

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 03000582

**Date Listed:** 7/6/03

Thompson, Sadie, Building  
**Property Name**

Eastern  
**County**

AS  
**State**

**Multiple Name**

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Beth Boland*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Keeper**

*12/2/03*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The Period of Significance is 1916--1917.

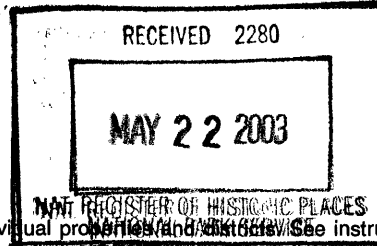
This was confirmed by Julie Taomia of the AS SHPO staff.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sadie Thompson Building

other names/site number Boarding House, Meredith Building, Haleck Building

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication

city or town Malaloa  vicinity

state American Samoa code AS county Eastern District code 0010 zip code 96799

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John Wright, SHPO 9 May 2003  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

American Samoa Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Beth Beland

7/6/03

Sadie Thompson Bldg.  
Name of Property

Eastern District, American Samoa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel  
TRADE/COMMERCE/department store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel  
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls WOOD/weatherboard  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof METAL/cast iron  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

LITERATURE

Period of Significance

World War I

Significant Dates

Dec. 16, 1916 - Jan. 30, 1917

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Somerset Maugham

Cultural Affiliation

EuroAmerican

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Sadie Thompson Building  
Name of Property

Eastern District, Am. Samoa  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .345 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	012	53311215	81421121610
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Wasko

organization Calumet Industrial Service date December 2002

street & number 4099 Nu'uuli telephone 684-699-8011

city or town Pago Pago state AS zip code 96799

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Tom Drabble

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 684-699-5714

city or town Pago Pago state AS zip code 96799

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Statement of Characteristics

The nominated site, "Sadie Thompson Building" has been referred to several times in its 100 year plus history. Significant to the nomination, the first reference was made by the historical literary figure Somerset Maughan, author of the infamous short story "Rain" whose main character is Sadie Thompson. Maughan described the building as a "dilapidated lodging house with a corrugated tin roof". He added that, "the partitions of the rooms did not come flush with the ceiling, affording an air space for ventilation. It was the only lodging house on the island. The boarding house was located on the outskirts of Pago Pago" Maughan further explains that he contracted, "a stubborn rash, no doubt fungus, while in the hotel in Pago Pago, and it took weeks to cure it."

This less than glowing description may reflect more of the writer's penchant for sarcasm and disdain for the events and characters that evolved on a south seas trip which led he and his companion to Pago Pago, Apia, Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand and finally, Tahiti. But his experiences resulted in a body of literature revered by readers, scholars and Hollywood producers alike. The end result of his six week stay at the "Sadie Thompson building" produced, "Rain".

Today the "lodging boarding house" retains its weatherboard facade and original architectural line, common both in American and Western Samoa as a popular English/German mixed colonial style. The original building was built by the Meredith family in the early 1900's. The family was then, as they are today, merchants and traders. In 1948 the property, located in the district known as Malaloa, was sold in fee simple to the family of Max Haleck jr, a merchant family of long standing from German descent.

Malaloa sits at the end of Pago Pago harbor. At the time Maughan visited Pago Pago, Malaloa had a small dock which was used by lighters to carry goods. Passengers boarded ships on the main wharf, also noted by Maughan. The bottom of the harbor where the lodging house is located, was likely a mosquito infested swamp closed in from breezes by the high walls of an ancient volcanic caldera. The boarding house sits flush on a steep grade of the surrounding hills. Although the location may have been less than ideal in 1916, the land may have been deeded to the Meredith family exactly because of its unattractive setting. Perhaps being at the outskirts of town and having a water access to the lower end of Pago harbor served both the clientel and management well in the early part of the century. Miss Thompson found her professional needs well suited to the structure.

Notably, preserved tract plats show that the land adjacent the Sadie Thompson building was U.S. Navy land. The Navy left American Samoa in 1953. Just the opposite today. Broad street, as Maughan described the location, is now the main road through the commercial district.

