

## Chapter 3

### STORY OF MY EARLY LIFE, 1915-1931, BELLA CRICHTON STOKOE

*Written in Samoan in April 1962, translated by son Thomas A. Stokoe - February 2014. As of this writing, Bella, at age 98, resides at the Kanehohe Rehabilitation Center on Oahu, in Hawaii.*



#### MY CHILDHOOD

This is the story of my life starting with me as a child. I was born November 8, 1915 in the village of Tufutafoe, Savaii, Western Samoa. My mother's name was Sulia Timo, my father's name was Sane Crichton. Sulia's parents were (father) Timo Solomona Tua'ilemafua and (mother) Faitala Viliamu Fili. Timo and Faitala were missionaries for the LMS church (London Missionary Society) in Tufutafoe for a long time. My father Sane's parents were William Crichton (a full blooded Whiteman from Glasgow, Scotland and founding father of the Crichton line throughout Samoa) and mother Upu Falemalu (a full blooded Samoan from Sataua, Savaii.)

Sane Alexander Crichton would often visit Tufutafoe and became acquainted with Sulia. Sane was an older man while Sulia was about 21 or 22 years old. Sane had two wives previously both whom had died. He proposed to Sulia and his proposal was accepted by her parents. Sane and Sulia were married in 1914 in Tufutafoe. I was born November 8, 1915 and as soon as my mother was strong I was carried in a coconut basket from Tufutafoe to Sataua where I would live for the next three years with my parents.

A second child was born named Peter who died at age 6 or 7 months leaving me as the only child of my mother. 1918 was the year of the world-wide flu epidemic killing millions of people.

Many Samoans died including my parents. Deaths were so rapid that burial was not always immediate and decaying human flesh was consumed by dogs. At the time my parents and I were living in Fagasua in Sataua, Savaii. Fagasua was the name of the Crichton family property.

My father, Sane, raised cattle, pigs and chickens and grew coffee, oranges, bananas, taros and breadfruit. Occasionally cattle and pigs were slaughtered, salted, and put in barrels and rotated for meals for the family. He was also a fisherman and boat builder, and built cement tanks to store water in the villages of Vaisala and Samata.

As a young child there were things that I wanted - biscuits and cake. My father made sure I got some. From the coffee trees, beans were picked and my father would store a bag of them. Gaogao, the wife of my half brother Aleki, used to go and pick coffee beans and peel and dry them. We had a coffee bean grinder.

Our family had a fishing net called a tili that caught many fish. At night time family members would go fishing with torches. This was called "lama" and they caught many fish especially the aliali on the reef. Before my parents died I remember my father built boats (lagisi) and fautasi (racing boats). Villages commissioned dad to build them new boats or refurbish old ones. Close to our coconut shed several lagisi (boats) were gathered to be refurbished.

My father used to tell me to go with him to work on boats as there was no one else to help. He told me to hold a ball of iron on the outside of the boat while he hammered nails on the inside. The ball of iron was to prevent nails from protruding outward. I was pleased with my work and thought of myself as being a smart girl helping my father.

Sometimes my father would look for me but I had gone to the beach. I would take a piece of coconut husk forming a boat, poked a chicken feather into it creating a sail or flag, and float it in the sea. On other days I would gather uga (little clam-like creatures) and I would whistle to the uga so the creature would crawl out of its shell. Once the creature had crawled out of its shell, I would place it in my hair. I put several of them in my hair where they attached themselves.

This happened on a particular day. I couldn't get them out and started crying. My father came and asked why are you crying and I told him I couldn't get the uga out of my hair. He sent me to get a pair of scissors from my mother and then cut the uga out of my hair until all my hair was gone.

My father used to buy a can of biscuits known today as arrowroot biscuits. When the can was empty dad would say to Charlie, "Charlie, go to Sataua on the horse and buy a can of biscuits. Bella wants some." Charlie would obey as he was fearful of dad if he didn't do as told.

I desired walking with my sisters (half sisters, daughters of Sane's previous two wives - Lisi, Nora, Lily) toward Sataua. I was unhappy with them because they walked fast and I was slow. They would tell me to walk faster. I cried and was unhappy because I couldn't keep up and had a stomach ache. I have never forgotten their scolding attitude toward me. They showed no kindness to me just impatience.

When my parents died in the flu epidemic of 1918, I no longer lived in Fagasua instead I lived in the area known as Olofetu'u. Before my parents died our beautiful palagi (whiteman's) house was dismantled and a cement house commenced. However, my parents died and the cement house was never completed. The foundation still stands today.

When my parents died I was taken in by my half brother Aleki and his wife Gaogao and we lived together for an unspecified period of time. I used to baby sit their children, the older boy named Sikoti. Gaogao was not nice to me. I slept at night uncovered without a sheet. She never gave me one. She never took good care of me. I got an eye disease because she never washed my clothes or my face.

When my parents were alive and Gaogao came to pick coffee beans I would go and suck the sweet skins of the coffee beans and Gaogao would beat me. I started crying and my father heard me and asked why I was crying. I told him Gaogao beat me for sucking the sweet skins of the coffee beans. My father picked up a coconut and threw it at Gaogao missing her. If it had hit her that would have been the end of her life.

When we lived in Olofetu'u, Gaogao would send me at early dawn to pickup breadfruit leaves for the umu (Samoan oven). Eventually, we moved back to below Sataua to live in a fale o'o (small Samoan house) behind where our palagi house once stood.

Some of our family members went and gathered lama (a kind of nut in a shell) to burn and eat. I used to go and sit outside where the lama was, crack the shells and eat the nuts. They were rich and I got dizzy so I never ate them again.

I remember kids in our family would go tafafao (walk around for fun): Malie, the daughter of Viena and Fuiono; and Mele the daughter of Taepovi (Cow Shit, yes that was his name) ma Anitelu. Unfortunately, Mele fell from the side of the house and hurt her nose real bad. Mele and her parents left Sataua to go live in Upolu with the family of Taepovi and they never returned to Sataua.

My half sister, Louisa, living in Sataua, would give me worm medicine. I had to first eat a piece of breadfruit. Once it was soft in my mouth, the worm tablet was added and I would swallow. That was the only way worm medicine could get into my stomach as I was young and didn't know how to swallow tablets.

My half brother, Charlie, would go to Apia and return with a nice hat with small beads sewn into it, clothes, and lollies (candies) or cake for me. Charlie used to bathe me and dry me with a towel and dress me with nice clothes and put hair oil in my hair. Charlie was very kind and good to me and I would follow him around. He took me on the horse to the store where I had my first ice cream cone. I ate the ice cream but not the cone. Then I gave him the cone and said, "Take the cone back to the store so they can wash it and fill it up with ice cream for the next person."

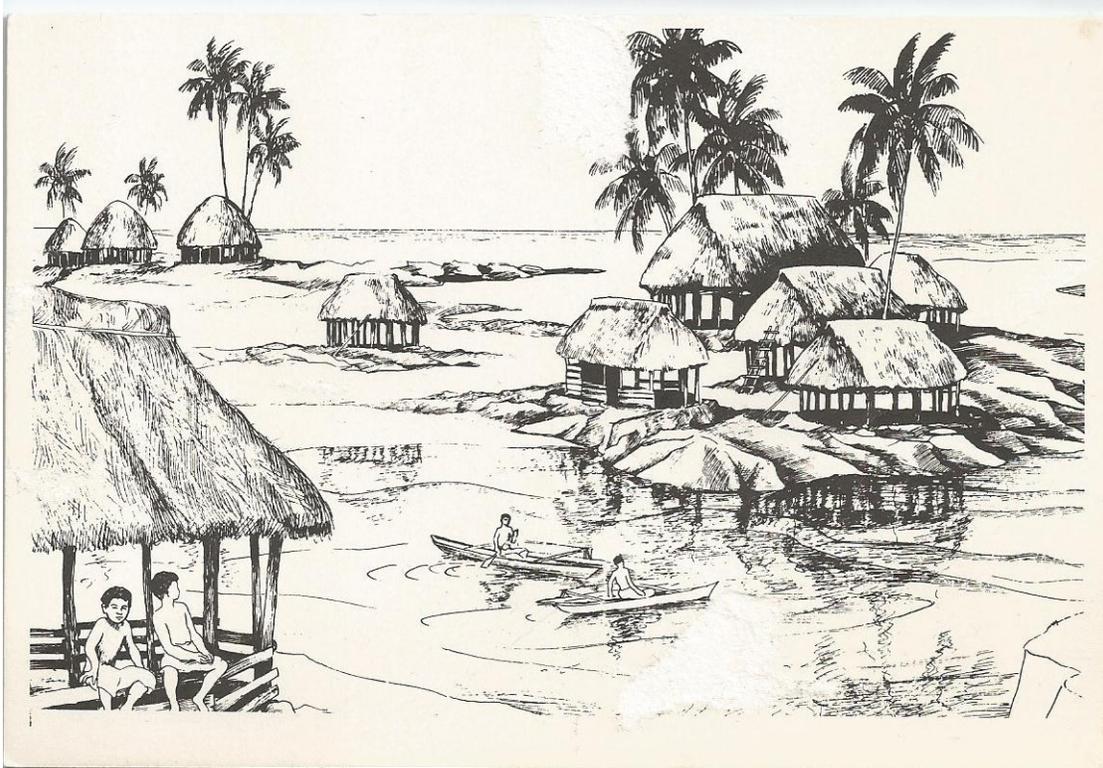
Our family had a store. When the family would gather behind the store to eat, Malie and I were sent to the front to guard the store. We were given the rule never to open the candy jar and eat candy otherwise our heads would be shaven bald with a razor. However, the temptation to eat candy was strong, so we opened the jar and ate. Sure enough, our heads were shaven bald.

