Register to the Papers of Saul H. Riesenberg

Eva Sartori
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National Anthropological Archives
Smithsonian Institution

INTRODUCTION

The collection is made up almost entirely of material gathered by Saul H. Riesenberg, anthropologist and ethnologist, during a year's research (1955-1956) in American Samoa.

Throughout his professional career, Riesenberg was principally interested in Ponape, in the Caroline Islands. In the 1950's, however, stimulated by the work of graduate students at the University of Hawaii where he was teaching, Riesenberg applied for and was awarded a grant to study acculturation in American Samoa. One of the graduate students, B.F. Pierce, was studying Samoans who had migrated to the Mormon community at Laie, on Oahu. Riesenberg's study of Samoans in American Samoa was to provide a "baseline" (his word) for the study of migrations in the South Pacific, and, in addition, to identify agents of change at work in Samoa itself.

A significant part of this collection is comprised of the research notes and data accumulated by Riesenberg during that year. In his grant proposal, he stated that his aim was to present "a sound description of modern Samoa, politically, socially, economically, etc." This broad perspective is reflected in the range of his interests. His research notes cover every facet of Samoan culture, from cricket to banking to diet to government. However, his primary interest was the matai (chief) structure of Samoan society, and the system of land ownership operating within that structure. Much of the data he gathered, both in the form of notes and in the form of processed materials, is concerned with these two subjects. None of this material has been published.

During that same year, Riesenberg also worked part-time as Staff Anthropologist to the Governor of American Samoa. Thus he was able to collect a good deal of processed material originating in the government. This material includes pamphlets, resolutions, memoranda, correspondence, legislative codes, etc. He also collected official U.S. publications in the form of Committee prints, annual reports from the Governor of American Samoa to the Secretary of the Interior, and U.S. reports to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. When examined chronologically, these papers, some of which go back to the earliest days of American involvement in Samoa, provide an extremely interesting picture of the U.S. government's relation to the indigenous population of Samoa and into the transformation of the Samoan way of life under the pressure of Western influences.

Another significant category of processed materials in the collection is that of studies and research papers concerned with Samoa. The papers were written by functionaries and academicians. They will be of interest to students of the history of anthropology as well as of Samoa.

Students of minority education will be especially interested in the series entitled "Samoan Education," the "F.E. Midkiff Papers," and in some "Samoan Government Records" papers. Those studying the Samoan language will find the songs and publications of value.

The only papers in the collection not concerned with Samoa are the records of the Smithsonian Office for Anthropological Research (SOAR). These materials reflect Riesenberg's interest in administrative rather than strictly research matters. They document his involvement in the reorganization of Anthropology, the search for a new leader, and the creation of the Senate of Scientists, which allowed staff scientists at the Smithsonian to participate in administrative decisions.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SAUL H. RIESENBERG

1911	Born August 28, Newark, New Jersey
1932	BA, University of California at Los Angeles
1945-48	Teaching Fellow, University of California
1947-48	Fieldwork on Ponape, Caroline Islands (June to Feb.)
1948-49	Research Assistant, University of California
1950	PhD, University of California at Berkeley
1949-57	Instructor to Professor, University of Hawaii
1953-54	Staff Anthropologist, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
1955-56	Field work in American Samoa (July to July) Anthropological Adviser, Gov't of American Samoa
1957-67	Curator, Division of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution
1963-63	Field work on Ponape, Caroline Islands (Jan. to March)
1966	Director of Area Studies for Micronesian (Summer) Peace Corps Volunteers Training Program, Key West
1967-70	Chairman, Dept. of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution
1967-67	Field work on Puluwat, Caroline Islands (Feb. to July)
1970-79	Curator, Old World Anthropology, to Senior Ethnologist, Smithsonian Institution
1970-71	Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University, Canberra (July to June)

PROVENENANCE

Dr. Saul H. Riesenberg donated some of his papers to the National Anthropological Archives on his retirement from the Smithsonian Institution in the summer of 1979.

EXTENT

The collection covers approximately 5.5 linear feet.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES 1. CORRESPONDENCE, 1947-1969, 1947-1968
1/2 inch

The correspondence is arranged chronologically. Most of the letters are to Riesenberg, not from him. Some are personal, some concern job applications, some are related to his research in Ponape and Samoa. The letters written in the 1960s reflect Riesenberg's role as curator and later chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution (arrangement of exhibits, letters of recommendation). Some additional pieces of correspondence can be found in Series 23 in the "Leader search" folder.

