

*A History of the Village and the
Congregational Christian Church
Samoa of Elise Fou from 1936 - 2015*

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**A HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE AND THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SAMOA OF ELISE-FOU FROM 1936-2015**

A Thesis Presented to the
Department of Church History

Malua Theological College
Apia

In Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the
Bachelor of Theology

by

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August 2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the history of the village of Elise-Fou and the Congregational Christian Church Samoa in the village of Elise-Fou. Elise-Fou is one of those villages where the formation of this village was from non-Samoan migrants, intent on establishing a living in Samoa. As the name implies the majority of Elise-Fou residents were Ellice Islanders now known as Tuvaluan or descendants of Ellice Islanders. The thesis will explore the issues of the Elise-Fou village and the church from 1936 to 2015.

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DEDICATION

- I dedicate this work to the village and Church of Elise-Fou and the people of Tuvalu. Also, to everyone who continue to enlighten the world with the Good News. God Bless.

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Acknowledgments

Firstly, all honour and praise to the Heavenly Father for his guidance and for giving me the opportunity to study in Malua Theological College.

The research from the start I knew would not be an easy task, due to time and moreover how I would approach it. However, thanks to the staff of Malua Theological College and Rev. Principal Ma'afala Limā, for their insights and encouragement, it motivated me to keep pushing through and complete this paper.

I am indebted to the support of my Supervisor Rev Aukilani Tuiai, who guided me through from the beginning to the end of this paper. Fa'afetai, fa'afetai tele lava.

I would also like to acknowledge the Elise-Fou church members and church ministers for their support in many ways, more so their blessings and words of encouragement to carry through with this task.

I am grateful for the support of our parents, family and friends in Samoa, Tuvalu and overseas.

I also would like to acknowledge my colleagues in Malua Theological College Class of 2017, thank you for your support and memories will forever cherish.

I would like to acknowledge also the support of our parish in Elise-Fou, Rev Reupena Nofoaiga and faletua Vaipou Nofoaiga for their support in many ways.

Last and certainly not least, I thank my wife Fesue'ai for her patience, love and support, without you this task would have been impossible to complete. To my children Leslie, Cinderangi, Latasi, Halloqueen, Ahkuoi, Kamuta, Faailoga and Naama (Mauilani), I deeply apologise for all the family hours I missed out while doing this task, I hope one day when you grow up you will understand. Thank you for the laughter, love and joy you bring to my life.

God Bless

Panapa Panapa

Malua Theological College

List of Abbreviations

CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
CCCT	Congregational Christian Church in Tuvalu
EFKT	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Tuvalu
EFKS	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
FE	Faifeau Elise
FS	Faifeau Samoa
FT	Faifeau Toeaina
LMS	London Missionary Society
PIC	Pacific Island Church

Glossary

<i>Aigafiafia</i>	Happy meal
<i>Faalavelave</i>	refers to the material and monetary support of families during occasions such as weddings, deaths, celebrations, etc...
<i>FaaSamoa</i>	literally the 'Samoa way' in reference to cultural practices.
<i>Fakaala</i>	Tuvaluan word for 'feast'
<i>Matai</i>	chief
<i>Nuu</i>	village
<i>Pulenuu</i>	leader of the village

Introduction

Elise-Fou is a village which lies inland of Vaiusu 'village' in the Faleata West District¹. The name Elise-Fou is the Samoan translation of New Ellice, in reference to the Ellice Islands, the old name for Tuvalu.² Hence Elise-Fou is a village originally settled by Tuvaluans. A history of Elise-Fou offers a unique perspective on the Tuvaluan migrant community within the Samoan CCCS. As the first A'oa'o from Elise-Fou to Malua Theological College, I wish to carry out this research as a gift not only to the people of Elise-Fou, the people of Tuvalu, but also my contribution towards the history of the CCCS. I am also a descendent of those early Tuvaluan settlers of Elise-Fou and this work is in honour of their work and commitment to the village and the church of Elise-Fou. Another reason for this research is no previous work on the history of Elise-Fou has been conducted. Such a history will not only benefit the history of the CCCS, but serve to inspire or advise future generations of the history of Elise-Fou. I believe that recorded or recollection of past events is indicative of an interest and concern for the past, and as the old saying goes, those who do not appreciate history will make the same mistakes of the past.

In the 2011 census Elise-Fou had a population of 242 compared to 197 in the 2006 census.³ The village has only one Church since it was established in 1937.⁴ The Church is closely affiliated with the CCCS.⁵ According to the elders of the village, the Elise-Fou settlers were Tuvalu immigrants who were scattered around Samoa for example Alamagoto, Vailele, and Vaipuna.⁶ These Tuvalu settlers were Tuvaluans who came to be

¹Government of Samoa, "Population and Housing Census 2006: Analytical Report," ed. Samoa Bureau of Statistics (Apia: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2006), 76.

²Laumua Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors," in *Tuvalu a History*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1983), 103. An American commander De Peyster of a British merchant ship the *Rebecca* named one of the islands Ellice Islands in honour of the British politician and owner of the ships cargo

³Samoa Bureau of Statistics, "Population and Housing Census 2011. Analytical Report," (Apia, Samoa: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2011), 232; Government of Samoa, "Population and Housing Census 2006: Analytical Report," 76.

⁴Panapa Panapa Jr, Interview with Tusaga Peau Tusitala 12 December 2016.

⁵Elise Fou EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015," (Elise Fou Elise Fou EFKS, 2015), 2.

⁶ Panapa Jr, Interview with Tusaga Peau Tusitala; Panapa Jr, Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

educated in LMS schools such as Leulumoega-Fou, Malua-Fou and Malua Theological College.⁷ Some Tuvaluans came with returning Samoan Pastors.⁸ Unfortunately some did not complete their studies, so instead of going back to Tuvalu, they stayed in Samoa.⁹ Some had married Samoans and had families eventually settling in Samoa.¹⁰ There was also two Samoan families, the Tolua family and Kolia family, that was amongst the early settlers of Elise-Fou.¹¹ Elise-Fou became a place for these migrants of Tuvaluan heritage to not only live together but to worship together.

The Elise-Fou Church and the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) maintain close relations in many ways. However, there have been some rough times and good times as our elders told us. Elise-Fou has been the birthplace of some prominent Pacific Islanders such as Selina Tusitala Marsh whose mother Sailagi (Lina) Tusitala is from Elise-Fou.¹² This thesis attempts to explore these 'rough times and good times'. Elise-Fou village used CCCS land in Aleisa (Fiaga) approximately ten acres for farming but was returned back to CCCS for several reasons.¹³ Moreover, a one acre piece of land that was bought and owned by the CCCS was given as a gift is currently used for the extension of the Elise-Fou EFKS Church.¹⁴

Methodology

The thesis will follow a chronological order of events. A chronological sequence I believe explains how one event should give rise or explain succeeding events. Such a method would explain the current situation of the Elise-Fou community.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. Leau Poe, Letter of 50 year Anniversary of Elise Fou 1 January 1988.

⁹ Panapa Panapa Jr, Interview with Kamuta Latasi 10 January 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid,

¹¹ Panapa Panapa Jr, Interview with Taefu Salapu 16 May 2016.

¹² Dale Husband E Tanagta, "Moment with Selina Tusitala Marsh," *Samoa Observer*, 22 May 2017 2017, 14. Selina Tusitala Marsh was the first Pacific Islander to graduate with a PhD in English from Auckland University, where she's now as associate professor lecturing in creative writing.