This happened several times as we would continue to sneak candy from the jar. Later in life,

when we were mature, the hair on our heads was very thick due to repeated shaving bald when young.

Beside sneaking lollies (candies) we sneaked round biscuits that were very hard and difficult to bite through. They were known as horse biscuits. Along with other kids we used to make wrist bangles, rings, wind propellers, and small balls to play with. These we made out of flax and were woven. We used to play musa (hopscotch). In those days we had nothing to play with being parents had died, so we made our own things.

## **MOVING FROM SATAUA & MY FATHER'S FAMILY TO LIVE IN SAFUNE WITH MY MOTHER'S FAMILY**



About one or two years after the death of my parents, I was surprised by the arrival of Maneta, the brother of my mother. He came from Safune with the request from my mother's mother, Faitala, that I be brought to Safune where she would care for me and raise me. And so I left Sataua and my father's family, and with Maneta, journeyed to Safune to live with my mother's family, arriving in the village of Vaisala. Maneta piggy backed me part of the way and rest of the journey was aboard a kerosene boat.

When we arrived my grandmother Faitala had prepared a nice meal for us - melon, sugar cane, mangoes, pineapple, corn beef, and fish. My grandmother was very pleased that I had come to live with her in Safune. Her husband Timo had died and consequently they were no longer LMS missionaries. Grandma had returned to Safune, the true original village of habitation of her and Timo. It was here that I would live for the next four or five years.

I would sleep with my grandmother with her arm as my pillow. She used an ali (wooden pillow) to rest her head. I wanted to sleep on her arm so she couldn't go off with her friends but

stay with me. My grandmother loved me very much and was a mother to me being my parents had died and there was little time for me to experience much love from them.

If I woke up in the night and my grandmother was gone I would cry and go looking for her in at her friends' houses. My grandmother would be surprised when I would find her at a friend's house. My grandmother gave me freedom to go and play. I used to play with Ligi, the daughter of Lemaya because we were the same age. Today she is married and living in Togafu'afu'a and her children are grown and married.

I used to play also with Fa'asulu and Aati, who is known today as Malama, they are the children of Atuaia. We used to fight. Another friend was Fualua the daughter of Va'a and Sieni Stowers and her sister Mele and brother named Liu. I wanted to eat nice food like I had when my parents were alive because we had a store room for food. We stored bags of flour, sugar, porridge and cans of biscuits plus other types of food. Since my parents died the abundance and variety of food was gone.

I went regularly to the family of Ene and Faimasulu Stowers and played with their children because I liked their food. We used to go and get kapok off trees for pillow stuffing and we would swim in a pond known as Sili'afai. Further inland we would go to Laloaoa near Matavai and we would pick guavas, oranges, and gogu (a type of fruit) and eat. It seems we did that all day then went to where the water sprang up from the ground and ate our fruit then swam in the pond. We returned home when it was dark. My days living in Safune were good days as my grandmother gave me freedom to roam with other girls my own age.

My grandmother and I used to go to the place called Agiagi and sleep there because the property belonged to a family named Stehlin. Grandmother looked after the property for them. It was there that I fed chickens. On Sunday we would go to Asu, the part of the village where our house was located. Sometimes, we would spend a week at Asu and I would leave early each morning and walk to Agiagi and feed the chickens.

About that time of morning the Catholic church would hold its service and I would enter the church because I wanted to see the candles burning and the picture of Jesus as a baby sitting on the lap of Maria. I would watch the people in the church. There was a bowl on a pedestal in the middle of the church containing water. People would approach the bowl, kneel, put a hand in the water and touch their head and form the sign of the cross, then go and kneel at the bench where they were seated and pray.

I did not know the words of their prayer as I could not hear what they were saying though I saw their lips murmuring. At the end of church they would rotate to the bowl and again place a hand in the water and make the sign of the cross. With church over I would continue on my way to feed the chickens. However, Samoan chickens are used to being fed very early in the morning. By the time I arrived after attending the Catholic church, the chickens were gone roaming and no matter how loud I called, none of them would come.

Upon my return to the house grandmother would ask if I fed the chickens and I would say yes and she would ask were all the baby chicks present with their mother hens? I would say yes. This occurred every Sunday morning when I attended the Catholic church enroute to feed the chickens. The poor chickens never got fed on Sunday mornings.

There is a man named Pesefea and his wife Fali who had a daughter named Fa'agase. She planted flowers called makelita that had beautiful blooms of different colors. I asked her for some seeds. She gave some to me. I went to Leagiagi, prepared the soil and planted the seeds. This made me very happy. Each evening I would inspect to see if they had come up. One morning I discovered they were up and I was very happy. These were the first plants I had ever grown in my life. I would lay awake at night thinking about these plants. When eventually they bloomed into beautiful flowers my heart was filled with joy.

Even today at my age of 46 and a half years, I cannot forget the great happiness I derived from those beautiful makelita flowers. I never picked them until they were fully mature and I would keep seeds to replant.

## **WHITE SUNDAY**

White Sunday is a holiday in Samoa falling on the second Sunday of October. Parents and communities acknowledge and celebrate childhood by hosting special programs during church services which include scriptural recitations, "tauloto," biblical story enactments, and creative dance performances. Children receive gifts and are allowed the privilege of eating first. Normally parents eat first and children last. Samoan women and children dress completely in white to attend church.

When White Sunday drew near, grandma would tell me to go and gather coconuts so that a white dress could be purchased for me special for church. I would gather coconuts leading to the week before White Sunday. I was pretty good at guessing how much I would receive for a basket of dried coconut. The coconuts would be husked, cracked open, and the flesh cut out with a knife and dried in the sun. The dried finished product was called copra. Grandma and I worked cleaning Leagiagi and gathering coconuts.

There is a Vi tree (a kind of fruit tree similar to a mango tree) that grew close to the cemetery. I used to go early in the morning and pick vi, gather fallen ripe mangoes as well as gogu. I enjoyed eating these fruits. There was also an ifi tree (similar to a chestnut tree) and I used to gather ifi to roast and eat. I looked forward to doing this each morning. Grandma used to wake me up early in the morning to go gather fallen fruit before other kids arrived and got it all. There were birds and fruit bats that would eat the fruit.

In those days the pastor of the LMS church was Natapu. After him the next pastor was Soli and his wife was Foini. Soli became a chief and received the title or new name of Nemaia. When Soli and Foini died, their daughter married a man named Uelese. The title name of Nemaia became vacant through the death of Soli. Eventually Uelese received the chief name of Nemaia. Uelese alias Nehemaia is still living in Safune today (1962). I went to school with Uelese when we were young kids.

I used to accompany my grandmother to a dinner with the deacons of the LMS church and I entered the dining place with the head person in charge of the dinner. As soon as the food was spread out upon the dining mats I would go search for an empty basket and place it behind grandma. As soon as we finished eating we would place the left overs in the basket and I would take it home to our family members. Then I would wait for grandma to arrive home and we would go bathe in the sea.

Before bathing we would dig a hole in the sand and place our drinking gourds in the water that sprung up and fill them. With the tide out, the water running from underground springs was quite fresh and not salty. Each Sunday we bathed in the sea and did the same to obtain underground spring water that emerged at the base of a cliff by the beach.

Wherever my grandmother went I would go too, whether it was church meetings or on church assignments. At gatherings where there was food and I was not present, she always put some food aside for me. She would tell members of the family this food was for me because I was young, and none of them could eat it because they were older.

## **SCHOOL**

I attended the LMS church school where I learned the A E I O U alphabet and began writing in Samoan plus learning to read in Samoan. I learned to read from picture books and from the Bible. I became a good writer in Samoan and a good reader in Samoan. I was also in church performances for White Sunday. I was Sepulona the son of Jacob in one of the performances. I was taught and directed by the Pastor's wife Foini.

## **FISHING**

Fishing was something I used to do as a little girl. I would go fishing with 30 ladies of the village. The ladies were led by a woman named Letiva. We would go "tu'i le amu," a form of fishing using long sticks rounded at the bottom to pound the sand or rocks underwater and frighten fish toward an encompassing net. When the water was above my head I would lean against the long stick to help keep my head above water and not drown

Sometimes I would paddle the canoe used to place fish caught in the net. There were times when the village women would try to chase me to shore saying, "You little half-caste girl. You are just coming to have fun. Go ashore." But I followed them anyway and they would tell me to get in the canoe to place fish and paddle. When fishing was over and the women came ashore, I was given an equal share, usually two or three afi or packages of fish wrapped in breadfruit leaves.

There were times when I took our family chief's canoe without permission and would go fish way down by the reef. I would also get some salt water to mix with coconut o'o (round solidified growth inside the coconut) to mix into palusami because we had no salt. Palusami is a mixture of taro leaves, coconut cream, onion and a bit of salt.

At special times of the year fish known as Lo would come close to shore in schools. We kids would go to the beach and wait for them to appear then gather some and take to our families to eat. I had a fight with a kid named Moa because he quickly gathered the Lo and didn't allow me to get some. So I beat him up and he cried.

We also went fishing or gathered alualu at the time they appeared during the year. Also, in season, we pulled a net to catch akule fish. It was a net made out of leaves that would cause fish to gather in a concentrated area and we would catch them. While fishing we would sing a Samoan song. It was a fun song and as we sang we would laugh. I sang loud and laughed because it was a fun song and I enjoyed it. These are the words of the song we sang between 1920-1923:

Faupusa e,  
Filifili ane i'a,  
Se'i fau ane lea pusa manaia.  
Ua uma ona ti'o  
Ae le'i falifalia.

