to Apia’s past when ‘within the memory of man, the white people of Apia lay in the worst squalor of degradation’, or, if not, was attributed to the disreputable

367 ‘Diary: T.B. Cusack Smith 1891: 29 March 1891’ in ‘Diaries of Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith’, MS X 2759 (ATL)
369 Fanny & Robert Louis Stevenson, Our Samoan Adventure, p.110.
behaviour of particular individuals. In short, in conjunction with the official attempts being made by the Municipal Board, the introduction of respectable forms of sociability to Apia by certain members of the community was essential in the development of this port town. These were essentially the key factors that led to the dawn of quasi-respectability at Apia in the mid-1890s and the ultimate re-definition of ‘the beach’.

Figure 20: ‘Portrait of Fanua in her Wedding Dress’. In ‘Cusack-Smith Collection’, PA1-o-548-40-1, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand
Figure 21: John Davis, ‘Group Photograph taken at the Wedding to Blanch Yandall to photographer Alfred John Tattersall (1865-1951), Samoa, 13 August 1891’. In ‘Cusack-Smith Collection’, PA1-o-544-22, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand
CONCLUSION

FROM THE LIGHTS OF APIA

AND INTO LIMBO...

‘That is the fun of this place’, observed Lloyd, ‘everybody you meet is so important. Everybody is also so gloomy. It will come to war again, is the opinion of all the well informed - and before that to many bankruptcies; and after all that, as usual, to famine. Here under the microscope, we can see history at work’.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Vailima Letters: Being correspondence addressed by Robert Louis Stevenson to Sidney Colvin*, 1, New York, 1896, p.120.

As you walk along the seawall of modern day Apia there is little remnant of the natural landscape of ‘the beach’ that once was. Gone are the sand and the shingle, and in the middle of the wide curve of the bay sits a mass of reclaimed land, which marks the area upon which the rusted hull of the *Adler* sat for nigh on fifty years.372 Similarly, any evidence of the urban landscape of ‘the beach’ of the nineteenth century is slowly being eroded. The old customs house at Matautu was recently demolished and while a number of buildings such as the court house and the DHPG warehouses (later used by the New Zealand Reparation Estates Trust) remain, many of the buildings that stood until only twenty years ago have gone.373

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372 The Adler was one of the five men ‘o war sunk during the hurricane of 1889. During the early years of the twentieth century the hull of the *Adler* was a striking landmark situated in the centre of the harbour on the reef. It was significantly damaged by a storm in January 1939 and was later buried under the reclaimed land that now juts into the harbour. Charles S. Greene, *Talofa Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle*, San Francisco, 1896, p.36; Willard Price, *Adventurers in Paradise: Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji*, Melbourne, London & Toronto, 1956, p.163; Anon, ‘Latest Intelligence: Hurricane in Samoa’, *The Times*, 1 April 1889, p.5; Anon, ‘Old Wreck is Collapsing: Memories of when U.S.A. and Germany Nearly Fought, 50 Years Ago’, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 15 February 1939, p.7; Anon, ‘Apia Hurricane: Disaster of 50 Years Ago’, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 17 April 1939, pp.18-19; H.J. Moors, *Some Recollections of Early Samoa*, Apia, 1986, p.149.

373 To illustrate this one might consider the various buildings and structures that were examined in Pringle’s 1989 Heritage Assessment of Apia, many of which have now been demolished, see G. Pringle, ‘Heritage assessment: Apia, Western Samoa’, MSc Thesis, University of Sydney, 1989.
It is not surprising, therefore, that all references to ‘the beach’ have also disappeared. The idea of ‘the beach’ and its connotations of disrepute and degeneracy are now a thing of the past. As the capital city in a developing Pacific nation Apia looks forward, not back. Nonetheless, this silence and the relegation of this concept to the past did not occur through any natural process. Rather, its absence may be attributed to a number of deliberate attempts to re-define and control it. To this end, the establishment of the Municipality of Apia in 1879 was instrumental.

As a Pacific nexus that was formed through the merging of the indigenous and the foreign, Apia was intricately connected with the idea of ‘the beach’. Under Vaea’s watchful gaze ‘the beach’ sprang up along the shoreline in a way that was to supersede the physical. The evolution of this concept went beyond the physical. It was about an ideological terrain and landscape that could not be easily pinned down, but at the same time had very real and tangible consequences. The idea of the beachcomber and development of the concept of ‘the beach’ in the Pacific were intimately connected. Just as the existence and activities of the beachcombers epitomised the antithesis of Victorianism and respectability, so too did the beach communities:

The word beach has a special connotation in the countries of the South Seas; it is the home of the beachcombers, sailors who have deserted from their ships, ruined traders, ex-missionaries or aristocrats. From among them are recruited the deadhead drunkards of the water-front saloons, the sponging clientele of the opium dens and the illegitimate husbands of dusky princesses.