¹³ Panapa Jr., Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

¹⁴ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

This study will use primary materials from government departments and the Elise-Fou records held by the current minister of Elise-Fou. These primary sources are limited in that there are large gaps in the history of Elise-Fou. Oral history is vital in such cases so interviews were conducted to help shed light on the gaps in the primary sources. Nevertheless there were still gaps in the history of Elise-Fou. Time has also limited further research. In addition I will resource material in the Malua Theological Library for information pertaining to Elise-Fou. What is presented is no way meant to be comprehensive but it will at least give us a picture of the history of Elise-Fou village and the EFKS Elise-Fou church.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter one outlines a brief background of how Christianity first arrived in Tuvalu. It is through the efforts of a Cook Islander deacon Elekana, who enabled Christianity to come to Tuvalu. Elekana's misfortune at being cast adrift on one of Tuvalu's nine coral atolls, the island of Nukulaelae in 1861 was the start of the LMS mission to Tuvalu or the Ellice Islands as it was known then. The chapter will also look at the opportunities Samoa had to offer to Tuvalu especially in secular education through the LMS schools and religious education through Malua Theological College. The Samoan missionaries of the LMS contributed to the widespread use of the Samoan language in Tuvalu. The widespread use of the Samoan language made it much easier for Tuvaluans to not only visit or attend schools, but also to live in Samoa.

Chapter two will focus on the early years of the Elise-Fou village from its very beginning in 1937. The chapter covers the purchase of the land and eventual ownership of the land. The chapter examines the personalities and issues faced by a migrant 'village' and church.

Chapter three focuses on the Church at Elise-Fou. The chapter examines discrepancies of historical details from the 77th anniversary celebrations of 2015. The chapter also looks at the ministers that served at Elise-Fou and the major events under their leadership. The chapter focuses mainly on the Samoan ministers as there was little information on the first two Ellice Island ministers.

Chapter 1

Ellice Islands and the London Missionary Society

Introduction

Tuvalu formerly known as the Ellice Islands has had a long relationship with the London Mission Society (LMS) since 1865. The LMS was practically the only mission society in Tuvalu for a very long time. Hence there is a strong association with the London Missionary Society in Samoa. No doubt this has attributed to the formation of Elise-Fou in Samoa.

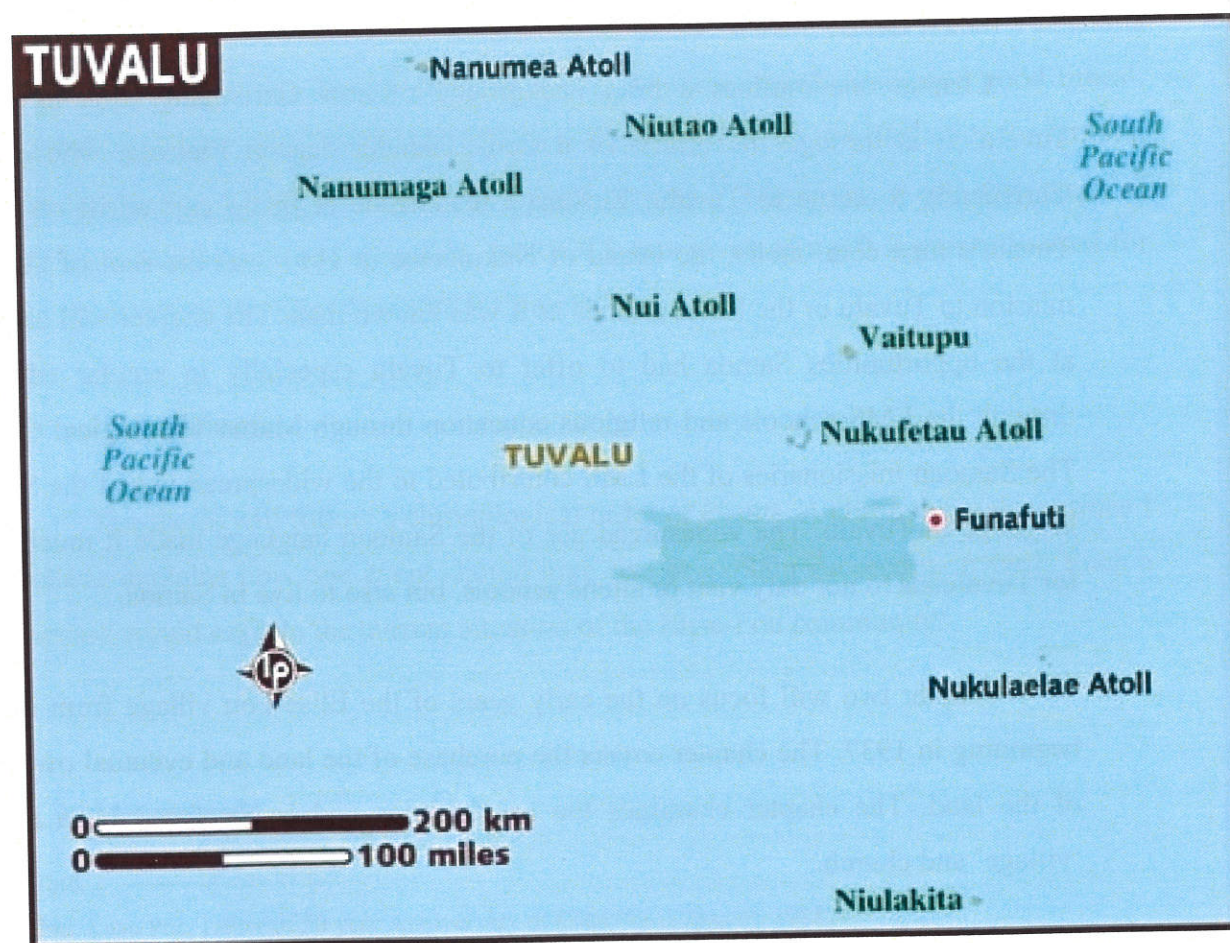


Fig 1: Map showing nine atolls of Tuvalu

1.1 The Discovery of Tuvalu/ Ellice Islands

Tuvalu¹ formerly known as Ellice Islands is a chain of nine coral islands lying between five and eleven degrees south of the equator.² The island group was first discovered by the Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana who saw the island of Nui in 1568.³ The name Ellice Islands is attributed to an American commander in charge of a British merchant ship who also named one of the nine coral islands after a British politician 'with whom he was friends with' and who owned the cargo on this ship around about 1819.⁴ The name of Ellice Islands has remained until independence of Tuvalu from Britain in 1970.

Although sparsely populated, the southern islands of Tuvalu suffered from a people smuggling trade for the Peruvian guano mines in 1863.⁵ Laumua Kofe believes that the deportation of the able-bodied men in Tuvalu;

'probably helped make the islanders surrender easily to Christianity...Christianity would give them some kind of protection from such evil men.'⁶

The mission to the Ellice Islands came as result of the decline in LMS missionary activity especially to Vanuatu from 1862. The decline also of LMS activity in the Loyalty Islands shifted the mission back towards Polynesia, in particular the Eastern Pacific areas.

¹Talakatoa O'Brien, "Genesis," in *Tuvalu a History*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1983), 17. Tuvalu means 'group of eight'. However there are nine official islands in this group, eight of which is populated – hence 'group of eight'.

²Ibid. Six of the atolls are built around lagoons open to the ocean. Nanumea, Nui, Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti and Nukulaelae. With the exception of Vaitupu these atolls consist of numerous pieces of land linked by a reef and arranged like a string of beads. Of the remaining three atolls in Nanumaga and Niutao both have completely landlocked lagoons while Niulakita has no lagoon but a swamp at its centre. Since Niulaketa had no permanent population on the island it was not taken into account during the naming of the Tuvalu group.

³Laumua Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors," *ibid.*

⁴Ibid., 103. The name of the commander was De Peyster and the ship he was commander of was the *Rebecca*.

⁵Ibid., 106-07. These people smuggling traders were often known as blackbirders. The London Missionary Society missionary Rev. A Murray in 1865 reported less than one hundred inhabitants on the island of Nukulaelae compared to an estimated three hundred in 1861. On the island of Funafuti 171 Tuvaluans were captured and sent to the Peruvian mines.

⁶Ibid., 109.