This was a very funny song to me and 'til this day (1962) I have never forgotten it. When the fishing was over the catch was divided equally among all who pulled the net. I really enjoyed fishing and this was a fun activity for me as a little girl. We would go on assorted forms of fishing:

- (1) Fao tu'i tu'i. (Pounding with stick to frighten fish out from rocks)
- (2) Tago tago (where you would pull up rocks from the bottom of the sand and with a hand protected by material wrapped around the hand, you would grab fish hiding under rocks)
- (3) Another form was to dig for pipi or lumane (shell fish)
- (4) Tagapalolo was another kind. The palolo were light, tiny wriggly worms green in color that appeared once a year near the sea surface on a full moonlight night. We would catch them using small scoop nets. They would come in close to the shore.

## **THE FIGHT**

One day Sepelini, Niko, Telemeke and I went tafao (wandering around for fun). At the coconut shed of BP (Burns Phillip, a company with coconut sheds in a few villages where villagers could sell their dried coconut) Niko and Sepelini started fighting. I could see that my cousin Sepelini was getting beat up, so I grabbed the amo (pole used for carrying loads on a shoulder) and belted Niko across the shins as hard as I could. He went down crying. Then turned to Telemeke and belted him across the shins with the amo. Likewise, he went down crying. They both shouted "Aue, aue, ua ta fia ola!" meaning "Aue, aue, I want to live!"

Our family chief, Pepe Iele, heard the boys' cries of anguish and came running. "What's the matter with you boys?" They replied. "Bella hit us across the shins with the amo!" I started running across the sand and the chief chased after me. But being a small girl with short steps he caught me and beat me with a piece of rope used to tie a horse. I thought the chief would be happy because Sepelini and I had won the fight. Instead he was angry with me. To this day I have never forgotten that fight.

## **A COUPLE OF HARROWING EXPERIENCES**

On one Sunday we attended a church meeting in Faletagaloa. After lunch we went to bathe in the river at Saletele. There were some boys there with spears throwing them at fish. We commenced bathing when one boy threw his spear and it hit the ankle of a boy named Paulo, a member of the family of Fui and Suifaga. The spear entered one side and protruded out the other. The boys tried to extract it and succeeded. Paulo is still alive today.

One day we were canoeing below Saletele. I jumped out of the canoe and began swimming leaving the canoe to another girl. I tried to put my feet down on the sand but the water was too deep and I started swallowing the sea and drowning. One of the boys in a canoe saw what was happening and dived in coming to my rescue. I have never forgotten that experience.

## **WORKING WITH GRANDMOTHER**

Grandma and I used to go to where we had planted crops and sleep there. We had planted taro, bananas, yam, papaya, tobacco, breadfruit and numerous other crops. We used to make tapa cloth from the Mulberry trees and rope from the Togafu'afu'a trees. We would make an umu and bake masi Samoa (Samoa biscuits). We first dug a hole in the ground, lined it with banana leaves and placed breadfruit in the hole to ferment. Periodically we would feed the fermentation with more breadfruit and place new banana leaves. I would scrape coconuts and the coconut cream was mixed with the fermentation and baked in the oven as biscuits. When the biscuits were cooked we would eat then fill our baskets with biscuits to take home and share with family members.

I enjoyed doing things with my grandmother. She taught me a lot and was loving and kind to me. Arriving home with the biscuits the big drum announcing school echoed. I had no time to bathe so went straight to school. The kids at school could smell the biscuit aroma on me and would comment, "Bella has been making masi Samoa again with her grandmother Faitala." As soon as school was out my girlfriends would say, "Bella, let's go to your house and eat the biscuits you made in your umu."

## **EPISODE WITH THE COCONUT CUP WATER CONTAINERS**

One morning Faitala told me to go fetch water in her two coconut containers at Vaga the place where good water was available. I filled the two coconut containers with water and attached them to the hand carrier used to carry them and headed home. In front of the house of the family of Taulago, the mother of Faimasulu who was wife to Ene Stowers, kids were playing marbles.

I put down my load of coconut water containers in the middle of the road and joined the game of marbles. Suddenly a horse and rider from Leagiagi came trotting by and the horse kicked my water containers smashing both of them and spilling all the water. I felt real bad that the containers were broken and now useless. I was afraid to go home and face Faitala and the family. So I went loafing around all day and did not return home until 10 o'clock at night.

My grandmother was mad because there was no water to drink. She wanted that water I went special to get and to drink it directly from the coconut containers. As I crawled toward my mat to sleep I saw a big long stick next to my grandmother which I knew she was going to use to beat me. "Come closer." she said to me. As I came closer she quickly grabbed the stick and hit my leg. I told her what had happened that her coconut containers were broken by a horse. I escaped her stick and went to the house of a friend and slept the night. In the morning I returned home.

## **THINGS WE MADE**

I used to go and pick mosooi berries (they look like black olives) to get oil to put in our hair. I would scrape the coconuts and squeeze the coconut milk out and mix it with the mosooi oil then put the liquid into a bottle. I made a cork out of coconut husk.

We used to make u'a and tie and peel u'a at the waters of Vaga. We took a piece of flat wood to make u'a upon and use the pipi shell to scrape the u'a. The end product would be the manufacture of tapa cloth. It took a whole day of work. We would scrape and remove the wet stuff, then beat the residue with a stick to stretch it out like sheet. Then we would dry it in the sun then treat it with "dead" breadfruit or masoa (starch) to fill in any holes. I learned how to make

designs on the siapo.

I also learned how to weave mats (papa) and fine mats (fala lili'i) as well as pola sisi (blinds), water mats, baskets made out of coconut leaves, serving mats to eat upon, fans, and laupola to roof houses.

### **GRANDMA FAITALA MY PROTECTOR**

If anyone in the house beat me, whether young or adult married, grandma would entice the person to come sit near her on the pretense of sending him or her on an errand. As soon as they were close she would suddenly grab her hidden coconut fibre broom and start beating that person across the face. If the person didn't quickly stand and escape they would be hurting from grandma's beating.

### **MY SOURCES OF IRRITATION**

If at times I was slow and the umu wasn't cooked, or if I was slow in performing a certain chore, Fesulua'i would throw a coconut shell at my ankles. One day I was angry with Fesulua'i, the wife of my uncle Maneta now known by the chief name Pepe, because she was constantly telling me what to do and making me do all kinds of errands. All she did was sit around telling me what to do. I was so angry I went into the kitchen where there was a hen and started swearing at the hen. But it wasn't the hen I was mad at but Sefulua'i.

Sefulua'i told me she would tell Maneta her husband that I was swearing at her. I said no, I am swearing at the hen because she attacked me with her feet. I was also mad because I would be sent to Vaga with a bucket to fetch drinking water and I was small and the bucket of water was very heavy.

### **I WAS A CHEEKY GIRL**

There was an old man by the name of Apelu who was the father of Sapokuka who lived by the Methodist church. This old man had one good eye but the other was missing. He used to gather coconut husks and pieces of wood that filled half of his house. If my family had no matches I would go to him to get fire. I would get tired of sitting waiting for him to give me fire as he had his matches wrapped in about fifty pieces of paper. Finally he would light my coconut husk so I had fire.

After he had lit my husk on fire, I went outside and yelled, "Apelu mata ivi." meaning "Apelu missing eye." Apelu jumped out of his house, picked up rocks and started throwing them at me and yelling, "Lau alelo!" (a swear word). But I was long gone running as fast as I could. When Apelu went to bathe in the sea he carried a broken umbrella over his head.

Sometimes when I went to Leagiagi, I would run into an old man by the name of Matalavea. He had lima papagi or deformed hands and fingers. I used to walk on the cement wall and he would walk in the middle of the road. I would ask, "Where are you going Matalavea?" He would reply, "I am going to bathe." We would pass each other and soon as there was a bit of distance between us I would yell, "Matalavea, lima papagi!" (Matalavea bunchy hands). He would turn around and throw rocks at me but they couldn't reach me.

On other occasions while walking we would run into the Patele from Safotu (pastor) on his way to inspect the church at Safune;. I was a student at the time at the Catholic church in Safotu. I had learned to say in English "Good morning" if it was morning and "Good afternoon" if it was afternoon. We had no clocks or watches in those days and had to determine time by the position of the sun in the sky.

So on seeing the pastor approach, I would glance at the sky. If the sun had not reached straight upright I would greet the pastor in English with "Good morning, Father." If the sun was crooked in the sky I would greet him in English with, "Good afternoon, Father."

## **CARRYING LOADS ON OUR SHOULDERS**

My grandmother was dedicated to planting tobacco and we would sell the fili tapa'a or tobacco leaves wound in rope cord for money, chickens or other items of value. When I was older, I and other girls would go up to our land with crops and carry back to our homes baskets of food - taro, bananas, breadfruit, ta'amu or yams. We carried our loads on a shoulder using an amo - a pole with a basket of food on either end. This was the traditional way of carrying loads.

I wanted my load to be larger than anyone else. Consequently, I would have a sore back and get chills. Faitala asked a friend of hers named Meafou, who lived above Vaga, to massage my back and shoulders. It was through her massage that I gained relief from my back and shoulder pain.

## **UNDERGROUND FRESH WATER**

I was one who continually was at the bathing pool by the sea shore. Where the men bathed, at low tide, there was a cave that could be entered. My friend Jane Stowers, whose husband today is Sinapati Fruen, and I would enter the cave. We had to dive beneath the sea, swim under water, until we emerged into the cave where fresh underground water emerged. This water was drinking water for the village, beside water held in cement tanks captured as rain from roofs.