According to a recent economic survey prepared by the Micronesian Associates Inc., the original building was completed in the early 1900's ( Maughan and Sadie Thompson lodged there in 1916). Since the building's original use as a boarding house, it has served as a general merchandise store under various managements. Most recently, the applicant, Tom Drabble, has used the building as a department store below and a restaurant on the second level.

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No absolute record of all the renovations made to the Sadie Thompson building exists. The most significant changes have been made by the current owner, Tom Drabble. Revelations were made by Mr. Drabble's architect, Joe Weilenmann, AIAA, during the renovations. Especially noted were the presence of fully functionally intact original concrete columns and timbers. The basic frontal façade remains in place and fully preserved in architectural design. Two wings of the building were added in 1948 and remain part of the building today. They do not however detract from the original building features evident in the accompanying photos.

Please find attached survey plots of the land made sometime before 1953 when the United States Navy relinquished their claim to Tutuila. The property is clearly marked the "Sadie Thompson" building. Also attached are recent photographs prepared for Micronesia Inc. showing original timbers and footing and the retentive features of the building.

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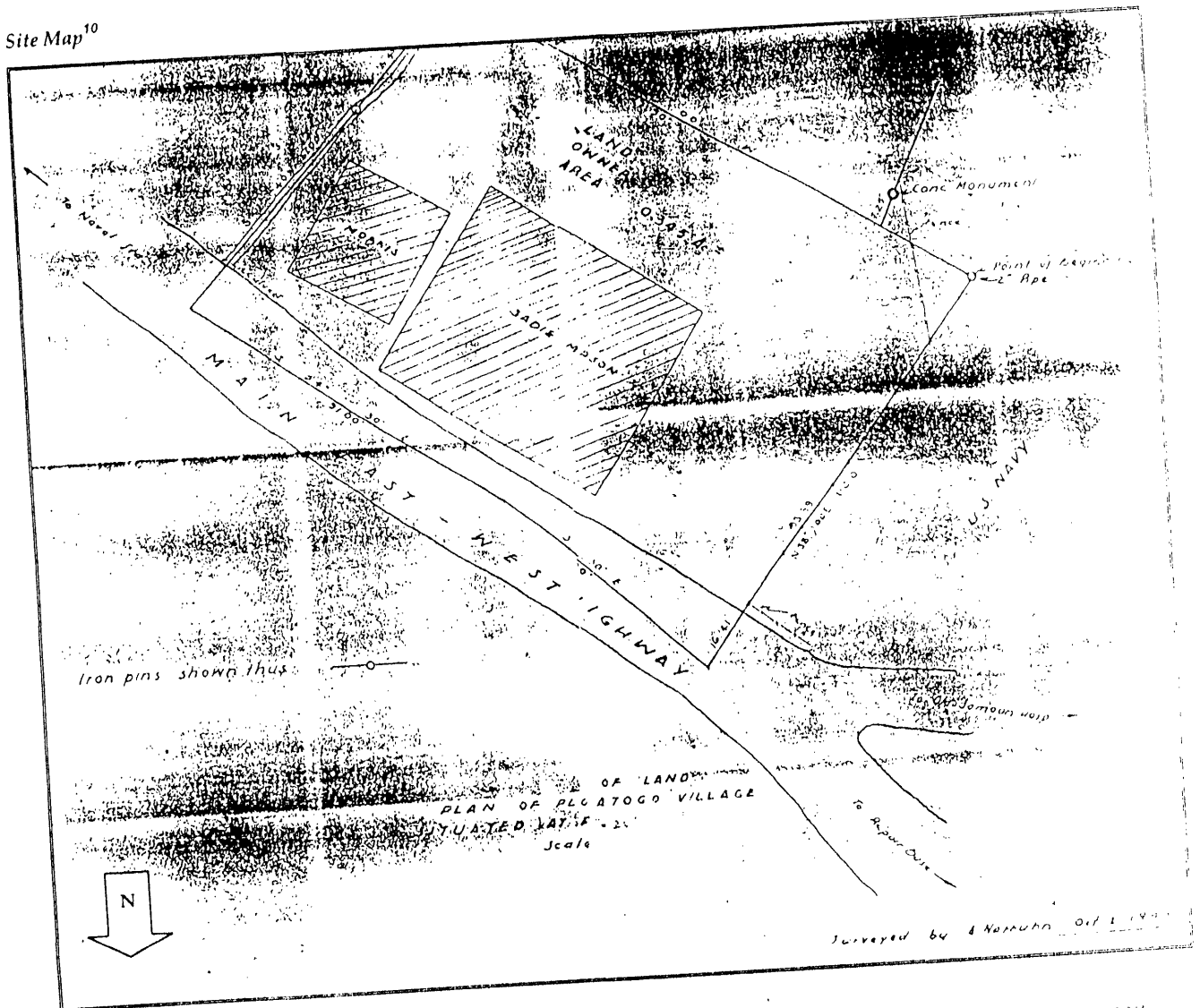
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Site Data