Box 1

Correspondence

SERIES 2. MANUSCRIPT FIELD NOTES, 1955-1956
10 inches

These notes are arranged alphabetically by subject. Riesenberg took these notes on loose leaf paper while he was studying Samoa (July 1955 to July 1956). They cover almost every facet of Samoan life: cricket, the fish cannery, the welfare system, the church, the economic structure, etc. Riesenberg was interested in the acculturation of the Samoans, but most of all he was interested in the *matai* (chief) system of social organization and in the pattern of land titles and land holdings. Notes on these subjects make up the bulk of the material in the "miscellaneous" folders.

Box 2

Birth data
Fono notes
Land cases
Lists and charts
Maps
Marriage data
Matai system
Miscellaneous field notes (2 folders)
Miscellaneous field notes (3 folders)
Personnel notes

SERIES 3. STENO PADS, 1855-1956
1 1/2 inches.

There are 5 steno pads and one small brown pad. Again, these notes concern all aspects of Samoan life: copra production, kinship terms, the cannery, the church, library circulation figures, etc. The small additional pad contains notes on schools activities and student behavior.

Box 2 (cont.)

SERIES 4. QUESTIONNAIRES, 1955-56
5 inches

There is no key for these questionnaires. Some are numbered, but not consecutively. They are bound together in batches ¾ to 1 inch thick. The information provided includes the name of the village, the name of the head of household, whether the dwelling has water, electricity, or the telephone, whether it is owned by the individuals or communally. It also includes data on the members of the household and on their income.

Box 3

Questionnaires (4 folders)

SERIES 5. BIBLIOGRAPHIES
1/4 inch

This series contains two bibliographies. The first is 27 pages long and was provided by E.H. Ryan, Jr. of the Bishop Museum. It is undated. Included in this bibliography are general works on Samoa, works held by the Bishop Museum, and works on specific aspects of Samoa (language, botany, zoology, climate, geology, insects). The other bibliography is 11 pages long and was obtained from G.P. Murdock, probably in 1943. Most of the titles cited in both were published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Box 3

SERIES 6. SAMOAN EDUCATION, 1955-1956
3 inches

The material in the folders on student writing was gathered in the classes taught at the high school by Mrs. Riesenberg and Dr. Paul Fort. The papers were written between January and April, 1956, and are arranged in chronological order. The yearbooks cover 1955 and 1956. The 1955 yearbook has a handsome bark cloth cover; the 1956 one contains numerous photographs of the students and the grounds. In addition there is some miscellaneous material having to do with everyday aspects of teaching: memos, syllabi, lists, writing exercises, etc.

Student writing (2 folders)
School yearbooks
Miscellaneous

Box 4

SERIES 7. SAMOAN INVITATIONS, 1955-1956
20 ITEMS

These are invitations to a variety of social functions: proms, picnics, weddings, graduations, etc. They come in different sizes and in a variety of designs, some "homemade" rather than commercially printed.

Box 4

SERIES 8. SAMOAN PHOTOGRAPHS
8 items

These 5x4 photographs show Samoans sharing a meal with guests, a graduation ceremony, and some local landscapes. They are not dated.

Box 4

SERIES 9. SAMOAN PROGRAMS, 1953-1956
16 items

These programs, which are arranged in chronological order, commemorate various celebrations such as the governor's inauguration, flag day, graduation, play openings, school events, etc. One program has a bark cloth cover.

Box 4

SERIES 10. SAMOAN PUBLICATIONS, 1943-1955
1/2 inch

There are six issues of *Failanga Samoa* (1953-1956), five of which are in Samoan, the sixth in English; two issues of *Ole Fa'atonu* (Nov., Dec. 1946) with articles in English and Samoan; and two issues of *Yap News* (no date) in English. The English language articles report local and some international news. Two school newspapers in English concern themselves only with school news. The "miscellaneous" folder contains village regulations, questionnaires, and various forms, all in Samoan.

Box 4

SERIES 11. SAMOAN SONGS
13 items and a music booklet

Included in this series are the lyrics to Samoan songs. Some of these are in Samoan, others in English. A few have the original Samoan and an English translation. The booklet contains both music and lyrics for several songs.