My older half-sister Lisi and her husband Su'a Kipeni went to a concert at Falealupo where a special presentation on Lehi, Sarai and their children was taking place. This was a very nice presentation. The missionaries giving this presentation were fed daily with umu of yams, chickens, pork, fish and other items to eat. People attending changed into their good clothes.

There was an old woman named Muluga who had bad small toes on her feet. The toes were papala or rotten, crooked and gnarled. The big toes curled upward in distortion. She attended the concert.

## **BOATS**

Rowing boats belonging to our family also took people to the concert via the sea. There were Samoan village rules governing the use of boats on such an occasion: When a family boat left the village, the pola or blinds of the owner's house had to be lowered. It was forbidden they be raised until the boat returned. Also, the names of those who went in the boat were forbidden to be mentioned lest something bad happened to the boat and occupants. This was known in Samoa as the "tapa tautali."

## **THE HURRICANE**

When rainy days occurred, the rain flowed into the village malae or “village square.” There was lightning and thunder. I was afraid and closed my eyes when lightning flashed and thunder cracked and I hid beneath my sheet. There were signs when a hurricane was about to hit the islands. We would look to the sky to see if birds called Atafa were swooping down above the village. If they were then this meant a hurricane was coming. If there were no Atafa birds in the sky, there would be no hurricane.

I remember a big hurricane that struck the islands when I was about eight or ten years old. Faitala and I tried to lower the pola or blinds to our tin roofed house and tie them to the house posts but we couldn't do it due to the hurricane. All the people from our side of the village had fled to the part of the village called Asu for refuge in a small Samoan house belonging to Lua'ufui. This house stood at the back of the house of Tua'ilemafua. Many Samoan houses were destroyed, blown down, as well as coconuts and breadfruit.

It was difficult for people to go inland to get food from their little plantations because of the heavy sweeping rain and wind. Grandmother and I tried to light our kerosene lamp. The wind blew so strong. We encircled our kerosene lamp with a mat and tried to light it with matches but couldn't, using up our matches in the process. We tried to sleep but the wind was so strong it blew sand across my body. The sand stung me. My body hurt.

Grandmother and I finally fled from our house to seek refuge in the house belonging to Lua'ufui. The wind tried to lift my body up and blow me away. The people in the house we fled to were all afraid. They feared the house would fall down upon us all.

Gradually the wind decreased and people were able to go inland up to their small plantations and gather baskets of food - ripe bananas, vi, and mangoes. Everybody was cold due to the rain and wind. When the hurricane was over, people returned to their homes. Some were in tact, others needed repair, others no longer existed..

## **PEOPLE**

In those days Toenuiti was alive, Lua'ufui and Paese and two children named Pale and Lealava'a; Tasele and her sister Fegama'i. Tasele was the taupo (princess) for Tua'i lemafua when Faitala and husband Maneta were alive as well as Soli and Fekelita. Also alive were the children of my mother's brother named Fineaso who died in the 1918 flu epidemic. Fineaso and wife Letui were LMS missionaries. Children of Fineaso and Letui were Sepelini and Malie. Malie had a husband named Tu Seuini'i and son named Pe'a. They lived in Safune. (Tommy and Leo spent Christmas with them in 1956 and Leo lit a fire cracker that exploded next to Maneta's ear).

Sepelini eventually had a wife and lived in Siumu. Soli was the sister of my mother Sulia. Soli died in 1940. Her husband was Usu To'avalu. Their children were Mate (female), Silepea (male), To'avalu (male) and Pa'usisi (female).

My mother Sulia also had a brother named Maneta (chief name Pepe). He resides in Safune. His children are Mafu (female), Sousou (male), Fitu (female), Soli (female), and Lolua (male).

I have relatives on my side with Fasia living in Paia. I have another family of relatives living in Samauga by the name of Iele Laupu'e. Another relative is on the side of grandmother Faitala by the name of Folia'olona and his wife Tilesa living in Ava'o. They have a daughter named Fa'apito. I don't know the rest of their children. Also relatives are an old woman named Tinei and husband Tiomai and their son named Leaso living in Ava'o in Matautu.

## **LASSOING SHARKS**

Continuing on with my story. When we had a store in the village of Falealupo, a fishing group from the side of the village we lived in went in a fautasi - a big rowing racing boat - out to sea. The name of this fishing enterprise was called Lepaga Malie. They would fish for sharks, nothing else, just sharks, sharks. This fishing expedition went to sea for two or three days. They would prepare tui ipu to shake beneath the sea to call sharks.

They took with them long poles on one side of the boat and lasso ropes to lasso the shark's head then pull the shark up and ram a long pole down its throat killing the shark.

## **GENEALOGY**

My grandmother Faitala had a sister named Faisala and a brother named Fili whose wife is Tilesa. Fili's chief name is Galuvao and they live in Avao. I haven't found all the genealogy of my grandmother Faitala nor my grandfather Timo. I wish to find more. Also trace the genealogy of Iele Laupu'e and his wife Elelia.

Elelia is a woman from Safotu. Elilia's father is the brother of Gaitafili, the wife of Afoa Luti David who has a grocery store in Sale'imoa.

Another sister of my grandfather Timo was married to a man from Lepea named Pulu and his chief name was One. Tino was a son of his who inherited the title One when his father Pulu died. One has a sister named Lusia. One and Lusia are the only two living today, 1962, from their family. Niko had a wife named Amato Masae are dead but their children are living today.

Ele Laupu'e Jr. living in the village of Samauga today is a son of another of my grandfather Timo's sisters named Nani. She was the wife of Iele Laupu'e Sr. Their son inherited the title Ele Laupu'e when the senior Laupu'e died. Molia died during the battle of the Mau when he jumped in front of Tamasese to shield him from bullets fired by the New Zealand soldiers.

Another brother named Tasi who had the chief name of Aisa died but has children living. Molia died having no wife and no children. Tasi and Molia had a sister named Fa'ailoilo. She and her husband lived in Lepea. They have daughters. I am related to the Godinets. The woman who became the wife of the palagi Godinet, from her came Sa Tuilemafua from whom came my grandfather. I am related to Ane wife of Clark who live on the road going to Jahnke's house in Lotopa. I am also related to the woman who is wife of Vili Mu in Togafu'afu'a on the side of my mother.

## **WHEN MY HALF SISTER LISI and HUSBAND SU'A HAD A STORE IN FALEALUPO.**

There was a Mormon boy who came and lived with our family. He would go to Lapaga Malie. When he went to Lepaga his hand was badly bitten by a shark. The shark scraped off the

flesh from his arm. He did not visit a doctor as there were no doctors or hospitals in distant villages at that time including Falealupo. So he was treated with Samoan medicine. It got to the point his arm stunk.

He liked to go into the kitchen to see what food was being cooked. It got to the point I said to him, "Go back and sit in the house and stop coming to the kitchen because your arm stinks very bad. He got mad at me and started punching me because he was unhappy at what I said to him.

He pushed me out of the kitchen. He lived at our house for quite some time until he returned to Sauniatu. His name was Mareko Tausoga and his chief name today is Apelu. He is the father of Mareko Tausoga Jr., Tommy Stokoe's class mate at Pesega and they flew together on the plane to attend CCH in Hawaii and were class mates there for two years.

## **LIFE AT SCHOOL IN SAUNIATU & WORK IN SOLAUA**

It came to pass that I went to school in Sauniatu and my cousin Alisa and her husband Fitsemanu were there. Alisa's father John Crichton and my father Sane Crichton were brothers.

At that time they had three children - Talavou, Tavita, and Sione. Fitsemanu was the foreman over workers at the plantation in Solaua. I was only in school at Sauniatu for a short time when I was taken to work for the palagi Godwin who was the boss over Solaua. He and his wife had two children. A male named Leamoni and I were to look after their children, a boy named Julian and a girl named Sylvia. I looked after the girl and Leamoni looked after the boy.

Their house was located atop of a mountain. Encircling the mountain was a pineapple plantation with hundreds of pineapples plants. A Black man named Kupa worked for Godwin. He would chop wood and care for horses. There was a stable and Godwin would ride horses throughout his plantation checking on his laborers.

The Blackman would secretly bring pineapples and oranges into the stable and the three of us would eat them - Kupa, Leamoni and I. There was an orange tree growing on the mountain. One day after Kupa had chopped wood and the axe was laying there, Julian came and started chopping wood. and cut his big toe splitting it open.

The father Godinet came running and in anger attacked the Blackman punching him in the face. Godinet became scared in case the Blackman pressed charges. Godwin schooled me on what to say should police come or there be a court case. I was to say I knew nothing. The Blackman pressed no charges.

There was a day when the Chinaman who washed clothes was picking beans outside and I helped him when suddenly he started acting rough toward me. I got angry and slapped his face. Then started running away. Surprised, he spat on his hands to see if there was any blood in his mouth and by this time I was far away. He was angry with me.

One day after work in the early evening, I started walking from Solaua toward Sauniatu. I didn't know the Chinaman was hiding in the bush with a belt full of money, maybe 3 inches thick with pound notes. He emerged from the bushes and called to me, "Bella, wait." I said, "What for?" He said, "See this belt of money. I will give it to you if you will elope with me." I said, "I don't want your money and I don't want you Chinaman." I started running toward Sauniatu. The

Chinaman could see I had no interest in him and that he only made me want to vomit on him.

The Fitisemanus and I, moved permanently from Sauniatu to Solaua due to Fiti's work. We were neighbors to the Chinaman. He cooked his food in the evening. One evening I crept into the Chinaman's kitchen and stole his pot of rice and started running toward our place. By the time the Chinaman saw me I was almost to our house. He ran after me as fast as he could and as he drew nearer I threw the pot of rice on the ground and disappeared into our house. I laughed at what I had done and at the frustration of the Chinaman as he murmuring picked up his pot.