1.2 The Arrival of Christianity to the Ellice Islands

On the 22nd April 1861 a Cook Islander deacon by the name of Elekana travelled with six men, two women and a child from the island of Manihiki to Rakahanga, in the Cook Islands. Unfortunately they were caught in a storm and remained adrift for about eight weeks until they landed at Nukulaelae, with only five survivors.⁷ The survivors were located on one of the islets of Nukulaelae, called Motutala which is now known as Olataga, meaning 'Salvation'.⁸

Elekana discovered that no mission had reached Nukulaelae, and he found the people anxious to learn about Christianity.⁹ Elekana and his colleagues remained on Nukulaelae for about two months before leaving for Samoa.¹⁰ He had promised the people of the island that he would return with books and teachers.

Elekana left the island for Samoa with the aim of returning with a teacher. He also had hopes that if he could enter Malua Theological College in Samoa, he might return to the island as a missionary teacher himself.¹¹ Elekana eventually completed his studies at Malua Theological College in 1865.¹² The Pacific historian John Garrett mentions that in 1865 the Rarotongan missionary Maretu who had worked for almost two years and trained for three years at Malua was placed on Nukufetau, Tuvalu in 1865.¹³ It is not certain if Maretu is the same as Elekana, possibly another name Elekana is known as. However according to Laumua Kofe it was Elekana that was placed in Nukufetau.¹⁴ Teleke Lauti supports Kofe's account that Elekana went to Nukufetau.¹⁵ However all

⁷Ibid; John Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 120,55-56.

⁸ Teleke Peleti Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* (Nanumaga, Tuvalu: Ekalesia Kelisiano Nanumaga, 2010), 1.

⁹Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors," 110.

¹⁰ Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* 1.

¹¹Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors," 110.

¹²Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* 2.

¹³Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 156.

¹⁴Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors," 111.

¹⁵Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* 2.

accounts agree on the two Samoan missionaries, Matatia who was sent to the island of Funafuti and Ioaneto Nukulaelae.¹⁶ Both Matatia and Ioane were married missionaries.

Elekana did not last long in Nukufetau being forced to leave in 1870, due to involvement in a political situation in Nukufetau.¹⁷ According to Lauti the LMS missionary Rev. Samuel Whitmee was angry that the traditional chief of the island, Sapolu, 'had been overthrown and Elekana took over as leader of the majority of the elders of the house and was manipulating the situation'.¹⁸ Elekana was told to accompany Whitmee keeping the eventual reason hidden from the leaders of the island and eventually sent back to the Cook Islands and never to return to Tuvalu.

The story of Elekana would end in a sad note if not for the indirect contributions to Christian mission. One of his sons Taurake was murdered in Toaripi Province in Papua New Guinea in 1887.¹⁹ Tauraki's son Teina Materua was adopted by a famous Cook Islander missionary Ruatoka. Teina's own son by the name of Ruatoka came to Tuvalu for the first centenary of the House of God, *Seiona Fou* in 1967. It remains today on Nukufetau as a monument built by Ruatoka's great grandfather, Elekana.

Samoan missionaries to the Ellice Islands created a new order of things. They encouraged giving to the church and eventually to the missionaries, which made the missionaries extremely powerful in Tuvaluan culture.²⁰ According to Garrett thirty six Samoan missionaries, all married, served in Tuvalu to a population fewer than 2,400.²¹ There is no doubt that Tuvalu is overwhelmingly Congregationalist with little other mission society, except for a single Roman Catholic Tokelauan missionary to Funafuti which was not accepted by the island.²²

¹⁶Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 156; Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* 3-4.

¹⁷ Lauti, *Breaking through the Wall: The Coming of the Church to Nanumaga* 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰Pasoni Taafaki, "The Old Order," in *Tuvalu a History*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1983), 109.

²¹Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 156.

²²Ibid.

One of the institutions adopted from the LMS missionaries is the Women's Committee. In 1935 the LMS delegation to Tuvalu reported,

*"This work was started in 1926 by the missionaries of the London Missionary Society, who realised the danger to moral and social welfare engendered by the lack of interests in the islands of the island women."*²³

The Women's Committee aimed to give Ellice Island women skills that contribute to their communities. Women organised themselves into a sewing circle and with sale of their stock were able to buy new materials to continue sewing.²⁴ The women were also taught how to make soap using coconut oil at much cheaper prices than imported soap.²⁵ Weaving had improved to such an extent that in one island 'Nanumaga distinctly new patterns of weaving had evolved by the (womens) committee and their standard of weaving has greatly improved.'²⁶ Some women even transformed a swamp area to grow taro – which is difficult in Tuvalu.²⁷

When the LMS mission visited the Ellice Islands in 1935 the missionary Evelyn Downs recorded that there was no written Tuvalu language, but 'all the children learn at least to read and write in Samoan'.²⁸ Nevertheless Samoan pastors working in the Ellice Islands did use the Ellice Island language to preach, but continued to read the Bible in the Samoan language.

1.3. Ellice Islanders to Samoa

John Garrett stated that the Ellice Islands owed its spirit and religious outlook to the mission of the Samoan missionaries. European educational missionaries came only for limited intervals before 1958.²⁹

²³ Evelyn Downs, "Ellice Islands Women's Committee Report August 1935," (Malua, Samoa: Samoa Mission Committee, 1935).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 2.

²⁸ S G Phillips and Evelyn Downs, "Report on the Annual Visitation to the Ellice Islands by the "John Williams" 1935," (Apia: Malua Theological College 1936).

²⁹ Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 159.

Ellice Islanders came to Samoa for various reasons, such as education at LMS schools and especially to attend Malua Theological College.³⁰ In 1935 LMS visitation to the islands, the LMS missionary Evelyn Downs brought seven Ellice Island girls who completed their schooling in Atauloma Girls School in Pago Pago.³¹ The LMS in Samoa had suggested establishing a school for girls in the Ellice Island group but the problem was one of cost and isolation. It would be financially more feasible to send students to Samoa to be educated.³²

There were plenty of Ellice Islanders who graduated from Malua and returned back to the Ellice Islands in 1935. According to Downs,

*'...one of the main problems in the Ellice group at the present time is the large number of trained pastors and qualified students who have no work to do and living on their islands in many cases disappointed and discontented.'*³³

Such a scenario suggests that 'trained pastors' upon their return to the Ellice Islands had no village to serve. It would seem that graduates would prefer to stay in Samoa where there were more villages and therefore greater opportunities to serve in villages. In 1935 there were limited mission opportunities for graduates to go to Papua New Guinea. Compared to the Ellice Islands, Samoa was seen as the land of opportunity to young men and boys of Tuvalu,

*'...so many boys, realising the lack of opportunities in their own islands, take the chance of getting to Samoa on the JW (John Williams mission boat)...'*³⁴

A similar observation was noted by a certain sea captain T Hope Evans who captained a trade boat that took LMS missionaries to the Ellice Islands. He wrote to Rev Phillips that;

³⁰ Elise Fou EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Januari 2015."

³¹ Phillips and Downs, "Report on the Annual Visitation to the Ellice Islands by the "John Williams" 1935," 2.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

*'There is also the problem of sending girls to Atauloma. Seemingly girls after they finish their time at school, are not inclined to return home to their islands and run away into the bush when the ship arrives to take them home.'*³⁵

1.4 Conclusion

The story of Elekana's discovery of Ellice Islands was indeed fortunate for the Ellice Islands or Tuvalu. Elekana's observed and noted that the Ellice Islanders were keen to know more of the gospel and Christianity. There were many reasons for such acceptance, the negative impact of people smuggling being a common practise, leading to the removal of the young men of the islands.

Many Ellice Islanders were very keen to stay in Samoa. Samoa offered opportunities such as education and possibly a better way of life. Many Ellice Islanders were familiar with the Samoan language in both written and spoken forms. It was only natural therefore to expect the formation of a Ellice Island communities within Samoa. Ellice Islanders were known to have resided in villages around Apia in particular Alamagoto, Vaipuna and Vailele.³⁶ The creation of Elise-Fou was the logical progression of a growing Ellice Island community within Samoa, a permanent Tuvaluan village within Samoa.

