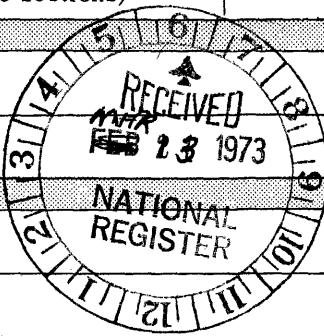


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE:<br><i>American Samoa</i>    |                    |
| COUNTY:<br><i>Western District</i> |                    |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY                   |                    |
| ENTRY NUMBER                       | DATE               |
|                                    | <b>APR 18 1973</b> |



1 NAME

COMMON:  
*Aasu*

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
*Massacre Bay*

2 LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
*On Massacre Bay*

CITY OR TOWN:  
*Aasu*

STATE: *American Samoa* CODE: COUNTY: *Western District* CODE:

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)   | OWNERSHIP  | STATUS   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site<br><input type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered  | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)  |  |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><i>Grave and Monument</i>                   |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
*Chiefs, Aasu Village*

STREET AND NUMBER:  
*C/o Governor, American Samoa*

CITY OR TOWN: *Pago Pago* STATE: *American Samoa* CODE: *96799*

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
*Land Commission*

STREET AND NUMBER:  
*C/o Governor, American Samoa*

CITY OR TOWN: *Pago Pago* STATE: *American Samoa* CODE: *96799*

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

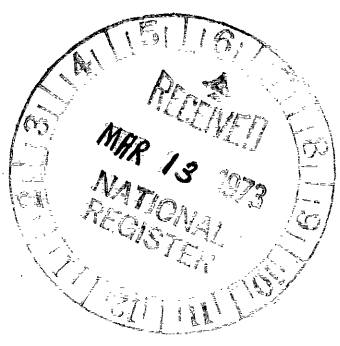
APR 18 1973

7 DESCRIPTION

|           |                                    |   |  |                                       |   |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                        |   |  |                                       |   |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                        |   |  | (Check One)                           |   |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A monument and cross erected in 1883 by the French government stands over what is probably the graves of the Frenchmen killed in 1787. It is in the village of Aasu. The bronze plaque lists the names and positions of the Frenchmen and is headed, "Morts pour La Science et la Patrie le 17 Decembre 1787." The plaque is fastened to the sloping front of a concrete structure which is surrounded by a low concrete wall. Estimated plan dimensions are 7 X 15 feet. Top of the cross is an estimated 8 feet high. Some patching of cracks in the concrete is needed. Some surface disintegration of the concrete is probably due to exposure to the marine environment.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

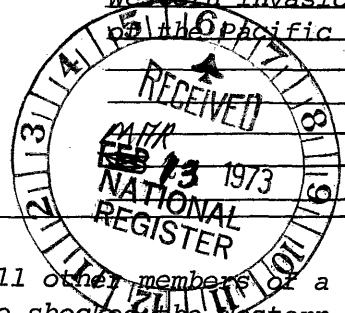
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science  | <u>Western invasion of the Pacific</u>              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  |   |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Short Statement: Massacre of a naval captain and 11 other members of a French scientific expedition at this bay in 1787 so shocked the western world that the Samoan islands were avoided for decades and escaped occupancy by Western governments until late in the 19th century. A monument erected over the grave in 1883 by the French government is maintained by the village of Aasu. The massacre took place on the beach and in the channel directly below the monument. The Aasu monument, now 90 years old, is the only site commemorating the event. Because of the danger of any other monument, placed closer to the actual site, being washed away, the existing monument is the most appropriate location to mark the massacre.

\*\*\*\*\*

Under the sponsorship of King Louis XVI, Franch sent out a scientific exploring expedition under the command of Jean Francois La Perouse. La Perouse commanded the expedition and the flag ship La Boussole (compass) and selected M. de Langle to captain the other ship of the expedition l'Astrolabe (quadrant). Scientists included geographers, astronomers, mathematicians, botanists, a geologist, a painter and an anatomist. Merchandise to be used for trading and presents to native peoples included 2,000 hatchets, 700 hammers, 50,000 nails, 1,000,000 needles, 30,000 flints, 2,600 combs, 5,000 pieces of jewelry, 1,200 silk ribbons and 900 toys. Sir Joseph Banks of England presented La Perouse with two magnetic needles that had been used by Captain Cook. The expedition sailed from Brest on August 10, 1785.