In those days there was man named Paovale who was an assistant to Fiti in supervising the workers. Paovale had a wife named Loseta. She had a lot of children from Paovale. A girl named To'alima came to Sauniatu school. Paovale left his wife Loseta and eloped with To'alima. They lived in a room near us in Solaua then went to live in Polauli at Paovale's family. Eventually Paovale got sick and died. Paovale and To'alima had plenty of children including one son named Paovale who is attending BYU in Provo with Tommy. (In April, 1962).

I used to persuade the Blackman to loan me his guitar so I could play and sing songs. I loved music. The Blackman had red teeth. I asked why is it you Blacks have red teeth?. He said that they ate the fruit of the manuini which stained their teeth red.

Manunu girls want Chinese men. On pay days they would come to the Chinese men's rooms and wait for them to arrive with their pay. They would sell themselves to the Chinese men and go home with corned beef and rice. I saw this with my own eyes when I was young about 12 or 13 years old.

Manunu girls used to catch shrimp in the river behind where we lived in Solaua. At that time Samoa began making boxes of bananas for export to New Zealand. Also there were rubber trees and the rubber was tapped and sent overseas to other countries to make tires for automobiles and for other purposes.

While in Solaua I used to cook for our family. We had a big kettle and I would boil water in it. The kettle was heavy and when it boiled, in order to move it, I had to insert a spoon under the handle and lifting on both sides of the spoon, I would lift the kettle off the fire. One day the spoon broke, the kettle fell spilling boiling water all over my foot. My burnt foot was attended to Samoan style with Samoan oil and lau ofe (leaves of the ofe). My foot became infected and stunk and I couldn't walk. I was bedridden for a month and today I still have the scar on my foot.

When it rained and the river behind us flowed fast it was hard to sleep because of the noise of rushing water. When I lived at Sauniatu, a boy named Luese beat up a white missionary named Misi Aleta. Ua tu'i fa'apo ( he sucker punched him). The missionary fell in a ditch unconscious. When he came to he was incoherent, out of his mind. Maybe the missionary had punched Luese.

#### **COUPLES LIVING AT SAUNIATU WHEN I WAS THERE**

- # Si'ai wife of Iese
- # Luaga wife of Simi
- # Folele wife of Niu
- # Sapi and wife Fatoeia and wife Akisa
- # Si'u and Tulili
- # Muai'ga and Fa'aliga

- # Aiulu and wife.
- # Ao and Male
- # Paovale and Loseta
- # Vaelua and Uli
- # Leausa and wife
- # Tuitufu and Iaeli and children
- # Samila and Viiga and children Mata, Masina, Tapasa & Sefulua'i
- # Fiti and Alisa
- # Mauga and Fonati lived on their own property.
- # Of the children of Mika staying there were Valila and Faleniu, (Manitele lived in New Zealand), and in Faleupolu.
- # Filiaga and Mei and the sister of Mei named Luta.
- # Faitele and children Sapini and other boys and the woman named Siva and her husband whose name I don't remember.
- # There was an old man named Vaetoe and wife Fa'apelepele and their children Taupaolo, Fa'atau, Fa'apologa, son Leu and the adopted son named Sione.
- # Faleupolu was the daughter of Mauga Fonoti. She was my good friend in Sauniatu. I used to go and sleep in her house and we would bathe in the river in Sauniatu and attend Primary and went to school together.

## **EXCURSIONS TO APIA**

We used to go to Apia with a palagi couple and we used to stay in the house of the high judge. On another trip we sat under a tree with red blossoms next to the house. That tree is still growing there today. Still on another occasion we went to Apia and stayed in Vailele in the house of the boss of the plantation. It was there that I ran into the son of my uncle Joe Crichton. His name was Edward.

On another trip to Apia we stayed down in Matautu in the village of Moata'a. There were houses there where palagi people stayed. Folailiva and Edward came and we talked and in the evening when the papalagi came we introduced them to the papalagi as our aiga (family). Mr. Godwin went to Vailele and Edward went to him and applied for a job. He got a job working for the government through Mr. Godwin and worked at that job until he died. Tired of working for Godwin on the plantation, I fled and boarded a kerosne boat and went to Sataua and my half sister Lisi. From there I went to the LDS school in Vaiola.

## **LIFE AT THE LDS VIOLA SCHOOL, SAVAI'I**

Missionaries who were at Vaiola while I was there:

- # Misi Matuni (McKune)
- # Misi Oene (Elder Owen)
- # Misi Oeta. I don't know his English name.
- # Misi Sanita
- # Misi Kiona Kenneth Smith
- # Misi Alema
- # Misi Kipeni
- # Misi Mafi (Elder Murphy)
- # Misi Samasoni (Elder Sampson)

Boys that attended Vaiola school while I was there:

- # Ma'a from Palauli
- # Mose from Palauli
- # Nofoaiga from Palauli
- # Saimoa from Palauli
- # The couple Fa'ane'e and Mauga Tapusoa who today are residing in Laie.
- # Puifatu who also resides in Laie today.
- # Elia from Papa
- # Si'i from Papa
- # Fa'apologa girl friend to Filifili Fa'agai
- # Samata (male)
- # Fa'alele (female)
- # Fale (female)
- # Mile (female)
- # Fa'aleolea (Female) and her brother Fa'alata. Fa'aleolea became the daughter of Misi Matuni.
- # Meipo Burgess wife of Mulivai Purcell
- # Peka Grey, Flore Grey from Satupa'itea
- # Mele Grey, Piki Grey, Suipuleaga and two other sisters I don't remember their names.
- # Lene Peivi, Faimafili Peivi,
- # Tipa from Tapueleele and Fo'omata'u
- # Lafaga and his sister Fili who got pregnant by the missionary named Misi Kipeni
- # Mimita from Safotu.
- # Taulote from Saipipi, Galitele and Pone also from Saipipi.
- # Nive, Lotamo, Samuelu, Fa'afou and Ma'amu all from Sataua.
- # Elisara from Salai'lua.
- # Pa'ipa'i from Satupaitea
- # Ioane from Sili and his brother Pati.

#### **COUPLES RESIDING AT VIOLA DURING MY TIME THERE:**

- # Iese and Meaal'ii
- # Ietei and Lolini
- # Epenesa and Saifoloi
- # Tapuvae and Isa
- # Mauga and Fa'ane'e Tapusoa (currently residing in Laie as of 1962)
- # Sasa and Logologo who got married and became "dorm parents" at Viola. Logologo also taught school.
- # Faofua and Tagisia. Faofua was the Viola band director.

#### **SPORTS**

I really enjoyed playing cricket. I remember Pati was our cricket team leader. When we were fielding Pati would call out "Pati a." (a special clap). "Lua pati ma le po." (a combination of claps). But I wasn't listening as I was watching the lape (singing and dancing performance) of the team sitting because it was very funny. It made me laugh. I was suddenly brought back to focus when I was slapped on the back with atoato (branch of leaves) by our team leader. Playing Samoan cricket was a fun time.

I also liked basketball and played a lot of it. If I was sent on an errand and came across a

basketball game, I would abandon the errand and go and play basketball. Even if the game featured only boys, I would go join in. I played guard. When conference was held our basketball team would attend and participate in competition. Usually we won. In one of the games my mouth got hit and my lower lip was cut. A girl's head hit my mouth. My lip healed and I was alright.

## **WEEDING, ROAD & PIG STY WALL BUILDING**

We used to weed around cacao trees and around the base of coconut palms just before a school term began. Also, on some days after school. Sometimes I was lazy and just sat beneath a cacao tree. Eventually I would stand up and weed my line of trees. Sometimes we were to cut grass and I was too lazy to do it. So I would stomp down the grass with my feet so that our boss, Iese, would really think I had cut it.

They began paying us, three pence per line to weed. I got one shilling for weeding four lines of cacao trees (cocoa trees). We also would help build roads by adding rocks to the existing road below the missionaries' house. We worked very hard on that road. The same thing working on the pig fence that was located in an area leading to the river. We had to carry rocks to build it up. The place was called Vaiaata. We had to build the pig pen because the pigs got into the taro patch and ate our taro.

## **SAW MILL AND LUMBER**

The school had a saw mill or a saw that could cut logs. Logs were cut to provide lumber for building houses. The boys of the school would cut down trees. Then boys and girls would place smaller logs on the ground and then with ropes we would pull the big logs over the little ones to the saw mill. Then a log would be positioned to be cut, and we would pull it through the blade splitting the log in half. This is how boards for building houses were made.

## **LEIS**

The students at the school made ula laumaile (leis made of leaves) The bush had plenty of nice smelling plants - laumaile, lagaoli, mosooi, magele, seasea, teuila. These were all used in making our leis.

## **BATHING**

All the girls of the school used to go to bathe at Tapueleele or Vai'aata or at the cave above Vaiola that had a pool of water in it. The only negative about the cave was that you swam in the dark. When tanks of drinking water ran dry at Vaiola, we were able to get some from another cave with water close to Tapueleele. Also, we would go there to wash our clothes carrying them there and back using an amo and baskets.

## **THE ACCIDENT**

At the time Elder Sampson was there in Vaiola an incident occurred. A boy from Saipipi named Totamo, who had a sister named Nive, went with other boys and Iese to cut down trees close to where the cacao trees grew. Unfortunately, a tree being cut down fell on top of Totamo killing him. Iese carried the body on his shoulders with head down and legs up. The legs and

arms were broken and blood came from the ear holes. This was a bad accident and the first time I had ever seen something like this.