³⁵T Hope Evans, Letter to Rev G E Phillips, 8 October 1935.

³⁶Panapa Jr., Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

Chapter 2

Elise-Fou Village

Introduction

This chapter examines the beginning of the village of Elise-Fou and the issues of future development. The chapter looks at the original families and people involved in the process of purchasing the land from the previous owner Atalina Pritchard. The chapter also looks at the other developments of significance to the village such as a 'foot path' for access to the main road as well as attempts to purchase arable land. Elise-Fou was forced to relinquish land at Aleisa to the Development Committee of the EFKS in 1967.

2.1 The Elise-Fou Settlement

The village of Elise-Fou began with a purchased land on the 18th April 1936.¹ The majority of settlers came from the village of Alagamoto, a village close to Apia². The land was purchased from Atalina Pritchard for the Ellice Island communities.³ Elise-Fou lies in the Faleata East subdistrict on the island of Upolu. Faleata East is a region with the villages of Toamua, Lepea, Vaigaga and Vaitele.⁴

The land at Elise-Fou was purchased not only for general usage but also as a place of worship. The freehold land is 32,067 square metres (or nearly eight acres in Imperial measurements) and is an elongated piece of land where the northern end is open to the Elise-Fou Road.⁵ The land is known officially as Lot 284 in Plan 2087 and is located at the subdistrict of Vaiusu in the district of Tuamasaga.⁶

¹ Geoffrey Thornton Jackson, Letter to Secretary of Samoan Affairs 17 November 1948.

²A V Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966," (Elise Fou), 61. Poutoa mentions a delegation from Alagamoto village during the first service, in which he refers to this delegation as from 'our village of Alagamoto.'

³ Jackson., Letter to Secretary of Samoan Affairs, 17 November 1948.

⁴Efks, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015; Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966."

⁵Government of Samoa, "Computer Folio Certificate. Land Titles Registration Act 2008," (Apia: Government of Samoa, 2017); C McKay, "Atalina Pritchard Agreement with Ellice Islanders", ed. Native Affairs (Apia: Native Affairs, 24 March 1941).

⁶Government of Samoa, "Computer Folio Certificate. Land Titles Registration Act 2008."

The Land Deeds document confirmed that the agreements for the purchasing the first four acres of Elise-Fou was held on the 18th April 1936.⁷ The original purchaser's representatives were Tinei Falekai, Siniva Vaele, Kui Isakara, Potoa Niu, Saili, Matiu and Siaki of Apia.⁸ These seven Ellice Islanders made the original agreement with Atalina Pritchard for the purchase of four acres of her land. Their contributions continued from month to month starting from April in 1936 and throughout 1937.⁹

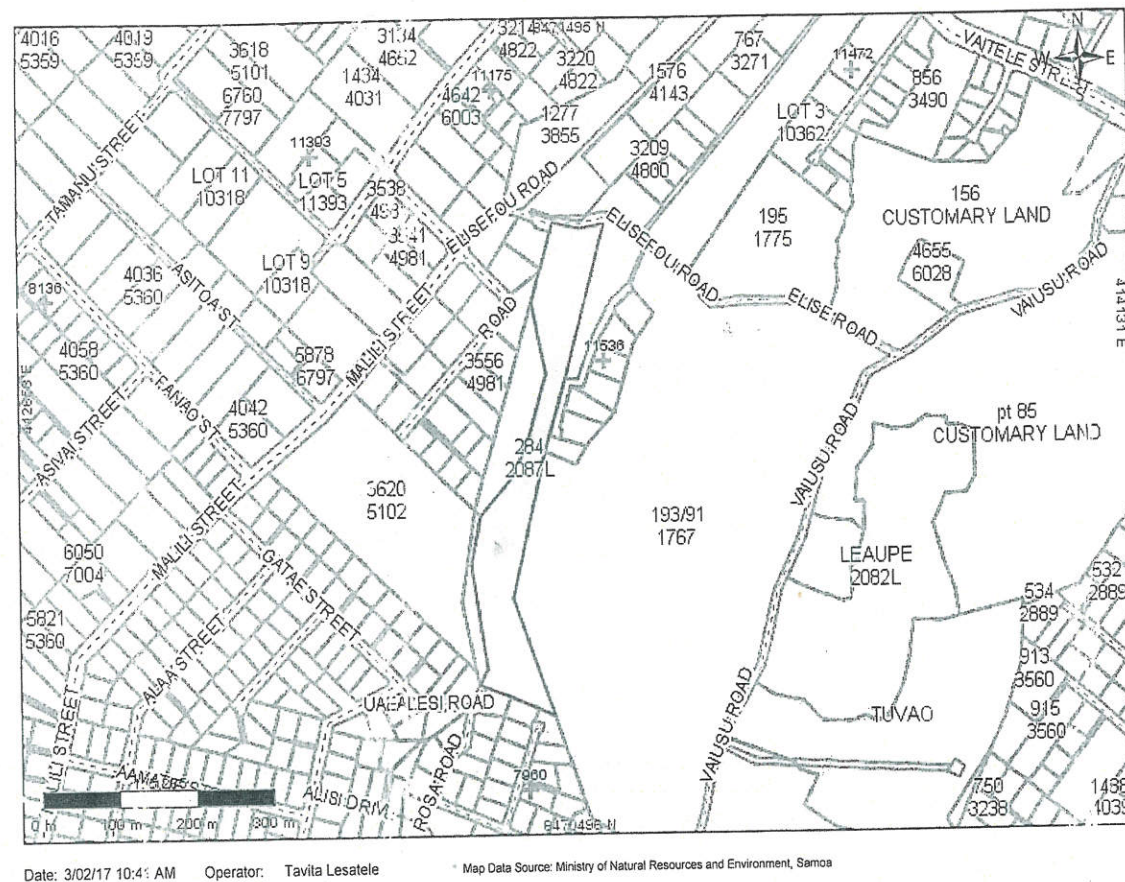


Fig 2: Map of Elise-Fou (Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Samoa)

A fellowship meal (*aiga*) in Alamagoto village on the 29th April 1937 donated £31-1-6.¹⁰ The contribution by the Alamagoto village indicates that there was a large

⁷ Frederick Grattan, "Land Deed" (Apia: Samoan Affairs of Western Samoa, 1948).

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966," 1-7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Tuvalu community in Alamagoto before the establishment of Elise-Fou. Many of the Elise-Fou settlers knew that the Tuvaluan community in Alamagoto supported the development of Elise-Fou.