Site Map<sup>10</sup>



Legal Description

The subject property is legally described as:

That certain parcel of real property lying in Fagatogo, County of Mauputasi, American Samoa, known as Tuamauga (Sadie Thompson) and bounded and particularly described as:

S.47°30'E. a distance of 63.00 feet; thence S 54°30'E. a distance of 91.00 feet; run thence leaving said Highway S.42°40'E. a distance of 61.00 feet to an iron pin, thence S.41°10'W. a distance of 35.17 feet to an iron pin; thence N.47°00'W. a distance of 147.50 feet to point of beginning.

The above described land contains 0.345 acres more or less and the buildings and improvements thereon

... 100 inch galvanized iron pipe in



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## Statement of Significance

In 1899 Eastern Samoa was partitioned from the Western Samoan archipelago to form a separate political entity, American Samoa. This agreement among the world powers of Britain, Germany and the United States was officially ratified by the Treaty of Berlin. Tutuila and Manua became an unincorporated U.S. flag territory under the control of the United States Navy. While retaining many political rights and cultural privileges, indigenous Tutuila residents were placed under many laws of the United States.

These facts play important roles in the history of the Sadie Thompson building. Primarily it is there that Somerset Maugham blended his political, social and religious observations in his literary crucible. From this unusual potpourri, Maugham's literature has preserved an introspective period of time and an era of social, political and religious beliefs which struck at the foundations of contemporary conservative Victorian thought.

Maugham's voyage to Pago Pago included a cast of characters worthy of any literary giant. One was Miss Sadie Thompson, an actual character of the same name, evicted from Hawaii for prostitution in the village of Iwilei. Perhaps because of the presence of U.S. Naval personnel on Tutuila, Miss Thompson sought new business opportunities where her native flag afforded protection and the U.S. dollar presented the prospect of a quick buck. The Mormon missionary couple, the Davidsons, juxtaposed Miss Thompson in moral, sexual and conservative ideology, a fact Maugham was quick to observe. As the three sailed south from Honolulu it became obvious to Maugham that the ingredients for a story were at hand. What he failed to figure was that a measles threat and bad weather forced the group to reside under the same roof for six weeks at the "only lodging house on Tutuila." Here a far greater plot played out as Maugham was able to refine the attitudes and sensibilities of the principals under the same roof. For example, Miss Thompson developed a liking for a Samoan marine. But prevailing mores (or prejudices) of sexual relations between male Caucasian sailors and Samoan women were tolerated, a blonde American woman having sex with a Samoan man was outright taboo. This contextual history supports the significance of the chance union played out at the Sadie Thompson building from December 16, 1916, when the ship berthed at Pago Pago, to six weeks later when Maugham continued on to Apia, Western Samoa.