Box 4

SERIES 12. PERIODICAL ARTICLES ABOUT SAMOA, 1947-1956
6 items

The two earliest items are Sunday supplements to the *Honolulu Advertiser* (1947, 1948), both in very brittle condition. One describes the mapping of some Pacific Islands by a scientist from the Bishop Museum, Kenneth Emroy.

Box 4

SERIES 13. FAR EAST BIBLIOGRAPHY (A-Z)
9 1/2 inches

The 3x5 typed cards contain bibliographic citations on Far Eastern cultures (Korea, Japan, the South Pacific, etc.). Many bear in the right hand corner a notation specifying the particular area with which the publication is concerned.

Box 5

SERIES 14. NOTESLIPS
14 inches

Riesenberg collected data on these noteslips. These measure 8 in. x 5 in. There are three sets. The first has a key, with numbers corresponding to the respondent's name, date of birth, birthplace, name of father and mother. The second set contains notes arranged alphabetically by village. The third contains a miscellany of lists and notes.

Box 6

SERIES 15. RESEARCH STUDIES
10 inches

This series can be divided into three subseries: 1) the papers of J. Forster, 2) the papers of Ch. Ostrander, and 3) the papers of B.F. Pierce. All are studies of Samoans, either in Samoa or in Hawaii. Forster and Pierce both studied Samoans who had emigrated to Hawaii. Of Forster's papers, only questionnaires are included here. Each is 9 pages long and covers, among other topics, housing, family structure, family relations, language, decision-making patterns, religious affiliation, etc. Some are numbered, others not. Batches of 1-2 inches are held together with large clamps. Ostrander's papers contain notes on daily life in a Samoan village, and a paper describing a study of changes in the Samoan diet which occurred as a result of acculturation. B.F. Pierce's papers comprise most of the material in this series. They include a study proposal, various processed papers, maps, lists, notecards, etc. The bulk of it, however, is in the form of questionnaires. These are color-coded and of three types: one is for the individual, the second for the household, the third for children. Batches of these are held together by metal bands.

Box 7

J. Forster (2 folders)
Ch. Ostrander
B.F. Pierce:
Research apparatus
Misc. field notes
Misc. processed materials
Questionnaires

Box 8

B.F. Pierce: Questionnaires

SERIES 16. RESEARCH AIDS
1 inch

This series is composed of a variety of materials helpful in the conduct of research, e.g. announcements of publication, a schema of a linguistic model, etc. The most significant items are the first and second editions of a Yale University publication done by G.P. Murdock et al. entitled *Outline of Cross Cultural Materials* (1938, 1945).

Box 9

SERIES 17. RESEARCH PAPERS, 1890-1967
3 inches

There are two subseries: the non-academic and the academic papers.
The non-academic papers are almost all anonymous and describe various aspects of Samoan culture: births, the market, the Fita guard, the fish cannery, taxation, etc. These are arranged alphabetically by subject or by author if untitled. The academic papers include:

Belshaw, H. Economic Development in American Samoa with special reference to the Manu'a Islands (mss., 117 p.)

Blixen, Olaf. Lenguaje honorifico y comportamiento reverente en Samoa y Tonga, 1966

Churchill, William. Samoan Kava Customs, 1916

Ember, Melvin. Political Authority and the Structure of Kinship in Aboriginal Samoa, 1962

___ Commercialization and Political Change in American Samoa.

Eyde, David. A Preliminary Study of a Group of Samoan Migrants in Hawaii, 1954

Freeman, J.D. The Falemaunga Caves.

Greer, Richard. Samoan Leadership in Modern Samoa.

Holmes, Lowell D. Stability and Change in a Samoan Village, 1957.

___ The Modern Samoan Family, 1967

Hoover Institute. American Samoa, 1947

Houze, M. Les Samoans de Leone, 1890.

Keesing, F.M. The Taupo System of Samoa, 1937
Malcom, Sheila. Diet and Nutrition in America Samoa, 1954

Martin, E.J. Incidence of Bifidity and Related Rib Abnormalities in Samoans, 1960

Mead, Margaret. The role of the Individual in Samoan Culture.

___ Social Organization of the Manua, 1930

Neubarth, R.G. Dental Conditions in School Children of American Samoa, 1954

Pierce, B.F. Conflict between the Actual and the Ideal Matai System in American Samoa, 1955

___ Untitled

Schultz, E. The Most Important Principles of Samoan Family Law and the Laws of Inheritance.