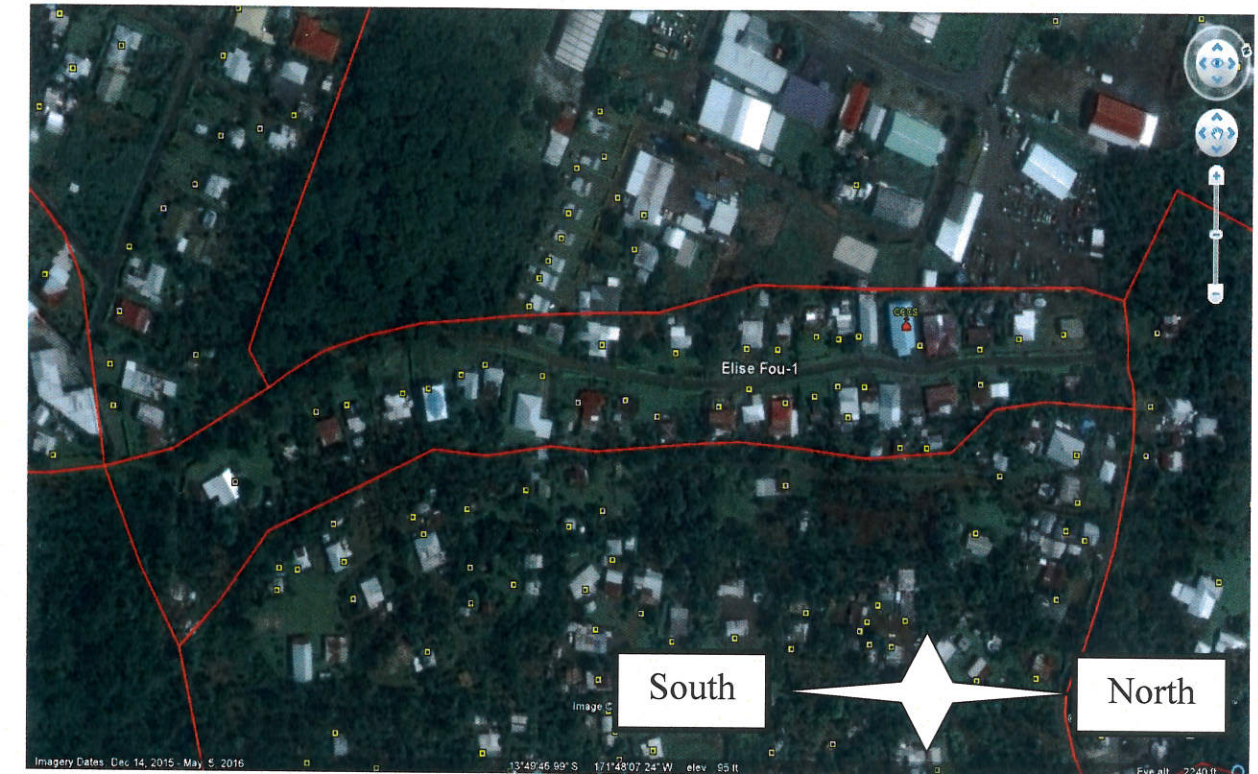


Fig 3: Satellite Map of Elise-Fou: (Source: Google Maps)

The closeness between Alamagoto village and Elise-Fou continues to this day. As I was growing up in Elise-Fou I enjoyed the times when the Ellice Island community of Alamagoto and Elise-Fou village celebrated the *Fakaala* Day on the 1st January of every year. *Fakaala* day to this Ellice Island community is a day of celebration and thanksgiving marked with a church service in the morning after a long night of food preparation, especially preparing *Fekai* on the previous day. The church service often includes an opportunity for the senior members of Elise-Fou, Alamagoto, around Samoa and overseas to advise and encourage younger members of the community. A big feast is followed by this service. At the end of the celebrations both villagers are involved in

traditional Ellice Island dances such as the *Faatele* a famous dance amongst Ellice Islanders.¹¹

The close relationship between the Church and village was formed and planned by the elders and continues today.¹² On the 21st May 1937, a feast (aigafiafia) was held in celebration of the purchase of the first four acres £78-10-0¹³ while the actual price was £60.¹⁴

2.2 The First Families within Elise-Fou

The northern part of the land or the side next to the Elise-Fou Road was first settled by three families; the Teoni family, the Tinei family and the Latasi family. Later subsequent families arrived and occupied the whole land leaving a smaller portion in the southern part for the village to be used as a cemetery or graveyard.¹⁵ One of the village elders Kamuta Latasi explained that when he was young his family moved from Vailele village and initially settled in the northern side of Elise-Fou.¹⁶ A road runs through the middle of Elise-Fou and Kamuta explained that his family stayed on one side of the road. The Teoni and the Tinei's families lived next to each other on the other side of the road. As more settlers came into Elise-Fou the Latasi family decided to shift to the middle of the village while the Teoni and Tinei's family remained where they were until today.¹⁷

2.3 Access to Elise- Fou Footpath

In 1941 Poutoa and Tolua of Laloaoa, met with Atalina Pritchard at Vaiusu concerning access to Elise-Fou from the main road.¹⁸ Since there was no access from the main road (Vaitele Road), Pritchard permitted the Ellice Fou villagers to use part of

¹¹ *Tuvalu a History*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1983), 40. The *Faatele* or *Fateleare* derived from *Ellice Island* dances known as 'fakanau' or 'fakaseasea' which were dances to commemorate the reign of a chief or warrior or a skilled canoe builder.

¹² Elise Fou EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Januari 2015."

¹³ Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966."

¹⁴ Grattan, "Land Deed " 1.

¹⁵ Panapa Jr., Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ McKay, "Atalina Pritchard Agreement with Ellice Islanders ".

her land as a footpath for people, 'but not for vehicles or animals.'¹⁹ The agreement by these two parties gave access for Elise-Fou village to the main coastal road a footpath that is still being used to this day.

The footpath through Pritchard's land was also used by villagers from Vaigaga and Vaitele. However the footpath became a scene of confrontation between the youth of these two villages and Elise-Fou.²⁰ The elders of Elise-Fou often tell not only funny but sad stories regarding confrontations along the footpath between these villages in their time of youth.²¹

At the beginning of the formation of Elise-Fou village there was no fresh water. Fresh water had to be collected at water pools from Vaitele and Vaiusu villages.²² If there were youth from Vaitele or Vaiusu on the footpath, often they would tease, or put dirt in the water buckets eventually leading to fights. Ulugia Toese a deacon and *matai* of Vaigaga recalls that in those days they used to fight with current Elise-Fou elders when they were young but when they grew older they became very close friend.²³ His recollection of all the elders of Elise-Fou amazed me and confirms that villagers of Vaigaga at least used the same footpath as Elise-Fou villagers.

2.4 Settlement in Elise-Fou (the Constitution)

In November 21-28 1945 a meeting was held at the residence of the treasurer, secretary and *pulenuu* of Elise-Fou, A V Poutoa.²⁴ The meeting involved eleven senior members of Elise-Fou, A. Matiu, Siakisini, Taio, Vaeluaga, Motufoua Teoni, Sueni Tapu, Suka, Kolia Kisona, Tolua, Latasi and Laupama. The meeting decided on four basic guidelines for future developments of the village. Firstly, the door is open for any Ellice Islander to settle in Elise-Fou depending on the elder and family decision

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Panapa Jr., Interview with Taefu Salapu, 16 May 201; Panapa Jr., Interview with Ulugia Toese, 18th June 2017.

²¹ Panapa Jr., Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

²² Panapa Jr., Interview with Ulugia Toese, 18 June 201; Panapa Jr., Interview with Kamuta Latasi, 10 January 2016.

²³ Panapa Jr., Interview with Ulugia Toese, 18 June 2017.

²⁴ A V Poutoa, "Meeting Held at Elisefou in Poutoa's Residence," (Elise Fou Elise Fou EFKS Congregation, 1945).

occupying each land portion in the village. The allocated portion of land and everything grown on the land will be this family's possession as long as they contribute to the village and also the church. Secondly, anyone causing trouble and does not contribute to the church and village can be removed from Elise-Fou following a united consensus from the village general meeting.²⁵ Thirdly, there will be only one church in Elise-Fou and that is the London Missionary Society Church. Residents of Elise-Fou are free to worship other denominations but are forbidden to introduce into the village other denominations, through missionaries, catechist, bible meetings, etc....²⁶ Lastly if any person leaves Elise-Fou everything they own is left behind for his own family or 'persons representing him'.²⁷

In 1947 there was a need to find a Trustee for the land of Elise-Fou. In July of the same year Geoffrey Jackson the solicitor representing Elise-Fou village wrote to the Secretary of Native Affairs, G McKay if he could be the Trustee for Elise-Fou.²⁸ The Trustee had to be someone that was not a Ellice Islander.²⁹ McKay agreed to Mr Jackson's suggestion that he would be the Trustee for the Ellice Islanders of Elise-Fou.³⁰ The need for a Trustee was part of the legal process of transferring property from Pritchard to Elise-Fou village was also a requirement by the Land Registrar.³¹

On the 13th August 1947 a memorandum from the Crown Solicitor who was also the Land Registrar reminded the Secretary of Samoan/ Native Office (SSNO), of his role of trustee for Elise-Fou.³² The Land Deed was also advised to be in line with the usual process in producing title deed according to Court Orders.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Geoffrey Jackson, Letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs, 10 July 1947.