Of the palpable and tangible consequences of this discourse, the Municipality was one. Beginning with the lynching of Charles Cochrane in 1877, the attempts to re-define and control ‘the beach’ were first and foremost a community initiative. From the outset the residents at Apia wanted to bring order and control to their own community. That their desire to do so was complementary to the agenda of the newly established Western Pacific High

374 That the idea of ‘the beach’ and the turbulence of the nineteenth century quickly came to be regarded in this way may be seen in the postcards and papers of my great-uncle Henry, who referred to 1880s and 1890s as ‘ancient times’ in the 1930s. ‘Personal Papers of Henry Oldehaver’, in my possession.
Commission was advantageous. With the arrival of Sir Arthur Gordon in 1879, and the signing of a treaty of friendship between Great Britain and Samoa, the scene was set for the signing of the Municipal Convention. That the mālō of Malietoa Talavou were also desirous of bringing order to the town and of securing legitimacy for their rule was also instrumental.

Nonetheless, the consequences of the signing of the 1879 Municipal Convention were to have long term ramifications. As a foreign initiative that sectioned off the town and district of Apia as an international treaty port within the sovereign state of Samoa, the Convention was a colonial encroachment. Through its signing, the physical layout of Apia was re-defined as the Municipal and Neutral territory of Apia, and a consular oligarchy was established. 376 It exacerbated civil conflict in Samoa and proved to be a catalyst in the struggle for titular supremacy between Tupua Tamasese Titimaea and Malietoa Laupepa in 1886-1887. It also put in place the structures and the means through which the ultimate re-definition and relegation of ‘the beach’ was achieved.

Through the establishment of the Municipal Board of Apia and the promulgation of Municipal Regulations for Apia, the official structures for the control of ‘the beach’ were put in place. The Municipal Regulations were instrumental in the re-definition of acceptable and appropriate behaviour at Apia and the official condemnation of the disreputable actions associated with ‘the beach’. Under these regulations the pejorative actions connected with ‘the beach’ were clearly identified as unacceptable within the vicinity of the Municipality. These official actions were integral in the process of relegating this concept to the ‘past’.

Alongside these official structures, however, the actions of the community also proved to be instrumental. In conjunction with the formal attempts to ostracise ‘the beach’ the activities of key members from within this community were also crucial. Of particular note, were the actions of the Stevenson and

Cusack-Smith families who in concert sought to bring about a dawn of respectability to Apia. As leaders of the community, both Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith were actively involved in the introduction of genteel forms of sociability to Apia. In this endeavour they sought to relegate the idea of ‘the beach’ to the past, and transform this society. Their actions, in conjunction with the official structures put in place by the Municipal Board, were instrumental in the evolution of a dawn of respectability at Apia in the mid-1890s.

‘The beach’ was a multifaceted concept that was understood in a number of different ways throughout the course of the nineteenth century. The concept’s inherent ambiguity has allowed for it to be remoulded and reconstructed in the present, whilst during the Municipal Era it also provided the proponents of respectability with an antithesis. It is a concept that is inherently malleable, dialogic, complex, and contested but through the deliberate attempts that have been made to re-define it, it has come to be cast as one-dimensional in its values and actions.377

This thesis has attempted, through a discussion of the establishment and workings of a Municipality designed to control this community, to cast light on the textured layers and incongruities that may be identified as a distinguishing characteristic of ‘the beach’. With its conical mountain, sweeping reef, and two dashing fresh water rivers, the bay of Apia testifies to this. This ‘old port town with its dusty roads and patched weatherboard buildings’ grew out of both the physical and ideological space of ‘the beach’.378 It is as much a product of Samoa as it is of the foreign. It is a physical manifestation of the contested space of ‘the beach’; it is a product of many cross-cultural encounters.379 It is bound by contradiction as, on the one hand, ‘a place apart, an outlier of a distant world of materialism and individualism, a centre for the diffusion of decadence and

378 Peter Hempenstall, Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A study in the meaning of colonial resistance, Canberra, 1978, p.4.
development’, while on the other its identity and legitimacy as a community is firmly grounded in the Samoan villages that are its heart. As is the case in the experiences of many ‘afakasi, the town of Apia is witness to the ‘permeability and imprecision that is attendant to convenient classifications of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The town of Apia is a space ‘in-between’; a product of Samoa’s interaction with the outside world. It is still ‘the beach’.

Figure 22: Charles H. Kerry & Co., ‘Apia, taken from the reef, 1890’, PAColl-8834, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand


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APPENDIX A

Convention between Her Majesty and the King and Government of Samoa for the Government of the Town and District of Apia

1879

APPENDIX B

Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations
1879-1883
APPENDIX C

Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1886

'Municipality of Apia: Municipal Regulations 1879-1886', Item ID: R6387987
AEND 19741 WPHC1W3800/14 1/IV/5 (ANZ)
APPENDIX D

Revised Ordinances and Regulations of the Municipality of Apia
1891-1894

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APPENDIX E

Municipality of Apia: Regulations Concerning The Port of Apia

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APPENDIX F

Census List of Foreigners Residing within the Municipality of Apia

1880

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