

**AMERICAN SAMOA:**

**POST OFFICES OF THE MANU'A ISLANDS 1981 to 1995:**

Robert T. Murphy published "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands" in 1983. He listed 4 currently operating Post Office Branches in the Manu'a Islands, Ofu, Olosega, Ta'u, & Fiti'uta. In 1989, according to the U.S. Post Office Directory only Olosega and Ta'u Branch Post Offices remained open. Comments below\* by Mathew Stoll suggest that in 1995 only Ofu and Ta'u Branch P.O.'s were operational.

During the period 1981 to 1995 a correspondent and myself shared the task of writing, at least once every 18 months, to each of the American Samoa Branch P.O.'s which Murphy listed as operational in 1983. During this period only two of our letters were returned as undeliverable - one from Fiti'uta, Manu'a and one from Leone on the main island - Tutuila. Shown below are the results of this exercise insofar as it concerns the four Branch P.O.'s in the Manu'a Islands.

Readers should note Bob Murphy's view expressed in "A Postal History/Cancellation Study of the U.S. Pacific Islands" that the Postmaster at Pago Pago holds certain Branch Post Office datestamps. e.g. Ta'u 4.2, Fiti'uta 5.2, Olosega 7.3 & Ofu 8.4.

My own view - and it is just a guess based on the standard of datestamping on philatelic covers I've seen and on comments from others - is that a full set of Branch P.O. datestamps is held at Pago Pago [not only the ones listed by Bob Murphy]. I also believe that letters from philatelists to the Branch Post Offices are sometimes intercepted at Pago Pago and these "shadow" datestamps used to cancel the covers enclosed - even occasionally when the relevant P.O. is not operational. However I do believe that most Branch Post Offices hold or have held a 4-Bar - sometimes quite different from the "shadow" 4-Bar held in Pago Pago, and that they do, from time to time, comply with philatelists requests to datestamp covers sent to them. In particular I believe that Murphy 4.2 or an identical 4-Bar was held at Ta'u around 1984 to 1991, if only from the distinctive nature of the cancellations applied to philatelic covers sent to Ta'u at that time e.g. dates inserted in ink, under-inked partial datestamps, messy over-inked multiple datestamps applied one on the other etc.

**LIST OF PHILATELIC COVERS SEEN - 1981 to 1995**

**FITI'UTA:** Enquiry returned Oct 13, 1982 marked "Branch Closed". No response since that date.

**OLOSEGA:** (No covers seen between October 4, 1980 and August 8, 1989)

August 8, 1989 - Illustration 14/11 (This cover was sent to OFU)

September 6, 1989 - Illustration 14/11

August 15, 1990 - Illustration 14/11

December 26, 1990 - Illustration 14/11 (This cover sent to OFU)

March 30, 1993 - Illustration 14/12 (Note mis-spelling 'SAMO') \*\*[Mathew Stoll - see below - says that Olosega P.O. closed in December, 1991 - might this cancellation have been applied at Pago Pago, or has Olosega re-opened ?]

**OFU:** (No response between July 10, 1979 and December 7, 1993 - other than 2 covers returned from Olosega)

December 7, 1993 - Illustration 14/13 (Murphy 8.4) - four over-inked datestamps

October 23, 1995 - Illustration 14/13 (Murphy 8.4) - five well inked datestamps

**TA'U:**

September 18, 1981 - Illustration 14/14 (Murphy 4.2) Barely legible

March 28, 1984 - Illustration 14/14 (Murphy 4.2) Some of lettering inked in with black ink. Date inserted in blue ink

January 12, 1989 - Illustration 14/14 (Murphy 4.2) Barely legible, year inserted in blue ink - cover sent to Fiti'uta.

March 10, 1989 - Illustration 14/15 - Cover sent to Pago Pago

December 28, 1989 - Illustration 14/14 (Murphy 4.2) - mostly legible - also bears Pago Pago machine cancellation.

September 30, 1991 - Illustration 14/14 (Murphy 4.2) - mostly legible

**\*Comment from American Samoa:**

For an up to date review of the postal situation in the Manu'a Islands I am grateful to Mathew Stoll, a resident of American Samoa, for the following in a letter dated 4 January, 1996:-

"I travel out to the Manu'a Islands for fishing getaways every month or two. Ofu and Olosega are connected by a bridge. Please note that there is almost no "real" outgoing mail from Manu'a. If somebody does have mail to be sent, it is usually given that morning to someone taking the flight to Pago Pago to mail at the main Post Office. Also you will definitely have problems in sending a letter to the "Postmaster" at these small sub-stations. The U.S. Government pays a lot of money to have a sub-station located in a private residence and the "postmasters" care more about the federal income than they do about philatelists. Although they are very nice people, they just do not understand collectors and postal historians.

**OFU POST OFFICE:** This has been operating since Cyclone Val, [December 1991 ? EB] when the \*\*Olosega Post office shut down. However, when I checked last they did not have any means to cancel stamps. They simply tossed unpostmarked outgoing mail into a bag and gave it to the Samoa Air Pilot. Postmark was applied at Pago.

**OLOSEGA POST OFFICE:** I have posted many letters over the years here. Although it is supposed to be operational, the last 8 or maybe 10 times I went there it was closed. The answer given was that the chief running it was "off island". (See reference under Ofu to \*\*Olosega P.O. being closed since Cyclone Val - I understand this was in December 1991[E.B.]

**TA'U POST OFFICE:** This Post Office is operational and has it's own date stamp. About 2 years ago they moved the landing strip from one end of the island to the other, and I haven't been to this Post Office since."

My sincere thanks to Mathew Stoll for his help.



Illustration 14/11

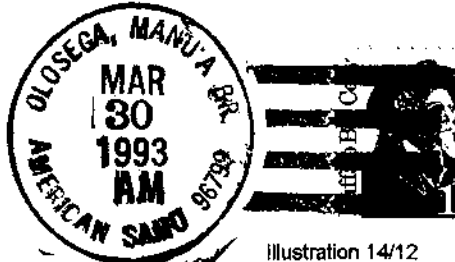
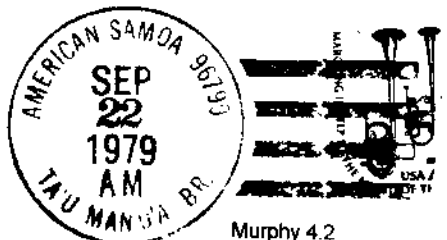


Illustration 14/12



Illustration 14/13



Murphy 4.2

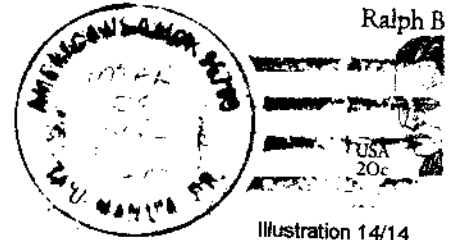


Illustration 14/14



Illustration 14/15