²⁹ Grattan, "Land Deed " 2.

³⁰ Jackson., Letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs, 10 July 1947.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Crown Solicitor, Memorandum for the Secretary of Samoan Native Office, 13 August 1947.

2.5 1948 the Land Deed for Elise-Fou

In 1948, the settlement of Elise-Fou ownership began to be finalised with the presentation of the Land Deed as the official confirmation of the land ownership. The Land Deed made on the 25th August 1948 indicates the culmination of several years of donations by Elise-Fou residents for the purchase of the land.³³ The Land Deed gave a brief history over more than ten years, such as the purchase of the first half on the 18th April 1936, the purchase of the second half in 1937 and the agreement for a footpath on the 24th March 1941.³⁴ The Land Schedule also described the area in Imperial measurements as Seven acres, three roods twenty seven decimal eight four perches (7ac, 3r, 27.84per) at Vaiusu a district of Tuamasaga.³⁵

On the 25th October 1948, the new Secretary of Samoan Affairs, Frederick Boyes sent to the Land Registrar a Caveat Forbidding Registration of Dealing³⁶ As the Trustee for Elise-Fou, Boyes claimed pursuant to clause 13 of the Land Registration Amendment Order 1921, which stopped further action or sale of the purchased land that may affect the ownership.

2.6 Elise-Fou Land Purchase Completed

On the 17th November 1948 Geoffrey Jackson wrote to Frederick Boyes that the matter about purchasing the land for Elise-Fou was completed.³⁷ Jackson also confirmed that the conveyance has been successfully executed by Atalina Pritchard who as the seller also agreed that the Secretary of Samoan Affairs should be the trustee of the Ellice Islanders. He also mentioned that the Ellice Islanders had been given a copy of the conveyance.³⁸

³³ Ibid Federick.

³⁴ Grattan, "Land Deed " 1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Frederick Boyes, Letter to the Registrar of Land, 25 October 1948

³⁷ Geoffrey Thornton Jackson, Letter to the Secretary of Samoan Affairs, 17 November 1948.

³⁸ Ibid.

2.7 Elise-Fou Attempts to Purchase Government Land at Tapatapao

On the 10 August 1953, Poutoa as the *pulenuu* of Elise-Fou requested to the Assistant Secretary of the government Mr Stahlin, to consider more land purchase for Elise-Fou.³⁹ Poutoa asked the government for land above Tapatapao. The reasons for the request were the increasing population of Elise-Fou resulting in the need for more land to plant taro, bananas, etc... Poutoa also informed Starlin that the people of Elise-Fou are willing to pay any price and he also mentioned that the present farming land was owned by the LMS. Poutoa's application also indicated that Elise-Fou were already using LMS land at Aleisa known as Fiaga before August 1953.

In 1966 Elise-Fou started to withdraw from the ten acre land at Aleisa due to the EFKS orders.⁴⁰ In the 1966 General Assembly the EFKS decided to create a Development Committee to utilise the land of the EFKS for cattle production.⁴¹ It came after a devastating hurricane on 29th January 1966 which killed ten people, made 52,000 homeless, in Samoa and surrounding islands.⁴² The Development Committee was created to generate finances from plantations on the arable land belonging to the Church.⁴³ The delegates on this committee were some of the most influential people in the Church: the treasurer Iona Levi, the General Secretary Etene Saaga, the chairman of the CCCS Ioelu Tapeni, and Moenoa Laufili the first Chairman and Secretary of the sub-committee.⁴⁴ All the arable land belonging to the CCCS was given to a Committee

³⁹ M Stahlin, Letter to Amosa Poutoa 10 August 1953.

⁴⁰ Panapa Jr., Interview with Taefu Salapu, 16 May 2017.

⁴¹ "Ripoti a Le 'Komiti O Le Ma'agao' Komiti Laitiiti a Le Komiti O Feau Eseese, Me 1966 – Me 1967," (Apia, Western Samoa: Komiti Feau Eseese 1967), 1.. See also "Ripoti Faaletausaga a Le Komiti Laitiiti a Le Komiti O Feau Eseese Komiti O Le Atina'e a Le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga a Kerisiano I Samoa," (Apia, Samoa: Komiti Atinae, 1968), 1.

⁴² "Four Territories Devastated in Worst South Seas Hurricane for 75 Years," *Pacific Islands Monthly* 37, no. 3 (1966): 45. "Unpleasant Measures Ahead for Western Samoa," *Pacific Islands Monthly* 37, no. 4 (1966): 15. "Help Begins to Arrive for Devastated Samoa," *Pacific Islands Monthly* 37, no. 6 (1966): 21.

⁴³ "Ripoti A Le 'Komiti O Le Ma'agao' Komiti Laitiiti A Le Komiti O Feau Eseese, Me 1966 – Me 1967".1. Unlike other Committees it had only five district representatives from within Samoa and American Samoa as these were districts in which there were plantations.

⁴⁴ "Ripoti A Le 'Komiti O Le Ma'agao' Komiti Laitiiti A Le Komiti O Feau Eseese, Me 1966 – Me 1967".1.

to work the land to produce finance for the Church.⁴⁵ Elise-Fou vacated the land at Aleisa by the end of 1967.

In 2013 during a church service at Elise-Fou a Reverend Elekosi Viliamu mentioned that he felt sorry for Elise-Fou, every time he passes Aleisa. Elekosi recalls how the elders of Elise-Fou used to live and cultivate Aleisa before it was returned to EFKS. Elekosi's heart feels for the Elise-Fou Church for Aleisa land in the present time is only trees and bush no such cattle farm or plantation it there as originally proposed by the Development Committee.

2.8 Rejection of Matai Title Ceremony

On 15th June 1959, a certain Logovi'i of the village of Talimatau wanted to have a proposed matai title ceremony to be held in Elise-Fou.⁴⁶ It was rejected by the Assistant Secretary of the Government of Western Samoa. The Assistant Secretary had replaced the Secretary of Samoan Affairs as trustees of Elise-Fou.⁴⁷ The Assistant Secretary had cited that Elise-Fou did not embrace the Samoan cultural concept of the matai system and also did not practise *faaSamoa* within their village.⁴⁸

The Assistant Secretary's letter to Logovi'i highlights that Elise-Fou did not embrace wholeheartedly certain aspects of the *faaSamoa* influence. The villagers and especially the elders may have been aware of the Samoan cultural practise of gift exchanges and 'family support' known as '*faalavelaves*'. Did the founding members of Elise-Fou see the Samoan '*faalavelave*'s' as having a negative impact on the village and the gospel? Did the founding members see *faaSamoa* practises as weakening the independence of Elise-Fou?

Currently Elise-Fou leaders of extended families are all equal in status and there is no hierarchal order amongst these heads of families. Hence the Elise-Fou village rule

⁴⁵ "Ripoti A Le 'Komiti O Le Ma'agao' Komiti Laitiiti A Le Komiti O Feau Eseese, Me 1966 – Me 1967". Apia: Komiti Feau Eseese, 1967. 4.

⁴⁶ Assistant Secretary of Government of Western Samoa, Letter to Logovi'i of Talimatau, 15 June 1959.

⁴⁷ Assistant Secretary of the Government of Western Samoa, Letter to Amosa Poutoa, 8 July 1959.

⁴⁸ Assistant Secretary of the Government of Western Samoa., Letter to Logovi'i of Talimatau, 15 June 1959.

is a more 'democratic' system with all '*matais*' having an equal voice. Furthermore the abandonment of Samoan *matai* system protects and maintains Elise-Fou's independence. The village is not obliged to support other villages when these villages have a *matai* bestowing ceremony. This saves considerable resources of the village in such inter village interactions. As a consequence Elise-Fou's resources would be focussed on developing the village rather than 'assisting' other villages. Elise-Fou's relative independence would have been impossible if Elise-Fou was founded on customary land like some villages in Samoa. Elise-Fou was fortunate and indeed blessed in forming a village that is like a home away from home (Tuvalu).