Maugham clearly expressed his disdain for American colonial hegemony over the Samoans in his abusive description of Tutuila Samoans: "lazy, thieving and worthless. Perhaps it is not their fault. They had become charity cases of a benevolent naval government who spoiled them with tinned meat and cast off clothes of the white man."

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In the final denouement, the story of the conflict between Sadie Thompson, the prostitute, and Reverend Davidson, the missionary, settles into a story of sexual repression. The reverend is the life diminisher, seeking to deport Miss Thompson from Tutuila for her irascibly profligate ways. But she is, in Maugham's literary view, the life enhancer, albeit a tragic one. Sadie Thompson's lust for life enchants Maugham because she tests prevailing morality and mores regardless how destructive her personal behavior may be. Reverend Davidson's contempt for sexual promiscuity belies the reigning Victorian ethic of prudishness, an idea that by 1916 had worn thin with the younger generation.

Millions of readers and movie goers recognized the story line of "Rain" for its timeliness and exposure of gut issues such as sexual repression, cross racial sexual relations and the scorn of colonial abuse. There have been three movie versions of "Rain", starring Gloria Swanson, Joan Crawford and Rita Hayworth. "Rain," conceived in the "only lodging house in Tutuila in 1916" presaged the roaring twenties, a worldwide desire for escapism and the ultimate failed social and economic theories embodied in the Great Depression. Somerset Maugham's literary depiction set in Pago Pago at the lodging house cast a new social consciousness so pervasive that audiences today still read and reread the story of the woman, her admirers and detractors.

Modern events of man's cruelty to man, racial tension and conflicting moral values continue to ratify the lasting imprint of the social mirror theme in "Rain" made famous by Somerset Maugham. Critics and reading devotees of Maugham are quickly reminded that the impact of a single place in time and the coming together of ideas embodied in personalities can be woven into literary works which shape social movement and change social behavior. Even today we are perplexed to wonder if Miss Sadie Thompson tells us the story of excessive destructive self abuse or excessive love of life played to the edge of fallibility. Blockbuster Video still stocks both speaking versions of Somerset Maugham's "Sadie Thompson."

Planned renovations at the Sadie Thompson building will restore the building to its original purpose, a Bed and Breakfast retreat for tourists and business visitors.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Somerset Maughan

“Rain”, from collected short stories, *The Trembling of a Leaf*, Doran, 1921

“Of Human Bondage”, Doran, 1915

“The Razor’s Edge”, Doubleday, 1944

Wilmon Menard

“The Two World’s of Somerset Maughan” Los Angeles, 1965

Ted Morgan

“Maughan”, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1975

Craig Showalter, M.D.

“Somerset Maughan – World Traveler, Famed Storyteller”

Caxtonian, Chicago, September 1997

American Samoa Government

Depart of Land and Survey

Site plan, “Sadie Thompson Building” 1939

Legal Description of Boundary, 1939

United States National Park Service

Topographical Map of Tutuila

United State Geological Survey

Topographical Map of Pago Harbor

Locator Map of American Samoa

Micronesian Associates Incorporated

Photo Collection of Sadie Thompson Building during renovation, 1986

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National Park Service

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** That certain parcel of real property lying in Fagatogo, County of Maoputasi, American Samoa, known as Tuamauga (Sadie Thompson) and bounded a and particularly described as: Beginning at a two (2") inch galvanized iron pipe in concrete, run thence N. 38 deg. 00'E. along the U.S. navy fence line a distance of 92.69 feet to the corner of said fence, continue thence N.38 deg 00'E. a distance of 16.41 feet to a point on the Main East-West Highway; thence S. 47 deg. 30'E. a distance of 63.00 feet; thence S.54 deg. 30'E. a distance of 91.00 feet; run thence leacing said Highway S.42 deg. 40'E. a distance of 61.00 feet to an iron pin; thence S.41 deg. 10'W. a distance of 35.17 feet to an iron pin; thence N.47 deg. 00'W. a distance of 147.50 feet to point of beginning.

**Boundary justification:** The boundaries encompass the entire parcel historically associated with the Sadie Thompson Building