We went to Saipipi to take the body to his family. The family and the village were surprised when our group arrived with the body. All the white missionaries came and we all sang a song composed by the school in tribute to Totama. It was a sad occasion.

## **BAND**

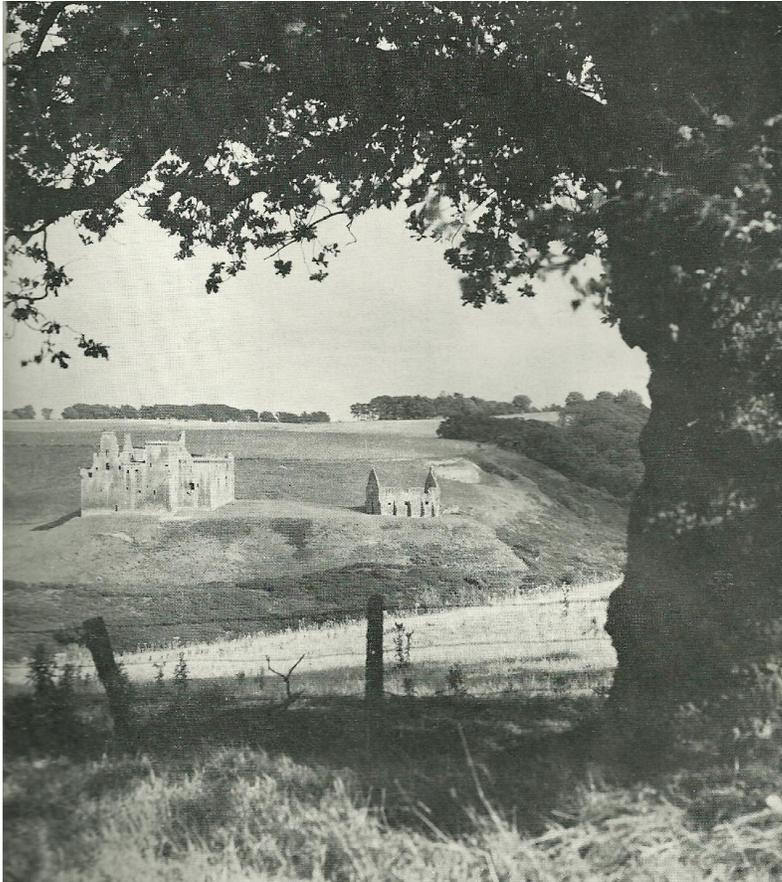
In the school band the following were musicians:

- # Fili, Suipuleaga, Peka, me Bella Crichton, Pone, Ma'asa, Lafoga, Lene, Fa'amata'u, Fa'agai, Galitele, Meipo - we played the pu usu.
- # Elia, Tipa, Toso played the pu malu.
- # Samuelu, Fa'apologa played the pu toso.
- # Elisala played the fagufagu and the baritone.
- # Faofua was the band director. When Faofua was not available then Mauga Tapusoa directed.
- # Sane pu laau
- # Euta drums
- # Pati played the cymbals
- # Aunoa from Samata was another musician. These are the only names I can remember.

We played at church functions.

## Bella's Ancestors

William Crichton, was born in Glasgow on June 8, 1820. He was the son of Robert Crichton (1802 - 1902) and Janet Frazier (1811 - 1919.) His father was a descendent of William Crichton, Chancellor to King James the Second of England, Scotland, and Ireland. *Ruins of Crichton Castle* stand on a lonely, wind- swept hillside near a church three miles outside Edinburgh.



This castle was lost to the family when the king fell in love and began paying court to William's wife. Unwilling to oppose his monarch in matters of the heart, he decided to get even by romancing Margaret, the king's sister. Lady Crichton died. The princess got pregnant. This prevented the king from arranging a royal marriage for her. *'Crichton was betrothed, some say married to Margaret, sister of James the Second, but got into a spat with her brother. . . His lands and castle were forfeited. . . The Crichton family took up residence in Sanquham and built a castle there.'* Tom and Diane heard this story from a guide in 1993. It does not appear in any of the official brochure on *Crichton Castle*.



*Photo of barn or stable of Crichton Castle on out skirts of Edinburgh, Scotland*

But back to great grandfather William Crichton. As a young lad he enjoyed watching trains enter and exit at the Glasgow railway station. On one particular day, William asked his mother if he and his younger sister might go to the railway station and watch the trains. The mother warned William to be careful, stay back from the tracks, and to take good care of his sister. Unfortunately, the warning was not fully heeded. His sister slipped from the station platform and onto the tracks. She was run over by a train.

Appalled and frightened, William could not return home to tell his parents of the mishap. Instead, he fled from Glasgow, made his way to a seaport and signed on as a cabin boy on a merchant ship. His parents lost two children that day. They would never know what became of their son.

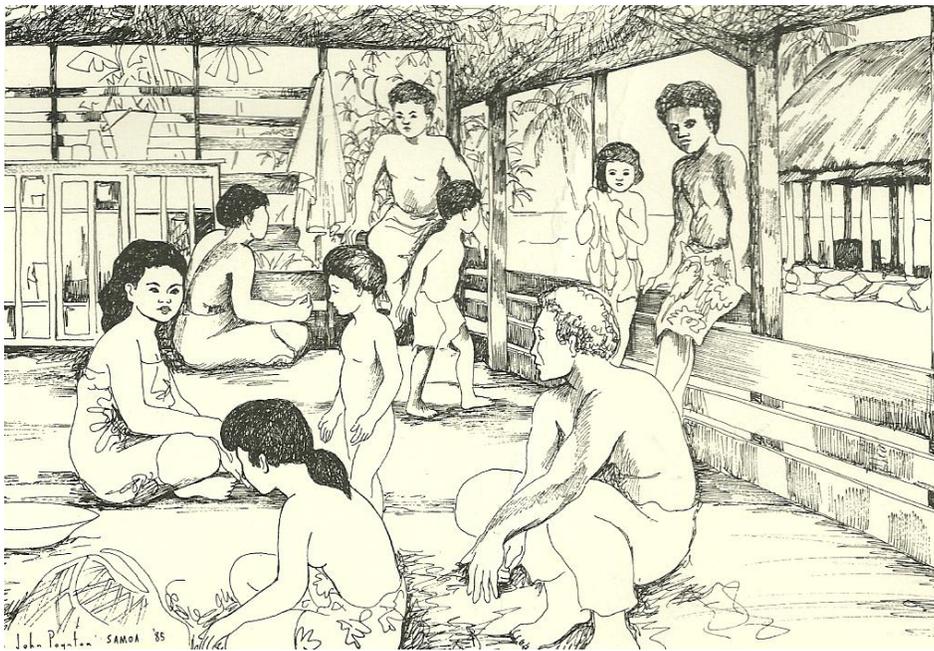
William grew to an adult and in later years was in the Pacific aboard a ship that engaged in the transportation of natives from the New Hebrides to serve as laborers on plantations on various islands of the seas. Two of these islands were Upolu and Savaii. Eventually, William opted to retire from the sea. He settled in Western Samoa in the village of Sataua on the island of Savaii. He became affluent owning a large tract of land on Savaii. He was the first white man baptized into the L.D.S. church in Samoa. He was baptized on March 4, 1893 age seventy-three by Charles W. Poole at Sa'ago, Savaii. Poole's diary indicates he was almost blind then.

**Deseret Weekly 52:217, Dec. 6, 1895,** Elder L. Buchanan writes from Savaii, 'We went on to Sataua. Old Brother Crichton was well and quite hardy and still had great faith and

hope in the Gospel.’

**Deseret Weekly 54:4565, Feb., 1897** Elder Christian Jensen, ‘We called at the home of William Crichton (Sataua). He is in very poor health but firm in the faith and glad to meet with the Elders. Brother Crichton wishes to be remembered to all the Elders with whom he is acquainted.’ [*Elder’s John Beck, J.A. Rasbanel, Lewis B. Burnham, J.C. Knudsen Salencdil, W.P. Silver, S.W. Walker, Fogatili, Christen Jensen in 1894. Also William Jeppson, George S. Burnham, George Leonard, Alexander Lemon, George W. Haine and Hendricks in 1897.*]

**Bella:** My grandfather came from Glasgow, Scotland. My people called him a pirate. He had big earrings and old fashion clothes. He had a blouse with ruffles in the front and pants that were tight around the legs. He arrived in Samoa and met a girl named Uputaua.



*Illustrations from original pen drawings by John Poyston, published by the Tusiata Art Gallery, Apia, Western Samoa.*

He fell in love with her and they got married. My grandmother was about 20 then. It looks like he was a man of about 40 or 50 in the photo. The Crichton’s have long faces and big ears. I saw men like my grandfather in the old fashioned movies. We used to have a picture of him but it got burned in a fire. After he married my grandmother he went with her to her people and they made their home in Sataua, Savaii. They built a European house and lived just like the Europeans. They had a big family. Their children were William, Robert, John, Alexander Sane, Lope and Tuiloma and some daughters, Margaret, Jane, Siени and Makelita. My father was Alexander Sane. He did not marry the first two women he lived with. He had two children by Fa’atuatu Fonoti: Alexander in 1886 and Lily in 1888. Mamele Enosa bore him Louisa, Lisi, Nora, Charles, and Julia before she died.

## **Timo, Faitala & Sulia Solomona**

Timo Solomona and his wife Faitala, were protestant missionaries for the LMS or London Missionary Society church in Tufutafoe. Their daughter Sulia Timo, had been attending Papauta School on the island of Upolu and had returned home on vacation. My father heard about the young daughter of the missionaries and believed that such a girl would be someone very special. So he decided to go to Tufutafoe to propose.