2.9 Chapter Conclusion

The hard work and great effort of Ellice Islanders contributed to the establishment of Elise-Fou village. The elders of Elise-Fou, insured that Elise-Fou would be open to all Ellice Islanders and their descendents if they contribute to the village and the church.

The refusal to allow *matai* ceremonies in Elise-Fou is indicative of the elder's attempts to limit the *faaSamoa* so that it does not become a burden to the village. This is further emphasised by the Secretary of Samoan Affairs report that the village of Elise-Fou do not understand the *faaSamoa*. This suggests that the elders were aware of the fine mats and monetary collections often associated with *faaSamoa* especially with the bestowal of *matai* titles.

Elise-Fou also were fortunate that they were able to use arable land in Aleisa for plantations for the village. Unfortunately the 1966 hurricane changed circumstances forcing Elise-Fou to vacate the land for the Development Committee.

Chapter two indicated a journey of hope for descendents of Ellice Islanders in Samoa to have a permanent place to live. People in search for a better future must depend on God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can have hope from God.

Chapter 3

The Elise-Fou Church

Introduction

The establishment of the LMS church in Elise-Fou was a significant moment in the history of Elise-Fou. However there were discrepancies between the history of the 77th anniversary and other primary sources. As highlighted in previous chapters one of the reasons for the settlement in Elise-Fou is a place of worship for Ellice Islanders residing in Samoa. Many Ellice Islanders came to Samoa because of the church, specifically the London Missionary Society church of Samoa. The chapter also looks at the first five ministers of Elise-Fou.

3.1 The 'First Service' of Elise-Fou congregation.

In 1936 Reverend Elder Sapolu (pastor of *Toamua*) was the elder of the sub-district of Faleata East.¹ As Elder of this sub-district it was crucial to obtain the approval of Sapolu for Elise-Fou to begin a church. However it was Reverend Poasa Te'o (FS) of the nearby village of Vaigaga who was eventually appointed to lead the first service in Elise-Fou.

In 2015 Elise-Fou EFKS celebrated its 77th anniversary since the founding of the Elise-Fou congregation. The 77th anniversary also included a brief history of the Elise-Fou congregation. This history involved recollections from Rev. Elder Eteuati Pasia and the Tuvaluan pastor Vaetolo. However upon further research there seems to be discrepancy of the history presented in the 77th celebrations and the primary sources.

According to the 77th celebration the first church service occurred on 12:00 midnight on January 1st 1937.² However according to the journal of the then secretary of the Elise-Fou congregation Amosa V. Poutoa the first service occurred at 11pm on the

¹EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

²Ibid.

31st of December 1937.³ Poutoa's time of 11 pm on New Years Eve is very close to the 12 midnight New Years day of 1937. Poutoa's year of 1937, could have been an error and the actual year could have been New Year Eve 1936, not 1937. However it seems unlikely that Poutoa would have mistaken the year of the first service, especially of such an important day in the history of Elise-Fou.

The second discrepancy occurs with the roles of the participants of the first church service. In the 77th anniversary history the service was led by Rev. Poasa of Vaigaga village.⁴ A deacon by the name of Lepou also from the village of Vaigaga led the prayers and a student from Malua Theological College preached.⁵ There was also a Rev. Tia'i of Lepea who was present.⁶

According to A V Poutoa the Malua Theological College student is identified as Vaaimamao.⁷ In addition to Lepou there is also an individual by the name of Sooalo Afereti. All three led the prayers. Rev. Poasa who conducted the service most likely would have given a sermon. In 1988 one of first elders of Elise-Fou Leau Poe recalled that it was Vaaimamao who gave the sermon.⁸ Poutoa's journal also identifies the correct status of Tia'i who was the elder deacon of Vaigaga village, not a Reverend.⁹ This would make sense as Poasa Teo was the minister of Vaigaga village at the time, and he would have brought a deacon from his church to assist him. Secondly, Tia'i's status would explain why he was not an active participant in the service and one can speculate that he was involved in the Holy Communion as a deacon would normally perform.

A third discrepancy of the 77th anniversary account of the first service is the number of families that attended the first service. The 77th anniversary and Leau Poe's recollections records five families: (1) Tinei and Anoanoai with children (2) Teoni and

³ Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966," 61.

⁴ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015," 1.

⁵ Ibid..

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966."

⁸ Poe. Letter of 50 year Anniversary of Elise Fou, 1 January 1988

⁹ Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966."

Toeaso (3) Latasi & Malili with children (4) Faraimo (5) Tolua & Toaono with children.¹⁰ Leau Poe's recollections, gives the same list as the 77th anniversary account.¹¹ However Poutoa names six families, in addition to the above families Poutoa includes a couple known as Vaele and Siniva.¹²

The next day the Reverend Elder Sapolu of Toamua with Elder Deacon Tia'i of Lepea were involved in a meeting of elders, reaching a consensus that only one church (that is the LMS church) would be permitted in Elise-Fou. These founding families agreement was witnessed by all of the above participants that day.¹³

Deacon Lepou and deacon Sooalo of Vaigaga were appointed to look after the church in Elise-Fou.¹⁴ They were followed by a Tuvaluan minister, Taluvale and his wife Tuua.¹⁵ There is no record of the years they were at Elise-Fou. They in turn were followed by another Tuvaluan minister Rev. Vaitolo Malulu and his wife Liliele.

3.2 Reverend Vaitolo Malulu and Liliele 1953-1977

Reverend Vaetolo Malulu (FE) and his wife Liliele became minister for Elise-Fou Church from the 11th December 1953 until the 19th February 1977.¹⁶ Malulu and his wife served in Elise-Fou for twenty three years. One of the significant events under Malulu was the building and opening of the first Chapel on 29th August 1957.

Less than a month later on the 13th September 1957 the village offered land for further development of the church.¹⁷ The land was officially accepted in a ceremony involving Rev. Elder Poasa Te'o (FT), of the neighbouring village of Vaigaga, Iupeli (FS), Vaetolo (FE) as well as senior representatives of the village such as Poutoa, Teoni,

¹⁰ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

¹¹ Poe. Letter of 50 year Anniversary of Elise Fou, 1 January 1988

¹² Poutoa, "Diary of Secretary of the Elise Fou Congregation 1931-1966."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

Tolua, Aumua and Tusitala. The official handover of the ¼ acre land occurred on the 3rd May 1958.

On the 31st August 1959 the foundation of the pastor's house was laid. The pastor's residence was finally completed and officially opened on the 16th April 1960.¹⁸ Another significant event under Malulu's leadership was the first Holy Communion in Elise-Fou, on the 20th April 1962. On the 5th January 1977, the first Youth group of Elise-Fou was founded, with twenty founding members.¹⁹

3.3 Reverend Polua Filivaa (FS) and Faletua 1977-April 1980

Reverend Polua Filivaa and his wife Nova succeeded Malulu and Liliele. He was the first Samoan minister of Elise-Fou. Filivaa was the son of Taugamusu of Aleisa. Filivaa lived in Aleisa nearby the EFKS land (Fiaga) that was used by Elise-Fou people. Filivaa and his wife started serving in Elise-Fou not long after they graduated from Malua. Filivaa was a well known rugby winger for the Malua Rugby team.²⁰

Two years into his service Filivaa started work on a second Chapel on the 7 October 1979.²¹ This was because the first chapel was old and smaller for the growing church and village population. Filivaa and his wife Nova were still serving in Elise-Fou EFKS during the construction of the Second Chapel.²² In April of 1980 Filivaa and Nova ended their service and left Elise-Fou, due to misunderstanding with the church members.

3.4 Reverend Eteuati Pasia (FT) and Sapini 1980-2011

Reverend Eteuati Pasia and his wife Sapini took over the ministry at Elise-Fou. They were the longest serving ministers from the 28th June 1980 until the 26th July

¹⁸ Ibid, 02

¹⁹ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015." 02. The board members were ... (Faatonu) as Ioane Alefaio, the President as Faifale Tauila, the Chairperson as Siitia Amituanai, Vice Chairperson as Ueli Obrien, Secretary as Moega Amosa, Treasurer as Fokisau Chang Sau, with two advisers Malifa Iosefa and Pa.