SERIES 18. F.E. MIDKIFF PAPERS, 1932-1935
3/4 inch

Frank E. Midkiff was an administrator with the Frederick Duclos Barstow Foundation, a charitable organization concerned with education in Samoa. His papers are arranged chronologically. Among them are a detailed general study of Samoa done in 1933, correspondence dealing with the work of the foundation, and a set of papers presented in 1955 on education in Samoa. Bound with this last set is a copy of *The Mid-Pacific Magazine* of January, 1933, which contains an article by Midkiff on the work of the Barstow Foundation and a number of pictures of Samoan and Samoans. Finally, there is an outline history of Samoa in ancient times.

Box 9

SERIES 19. SAMOAN GOVERNMENT RECORDS, 1920(?)-1957
15 inches

In this series are included the records of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the Samoan government. They are arranged alphabetically by agency or office of origin, and within those subdivisions the arrangement is chronological. These records contain correspondence, reports, statistics, minutes, official decrees, resolutions, codes, etc. Some of the material is very old, going back to the earliest years of the century. These papers document the workings of the Samoan government. They reflect the tensions in the society as it tried to adapt to western ways. Among the memoranda is a particularly clear presentation of the subjects of land titles and land tenure prepared by the President of the Samoan Lands and Titles Court.

Box 10

Annual reports: 1944, 1948
Annual reports: 1948

Attorney-General's Office
Bank of Samoa
Department of Education
District Governors and County Chiefs
Fair Labor Standards Act
Forms and Applications
Governor's Office

Box 11

Laws: Code of American Samoa
Codification of the Regulations and Orders, 1921
Legislative Records: 1953, 1954
Legislative Records: 1953
Legislative Records: 1954
Legislative Records: 1954

Box 12

Lists and Statistics: 1949-1956
Memoranda: 1939-1957
Publications: 1944-1945
Testimonies: 1955-1957

SERIES 20. SAMOAN INSTITUTIONS
1/4 inch

The rules and regulations governing the Goat Island Club, the Pago Pago Tennis Club, and the Samoan Church are included here.

Box 12

SERIES 21. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS, 1948-1961
3 inches

These processed materials are divided into three subseries: 1) Congressional Committee prints: these are staff studies and reports by the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of both the House and the Senate, presented to the Secretary of the Interior; 2) the Annual Reports of the Governor of American Samoa to the Secretary of the Interior. These are in the form of pamphlets (one is in draft as well as published form); 3) the Reports to the Secretary-General of the U.N. These are also in the form of pamphlets. The earliest of these have good pictorial supplements. Most of these publications systematically and regularly review all aspects of life in American Samoa (banking practices, public health, welfare, education, governmental structure, etc.). Miscellaneous material includes some census figures, and reports of visitors and various official groups.

Box 13

U.S. Congress Committee Prints: 1954, 1960, 1961
Department of the Interior Pamphlets: 1952-1957
U.S. Reports to the U.N.: 1948-1951, 1953-1954
Miscellaneous

SERIES 22. MAPS
7 items

There are two hand-drawn maps and five printed ones. The two manuscript maps record ownership of land along the coast. One is schematic, the other has detailed drawings of buildings. The printed maps were done by the Army and Navy. One of these records land acquisition, another includes villages. The other maps are topographic and oceanographic.

SERIES 23. SMITHSONIAN OFFICE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH RECORDS, 1964-1976
1 1/4 inch

These records are arranged chronologically. Most of them deal with the reorganization of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution when Ethnology and Anthropology were merged into the Smithsonian Office for Anthropological Research in 1964. A copy of the guidelines for the reorganization and the minutes at which these proposals for the new structure were discussed are among these papers. The merger resulted in the search for a new leader. The "Leader search" folder includes curricula vitae, evaluations, lists of publications, and letters of recommendations for candidates for this position. Some of the correspondence deals with a controversial offer made to A. Hoebel. One of the letters is a draft of a letter Senator Hubert Humphrey sent to Dillon Rpley in support of Hoebel's candidacy. The Oral History Interview is a transcript of an interview with Riesenberg conducted in 1975 in which he describes the formation of the Senate of Scientists at the Smithsonian.

Box 13

Organization
Leader search
Oral history interview transcript

SERIES 24. MISCELLANEOUS
1/2 inch

These papers contain a telephone directory of Tutuila (1955), receipts, membership cards, a cartoon, a manual, etc.

Box 13

Last updated: January 14, 2008
Robert Leopold