He took a talking chief from Sataua and went to Tufutafoe to talk to my grandma and grandpa Solomona. He said, 'I like to propose for your daughter. I like her to be my wife.' The family considered and they said, 'yes.' Then they talk to the girl. I suppose the girl did not like it but she has to agree because that was the culture. They believe that children must obey their parents. The marriage was arranged. It took place on December 26, 1914. My father was 50, my mother was 20. Sulia Timo became my father's 3<sup>rd</sup> wife. After they got married my father brought her to a place where he cultivated and raised cocoanuts. The name of the place was Fagasua located in the village of Sataua. My father and Sulia would have two children: myself and Peter who died as a little boy.

**Tommy:** Mum was born on November 8, 1915 in the village of Tufutafoe. The week she was born, a hurricane hit the island of Savaii. The Samoan house she and her mother were in, collapsed on top of them. Villagers came to their rescue by breaking through the thatches of the collapsed roof.

Alexander Sane was a farmer and carpenter in Fagasua, Sataua. He also built and repaired boats and built cement tanks used for holding water. He raised coconuts, bananas, coffee, taro, yams, ta'amu, pigs and made fishing nets. At age three mum helped him as he repaired boats by applying pressure on a metal ball on the outside of the boat, while he hammered on the inside. Then she would wander along the beach playing in the sand and in the sea with a toy boat she made from a coconut husk with a chicken feather as a mast.

On one occasion she decided to decorate her hair with sisi shells (uga) She would whistle to the little clam-like creatures until they emerged from holes in the rocks. Then she would place them in her hair. She went to her father and proudly said, 'Look at my hair.' Her father said, 'You silly girl, those shell creatures have clammed tight onto your hair and won't come off. Go get a pair of scissors from your mother.' He then cut off her hair until she was practically bald.

Mum enjoyed eating biscuits. Her father would send her brother Sale to buy them for her. She enjoyed the time spent with her father but could not remember much about her mother.

**Bella:** When I was a little girl my father raised cattle, pigs and chickens. He would slaughter them and salt them away in big barrels. The entire family would go fishing. They would clean their catch and dry them and salt them away for our food supply. Father had a few acres of coffee.

They drank coffee and tea. Our food included pork, chicken, beef and canned foods. We were considered well off. Eating was the main vocation. Clams and sea food were popular. They baked their own bread in the cement oven that father made. They ground coffee in a little old fashioned coffee grinder. Fermented, dried and roasted, we would take the outside layer of skin off the coffee bean and then store the fermented coffee in large jars.

Dad was a builder. He built race boats of very thin material. Often he would say, 'I will build your boat free if you will work on the fence around my land.' The fence was quite large, but the chief of the Fuiono family came and asked my sister Lisi if they could break down the fence to build a school. My nephew Sikoti was very unhappy because we no longer had a fence around the property. We lived in a beautiful European house with colored windows. But my dad pulled it down to lay a foundation for a better house of cement.

I used to help my father when he was working on a boat. He would tell me to go to the other side of the boat and hold the reinforcing metal. I remember my father's face. He looked like my other uncles. But the face of my mother I do not remember. My father looked exactly like my Uncle Joe Crichton.

When the sleeping flu came I was about three years old and my brother was about eight months old. Both my parents and my little brother died. I never had the flu. It was in 1918, the epidemic of sleeping flu. Most of the children from the second marriage were either married or away going to school. I was left with my older half brother Aleki and his wife and children. I lived with them less than a year. Gaogao, the wife, did not treat me well. I slept at night uncovered. I was not given a sheet or a lava lava to cover myself. My clothes were not washed and I got an eye disease.



When my mother's parents finished their mission and returned to Safune, my grandmother heard that my parents had died. So she sent my uncle Maneta. 'Go and bring Bella home to me. I will raise her.' So my uncle came and gave a speech to my brother and his wife and asked if he could take me to my grandmother. They said, 'Ok, take her.' My uncle Maneta, who was then eighteen, carried me on his back from Sataua to Vaisala. There was a kerosene boat from Apia. We borrowed someone's canoe and that took us to my people. We went from Vaisala to Safune.

**Tommy explains:** Twenty miles away in the village of Lefagoali'i her Timo grandmother Faitala and brother Maneta resided. Her grandmother said, 'Maneta, go to Sataua and bring Bella. I want to raise her.' So he went and got her, piggy backing her many miles and finished the trip by paddling in a canoe along the coast of Safune. It was in Lefagoali that mum would come to know the love of a caring grandmother.

**Bella:** When we got there my grandma Faitala was ready. She picked all her fruit from the garden like pineapples, mangoes, sugarcane, ifi and put it in a basket. When I arrived she was so happy. She said, 'I have been waiting for you and I have prepared this food for you.' I was so

happy to see my grandma. As a little girl I was very fond of fruit. Gradually I got used to my Grandma. I had never met her before but I came to love her like she was my mother.

Grandfather Timo Solomona had died of the sleeping flu disease. So one day my grandma said, 'We must go to the bush to live. We have to survive. We can't live here in the village on the coast, we've got to go to the bush.' I said, 'Okay.' So on a Monday, following church on Sunday, we packed up our stuff and went inland to the bush. We built a small house. We had one drum or barrel and one sheet of corrugated iron which we fixed on an angle so rain water would run inside the barrel; that is where we would bathe from and get water to boil our green bananas and stuff. We had to travel to the village to fetch drinking water.

When I stayed at my Grandma's place, I loved to go fishing. I used to take my uncles' canoe. I would dive underneath the sea and collect coral. I collected the coral and fished. Then I would dive down again and collect more. When I got enough I would go to the beach, break the coral on the rocks and then I would get the fish out. I had a lot of fun doing that. I also enjoyed digging on the beach for clams. I would dig with a coconut shell. I was proud to show my people that I could fish and collect clams.

When the people of the village would take the large net out to the lagoon to fish, I would go with them. We would surround the net and when it was full, we would pull it in. After the fish were collected they would divide the catch among the women who helped with the net. I was small and my feet could not touch the bottom but I used a stick as an extension in deep water so I was able to help. And if I was slow they would call out, 'E, half-caste (half white girl) come over here. You hurry up. Mostly I used to anchor the canoe and help pull in the net. I loved fishing. I was seven or eight at the time.

Sometimes I would get so badly sunburned that I could not sleep. My grandmother would get wet banana leaves and lay them on my sleeping mat. This would cool me so I was able to sleep. Grandma said this was the only cure for me. I got sunburned easily.

At night all the girls my age would go to the malae (village green.) If we were making our prayer at night, my friend would call out to me, 'Bella, hurry up and end your prayer. We are going to play hide and seek.' So I hurried up and finished my prayer so I could play with my friends. At a certain time everyone, no matter what religion they belonged to, went to their home for prayer. That was the custom. A bell was rung each night to announce prayer time. Everyone in the entire village sang their song and said their family prayers.

My friends would say, 'E, we like to smoke.' They know that my grandma grows tobacco because I go around selling it. So they tell me to get tobacco and a dry banana leaf so we can roll smokes. I go and steal from my grandma the tobacco leaves, get a dry banana leaf and a burning stick from the fire. We then built up a fire in the middle of the malae and roasted the tobacco leaves. I divided the tobacco leaves among my friends then we would roll the tobacco inside the dry banana leaf to form a cigarette. Then we would all sit down and smoke. You know we get drunk because we smoke too much. We all lay down and go to sleep. Samoan tobacco is really

potent. It has to be the strongest in the world. When you smell it, it's very strong. My grandma did not know where I was so she get up and looked for me. She found all the little girls sleeping in the Malae. Grandma say, 'Bella, what's the matter? Why you girls sleeping over here?' Then I say, 'We smoke the tobacco. We get dizzy and then we want to sleep.' My grandma say, 'Wake up these girls and tell them, go home. You come home yourself. It's very late.' So I woke up my friends and sent them home. I was about eight. Every night we went off to play games.

Once my grandmother sent me to the spring to fetch some drinking water. I took two containers to collect the water. On my way home I saw some kids playing marbles right in the middle of the road. The kids say, 'Hey, come and play marbles with us.' So I say to myself, 'What a good idea.' So I left the water containers in the basket, right in the middle of the road. Along came a galloping horse and he kicked the two containers of water and broke them in half. I was afraid to go home so I played the whole day while my grandma waited for me. Grandma was making tapas. She used long sticks. When I finally went home she said, 'Come here, where have you been and where is my water? What were you doing the whole day?'

I say, 'I went to Laloaoa and picked guavas and oranges with my friends.' She say, 'Come here, come here, come closer.' But she was threatening me with this long stick. Every time I come closer she lifts up the stick. I am afraid she is going to whack me. So I run away again. She calls, 'Come home, I'm not going to hit you.' So she threw away the stick and I come home. She say, 'Come home, eat, it is late and then go to bed.' We had to borrow water from our neighbor who has water in a bucket. My grandma liked to keep her water in the coconut shells because it would be very cool. Her neighbors kept their water in a bucket.

I used to fight boys and big girls. One time my cousin and I were playing at the shed where they stored the copra (dried coconut). People would go there to weigh their copra and then get their money from the store. My cousin was a lot older than me. His name was Sepelini Fineaso. The other two boys were very big. They began fighting with my cousin. I see my cousin getting beat up. So I take the amo, a pole which is used to carry big loads on the shoulder. I whacked them on their legs (shins) and they both fell down crying in agony. I was so happy until Pepe, my family chief, came and saw the two boys laying down. He thought I had killed them. He came with a rope and chased me along the beach.

