

UPDATING MURPHY - AMERICAN SAMOA

LEONE BRANCH - WESTERN DISTRICT

This office had a chequered history during 1979 and the 1980's. It was certainly open on June 7, 1979. A correspondent visiting American Samoa took a bus to Leone from Pago Pago. With him he carried a number of Registered and Ordinary covers ready stamped for posting at Leone Post Office. The Postal Clerk there appeared to have little knowledge of postal rates or postal procedures and was most reluctant to accept the covers. Eventually he agreed - but only on condition that my correspondent bought from him stamps to the value of those affixed to the covers. He said that the stamps on the covers had to be balanced with those sold from his stock. Bob Murphy in "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands" reports that the office was temporarily closed in late 1979. A U.S. Postal Bulletin dated Sept. 11, 1980 recorded the office as officially discontinued from July 30, 1980. In late 1980 Bob Murphy wrote to the Postmaster in Pago Pago asking for information about Leone - the result was a card bearing both the Pago Pago and Leone datestamps for September 11, 1980 - but no information. In early 1982 I wrote to the Postal Clerk at Leone - the letter was returned unopened and noted "No such office in state" and with a May 25, 1982 Pago Pago Datestamp. However by October 17, 1983 Leone had apparently re-opened for Bob Murphy reports in Addendum no. 1 to his "A Postal History..." that Murphy 11.1 was used between October 17, 1983 and February 22, 1984 but with the Zip Code 96920 removed. He gave this datestamp the Murphy No. 11.1(a). I have seen covers bearing this datestamp additionally used on March 11, 1985, October 6, 1988, October 7, 1988 (Commercial) and May 23, 1990. However the top bar on all examples of Murphy 11.1 and 11.1(a) in my collection is 24mm long rather than the 29mm on Murphy 11.1 shown in "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands". I suspect that the illustration of Figure 11.1 in "A Postal History..." may have inadvertently been altered during the printing process.

Murphy 11.1 from my collection is shown here as Illustration 10/1 and Murphy 11.1(a) as Illustration 10/2.

Subsequently Murphy 11.2 has been seen used on Aug 22 1990 and April 14 1993. In "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands" Bob Murphy writes that this cancel - or one identical to it - also resided at the main Pago Pago Post Office. As if to support this the August 22, 1990 cover referred to above also bears a Pago Pago double circle of the same date cancelling one of the stamps. But on the other hand the Commercial cover cancelled with Murphy 11.1(a) on Oct 7 1988 also bears a partial Pago Pago 4-bar cancelling one of the stamps. Murphy 11.2 is shown here for reference as Illustration 10/3. A new datestamp was used on June 23 1994 - this is shown here as Illustration 10/4. Please check your collection and let me have any additional information about Leone.

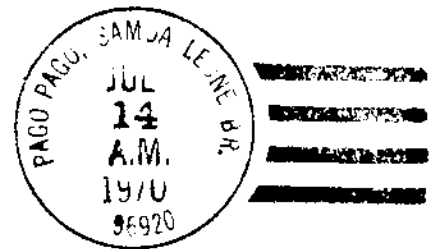


Illustration 10/1

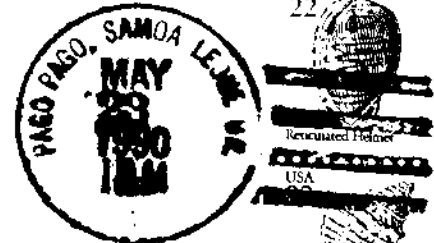


Illustration 10/2

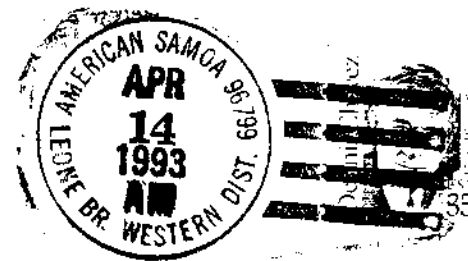


Illustration 10/3

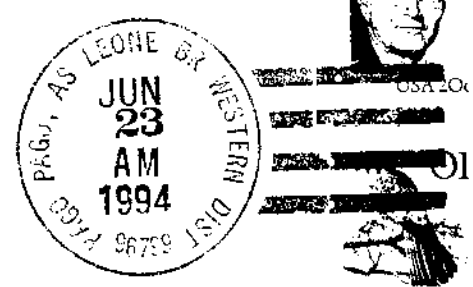


Illustration 10/4



The photographs show Leone Post Office as it was on June 7 1979. It occupies the room on the left hand corner of the ground floor of the Government Buildings. The Police have the office next door.