²⁰ Panapa Panapa Jr, Interview with Tamalemai Faipule, 3 August 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Panapa Panapa Jr, Interview with Taefu Salapu 16 May 2017

2011.²³ Eteuati Pasia graduated from Malua Theological College in 1969.²⁴ The date of commencement differs from Sapini's recollection where she recalls that they were called on 22nd June 1980.²⁵ Elise-Fou posed challenges for Sapini because,

'The wives of the Congregation were difficult to understand the Samoan custom. They were not conversant in the Samoan language.'²⁶

No doubt this lack of familiarity with Samoan custom can be attributed to the Ellice Island ministry. The only time a Samoan has led the church in Elise-Fou was the three years that Filivaa was minister of Elise-Fou. However by 1996 Sapini was able to claim quite confidently that many could say prayers in Samoan, and even preach in Samoan.²⁷

It is under the ministry of Pasia that the second Chapel that began in 1979 by Filivaa was completed after three years. The Chapel was officially opened, on the 11 April 1982.²⁸ The opening ceremony was led by Rev. Elder Sapolu (FT), the Sermon by Rev. Iupeli (FS), prayers by Rev. Elder Pouesi (FT) and bible reading by Rev. Uilelea (FS).²⁹ The year 1987 became a historical day for the Elise-Fou EFKS. It was a time when Eteuati and Sapini became the Elders for the Western Faleata sub-district.

On 18th April 2008 EFKS purchased an acre of land with a cheque of WST30, 000 for the use of an ever expanding Elise-Fou Church.³⁰ This purchase of 1acre from WESTEC land in Vaitele lies next to the Elise-Fou Church land on the eastern side. The Elise-Fou Church Youth managed to build a volley ball, on this piece of land and also cater for other Church activities. Elise-Fou church and village are thankful for the EFKS for this land gift and accept it with gratitude.

²³ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

²⁴ *Tina Ma Le Talalelei* (Wellington, New Zealand: Mafutaga a Tina o le Ekalesia i Ueligitone, 1997), 3.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

²⁹ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise Fou 1 Ianuari 2015".

³⁰ EFKS, "Tala Faalelotu 77 Tausaga Efks Elise-Fou 1 Ianuari 2015."

Conclusion

The origin of Elise-Fou congregation can be traced to continuing and ongoing relationship between the LMS mission and the Ellice Islands since 1865. Although sparsely populated and widespread the LMS were practically the only Christian mission there. This forged a close relationship between the LMS and the Ellice Islands. This was further reinforced by the Samoan language as the main written and read language in the Ellice Islands as late as 1935. Therefore many Ellice Islanders could not only read but also write in Samoan. This made it easy for Ellice Islanders to migrate and assimilate into Samoa.

The familiarity with the Samoan language has led the inevitable migration of Ellice Islanders to Samoa in search of education, not only in secular but also religious. There are cases of Ellice Islanders refusing to return to the Ellice Islands. Some were able to remain in Samoa because of marriage to a Samoan. Ellice Islander communities began to grow in such villages such as Vaigaga, Vailele and especially in Alamagoto.

The creation of Elise-Fou village was an extension of the general Ellice Island migration to Samoa culminating into a permanent village environment for Ellice Islanders. It was also a celebration of the EFKS or the LMS mission legacy. To have one denomination in the Elise-Fou is testament to the enduring work of the LMS Samoan missionaries to the Ellice Islands.

Credit must also go to the early leaders of Elise-Fou in particular, to maintain their distance from the *faaSamoa* within their village. This is highlighted in the refusal to conduct or hold *matat* ceremonies within Elise-Fou. Such a measure insures the independence of Elise-Fou from Samoan practices involving gift exchanges or *faalavelave*. Such measures help to prevent the inevitable large expenses on fine mats, and monetary gifts to support families involved in chiefly titles. Thus it is a way to conserve energy, time and money on developing Elise-Fou. It was also a way to preserve and remind residents of Elise-Fou of their Tuvaluan heritage. It is not a total abandonment of the *faaSamoa* but the early leaders were selective of what to incorporate of the *faaSamoa* so as to enhance village unity and independence.

As a growing community the elders were quick to request land to grow crops not only to feed the village but also to sell produce. The early settlers were given Aleisa to work and plant for the Elise-Fou community. However in 1966 they had to relinquish Aleisa to the EFKS so the Development Committee could convert all EFKS arable land into a self sustaining enterprise. The irony is that the present state of Aleisa is one of land left fallow and not producing any useful crops or even a cattle farm. It was not until 2008 that Elise-Fou was able to acquire additional land but this time Elise-Fou has decided to use it for the youth.

This history of the first service in Elise-Fou contains varying accounts according to the sources. Comparing the sources that were able to be retrieved the first service most likely took place on New Year's Day 1937, as the first day of the year is a special day in Tuvaluan culture known as *Fakaala* Day. Leau Poe's recollection in 1988 and the 77th anniversary history both agree that Reverend Poasa Te'o conducted the proceedings but it was the Malua Theological College student Vaaimamao who preached on this day.

However one correction to the official 77th anniversary records is the status of Rev Tia'i. Most likely Tia'i was a deacon as recorded by Poutoa. If Tia'i was a minister he would have at least said the prayers or read the bible, but these duties were performed by the deacons. Most likely Tia'i was a deacon and he may have been involved in the Holy Communion even though there were very few people representing Elise-Fou on that day.

I am also inclined to believe Poutoa's record of the number of families on this day was six families instead of five families. The sixth family (Vaele and Siniva) may have arrived late to the actual service maybe at a time the service was finishing. The fact that Poutoa included this sixth family suggests that he saw the family at the service but Leau Poe was unaware.

Unfortunately there was very little information on the first two ministers of Elise-Fou. Both were Ellice Islanders and it was very difficult to obtain information. It may have something to do with World War II in this time period.

However the third minister who was the last Tuvaluan minister of Elise-Fou. He spent over twenty years as leader of the EFKS Elise-Fou. Rev Malulu seems to have consolidated Tuvaluan language and culture. This is evident in the difficulty in communication that Rev Elder Pasia's wife, Sapini had with the Elise-Fou women. Although we are not told why Rev. Filivaa left, it could have something to do with language and the reluctance to follow the *faaSamoa*. Rev Filivaa followed Rev. Malulu. However Filivaa lasted only three years.

Rev Elder Eteuati Pasia created history for Elise-Fou EFKS when he became the Elder of the subdistrict of Faleata. The elevation of Pasia to an elder seems to justify the vision of the founders of Elise-Fou. Elise-Fou village is not only as a place to live but also a place to worship in the EFKS for descendents of the Ellice Islanders. What greater honour for the founders of Elise-Fou than to have their minister as an elder of the EFKS.

Elise-Fou church appreciated the gift of 1 acre piece of land that was bought by EFKS. It was a pleasure to receive it, as experienced until today as well that such land is being used widely for youth entertainment and other church activities.

Elise-Fou church is also thankful for the support of neighbouring families and friends from the villages of Vaiusu, Vaitele Uta and Vaigaga. As mentioned earlier we also thank the family and friends from the villages of Alamagoto. Not all of the supporters of Elise-Fou are directly of Ellice Island descent, but as fellow Christians our friends in these villages have worked together and given support to the Elise-Fou EFKS Church.

Due to restriction in time a more extensive research must be made especially with regards to the first two ministers of the Elise-Fou Church. This research does not claim in any way to be extensive and comprehensive but it is a first step in further research in the history of Elise-Fou and the EFKS Elise-Fou. It is hoped that this paper would stimulate further research to delve more into archives of the LMS and to make the congregation and people of Elise-Fou appreciate and be aware of their unique history.

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