His legs were long. Mine were short because I was not that old. My feet stuck in the sand. It was hard to run fast. I fell down and the chief beat me up with a rope. He said, 'You killed those two boys.' I said, 'They almost killed my cousin.' I was mad because he beat me up. He should be happy that I beat up the boys that were picking on my cousin.

Sometimes I fight with the girls. They come to me and say 'Hey Bella, you know Aati, she's not scared of you. Then they challenge me. So I go with them and I fight her. And you know what she did to get away. She bit my cheek. I was walking around my village with a big bite mark in my cheek. But even though they are bigger I fight them just the same.

**Tommy:** Mum slept on a mat beside her grandma using grandma's arm as a pillow.

They did things together: raising chickens, planting bananas, taro, ta'amu and yams; making the umu (oven of hot rocks to cook food upon), making masi Samoa (biscuits) from fermented bananas; weaving baskets and mats, planting, harvesting and preparing Samoan tobacco (fili tapa'a) for sale, carrying water in coconut shells. Mum would go throughout surrounding villages selling tobacco and masi Samoa in exchange for chickens, food, and any items of value. Her grandmother always praised her for her salesmanship.

She used to gather breadfruit leaves for the umu, crack open lama nuts and eat, took worm medicine given her, baby sat younger children in the family, and cried when the older children of the family scolded her for not keeping up with them when walking through the village. Her uncle owned a store. She and her cousin Malie would sneak candy from the candy bottle. Their punishment was having their heads shaved bald with a razor. Their heads were shaved several times.

Mum loved the sea and became a good swimmer. At age seven she would follow the women of the village into the sea when they went fishing. They would say, 'Bella, go back to the beach. You are too young to fish.' But she kept on swimming after them toward the reef. So they told her to climb into the canoe that fish would be placed in, and to paddle the canoe following them as they fished.

Each time she went fishing with the village women she received an equal share of the catch. Returning home she would say to her grandmother, 'Faitala, look I've brought us fish.' Her grandmother would praise her and say, 'Bella, what a good girl you are. You are seven years old and are providing food for our family. You are a good worker.'

Her grandmother was a healer with extensive knowledge of healing using herbs and plants that grow in the rain forest. Many villagers would come to her for treatment. She taught mum how to treat various ailments including eye problems.

At age seven she would ask the chief if she could use his canoe to go diving and spear fishing. He always said, 'no.' She would take his canoe anyway and head out toward the reef alone. There she would spear fish, lobster, octopus, and gather shell fish—clams, tugane, pipi, limu or seaweed, tuitui, loli, and gau. Whenever she saw a shark she would climb back into the canoe and paddle to shore. Bella was a good little fisherman.

Mum grew up planting crops, fishing, playing with friends and attended the L.M.S. church school (London Missionary Society or Lotu Kaiki). There she learned to sew and read and write in Samoan.

**Bella:** My sister Lisi came over to see Grandma Faitala and she say, 'Faitala, what is your opinion, can I take Bella so she can go to school. She has the white blood. She needs to learn to speak English. (I was maybe ten or so at the time.) Pretty soon you are going to die and she needs to learn how to take care of herself. It is no good for her if she does not know how to speak English. She has to go to school to learn something. My grandmother agreed. She say, 'I

understand what you say Lisi. I know I am going to die sometime and leave her behind. It is no good for a girl who has the white blood in her not to speak English. She's got to go to school to learn. I will let her go. She is my right hand. She help me grow the tobacco on the farm. She even can roll my tobacco and light it and put it in my mouth but I let her go.

So I left my grandma and I went with my sister Lisi. She was married by then and she had children. I would say she was thirty or so. We went to Sataua and prepare me for going to Vaiola School. My sister say, 'Bella, this is a Mormon school. It is a better school for you.' She made some clothes for me. I went to school over there and I stayed for a little while. Then I went home and my sister say, you had better go and stay in Viola School. I missed my Grandma for a while until I made new friends. When vacation time came, I went to visit my Grandma.

I went to Safune and stayed with her. Instead of her sending me back to school she sent me to Sauniatu School to my cousin Alisa Fitisemanu on a plantation. This was a rubber plantation where you get rubber to make tires. I took care of the manager's children. I only went to school two or three months and then they sent me off to work. I was paid ten shillings a month. A little over one dollar a month.

So I work and work taking care of the kids. I had to do what I was told because I was raised to respect adults. So I worked although I would rather be with my friends at school. When the manager and his family went on vacation to Vaiala, we stayed in a house for European tourists. I was so lonesome that I run away. I left them and went back to Savaii to my sister Lisi. I managed to get on the boat that went there. I stayed with my sister for a while until she sent me back to Viola School. I stayed until decided I was fed up with school. It was very boring.

So I went and stayed with my cousin David Crichton at Pesega. They seemed to give me all the work to do. They had their own children but they did not do as much as I did. I get up early in the morning before the kids go to school. After that I clean the house. I starch and iron the clothes. I make lunch. Then there is more ironing. In the evening I have to prepare food. I got used to it but nobody ever give me any freedom to do what I like. They expect me to work all the time. So I pray, I say to Heavenly Father, 'Why did you take my father and my mother. I slave and slave for my relatives. Why do these people do this to me?'

In the village there was a blacksmith who used to come and visit. Finally, he wanted to marry me. My cousin say, 'Go and get to know him. He is a good man. He keeps cows.' But I know his tricks. He wanted me to marry a man that would bring the family meat. They say, 'Go, on. Get to know him.'

But I say to myself, 'I don't like him. Why should they sell me for meat?' They call my family to come and make arrangements for my wedding. I know Frank Scott. He like to marry me. He was staying in the mission home to help out the Elders. He was a little older than me. So I wrote a letter to my sister Lisi. My cousin David saw me writing and said, 'Bella, give me the letter.' In the letter I wrote to Lisi I said, 'Don't come. There isn't going to be a wedding. I do not want to marry a man I do not love.' After reading my letter cousin David gave me a licking. I was 16 or 17.

He slapped me and I fell down. He slapped me again and kicked me under the table. 'You small little fly. Nobody cares for you. Since being here in my place and going around with my children people are beginning to notice you. You are going to marry the blacksmith. He is a good man. He is a business man. He got a good job.'

I say to myself, 'You wait, David Crichton, just wait and see.' Then he lick me again. I don't sleep that night. I wake Frank in the missionary house at 4 o'clock in the morning. I say 'Frank, Frank! Wake up, Bella like to talk to you.' Frank came out. He say, 'What do you want Bella?' I say, 'I want you to pay my fare so I can run away to Tutuila. I don't want to marry.' Then he say, 'Are you going to marry me?' I say, 'Don't worry about that just now. Give me the money so I can run away. My cousin is going to force me to marry the blacksmith who has cows so he can eat meat.' Frank gave me the money thinking I would marry him later.

Nobody knew about Frank and me. I roll up two dresses and whatever I can get in the roll. Just a few small things. I run down to the wharf to catch the boat. Cousin Fitiseanu who was a policeman was reading off the names of passengers. So I changed my name to Tioata Timo. When that name was read, I just ignored Fitiseanu. Then when he wasn't looking, I jumped into the boat. Some people on the shore saw me. When the boat was far off they said, 'Hey Fitiseanu, do you know that Bella's run away?'

I got away all right and when I got to Tutuila I went to the Subrinsky's house. Later Anna Winterstine and I took the same boat to Hawaii to work for the Subrinsky's making hula skirts from early morning 6 o'clock a.m. until 3:00 p.m. We supply the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu. Every week Subrinsky takes big orders to them. We work, work, work to fill the orders. We get very little sleep. We did that for almost a year. We never go to the movies. We never get out. We just work all the time. All we eat is rice and parsley soup. I get fed up. I say, 'What kind of a life is this?' I came because I thought I was going to have a better life, but no it's just work, work all the time. So I ran away again. I went to my cousin Alisa Uale in Laie. My cousin was happy to accept me. I explained the whole thing to her and she said, 'I understand. You come stay with me.'

So I stayed with her. Subrinsky complained to the immigration that I run away. My cousin Anna Winterstine ran away too. So the immigration went and looked for us and found us in the Loi where they grow taros. We were working in the taro patch.

We had to go with the immigration and stay there until the day of the hearing. They lock me up for one whole week. They say, 'Bella, why did you run away' I say, 'Because we were treated like slaves.' I was not afraid to speak out and tell them. All we do is work from morning until 3:00 a.m. the next day. I told them about our life. The immigration say if we agree to return to Samoa, everything will be all right. So Subrinsky agreed to pay the fare back to Samoa. You have to go to Samoa a little while and then you can return. I agreed but my cousin, Anna Winterstine, say that she is not going. So Anna was deported and she can never return. She is going to die in New Zealand because she never listen. She never talk to me ever since that day.

Frank Scott tried to find me when I was in Pago Pago. He heard I was back in Apia staying with my cousin Maggy. Maggy and I were talking one night. Frank came to the house looking for me. He listened outside. He said, 'Maggy is Bella in there?' I say, 'Maggy, tell him I am not here.' Maggy say to Frank, 'No, Bella isn't in here.' He say, 'I heard she had returned.' Maggy say, 'No, I think she is staying with another cousin.' Then he went away. If I see him I go hide. He wrote me a 35 page letter explaining how I crook him because I didn't marry him.

Meanwhile Tom Stokoe, unable to find work in England, sailed to Australia where he worked on a farm. From there he moved on to New Zealand where he worked for the Social Security Department. In 1938 he had the desire to travel in the Pacific so he boarded the ship "Maui Pomare." Arriving in Apia, Western Samoa, he met a Samoan girl, Bella Crichton, from the Island of Savaii.