Itinerary of the expedition included Teneriffe, Trinidad, around Cape Horn into the Pacific, Easter Island, Hawaii, the Northwest coast of America, Monterey, the Marianas, Macao, Manila, Taiwan, Japan, and Kamchatka to Samoa. From Samoa, where de Langle and 11 others were killed, the ships proceeded to Botany Bay, Australia. His reports, and the letters from the expedition, sent via an English fleet to Europe, spread the word of the massacre and established a worldwide reputation for the Samoans as savages and as Samoa as a place to be avoided. La Perouse sailed north from Australia and disappeared. It is believed the Boussole was shipwrecked at Vanikoro, near Tikopia, in the Santa Cruz Islands, Eastern Melanesia. The Astrolabe eventually returned to France. The mystery of the disappearance of La Perouse was not solved until the 1820's and confirmed as late as 1962 when the wreck was discovered by skindivers. Relics found are now displayed at Vila, New Hebrides.

(Con't. on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bishop, Francis T., Journal (mss.) 1832-1835, U. of Hawaii  
 Gray, J. A. C., American Samoa, Annapolis, c1960  
 Herman, Brother, Marist Brothers, mss., 1965, Library of American Samoa.  
 Kraemer, Augustin, Die Samoa Inseln, Stuttgart, 1902  
 La Perouse, Jean F., Voyage de la Perouse, Paris, 1797  
 Monfat, A., Les Samoa, Paris, 1890  
 Turner George, Samoa, a Hundred Years Ago, London, 1884  
 Valentine, F., Voyages and Adventures of La Perouse, Honolulu, 1969

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

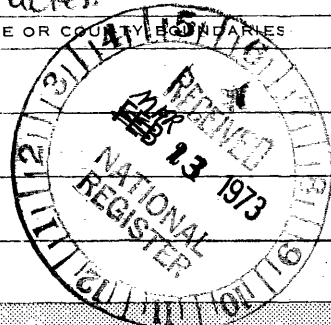
| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |           |         |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---|-----------|---------|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |    | LATITUDE  | LONGITUDE |         |
|  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |    | Degrees   | Minutes   | Seconds |
| NW   | 0' 0" 0"                | 0' 0" 0"                |    | 13°   | 17'       | 42"     |
| NE   | 0' 0" 0"                | 0' 0" 0"                |    | 170°  | 45'       | 30"     |
| SE   | 0' 0" 0"                | 0' 0" 0"                |    |   |           |         |
| SW   | 0' 0" 0"                | 0' 0" 0"                |    |   |           |         |

HIS NO. 177

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: APPROX 5 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Russell A. Apple, Pacific-Hawaii Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Park Service, Hawaii Group DATE: 5/25/71

STREET AND NUMBER:  
677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 512

CITY OR TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: Hawaii 96813 CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Donald F. Gray

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 27 MARCH 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert W. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date APR 13 1973

ATTEST:  
Antony James  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 4/11/73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE            |             |
| American Samoa   |             |
| COUNTY           |             |
| Western District |             |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE        |
|                  | APR 13 1973 |

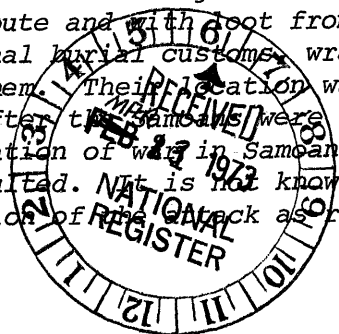
(Number all entries)

On December 11, de Langle, with 60 men in two cutters and two long boats, entered an adjacent bay, Aasu, but the tide was low and only the boats could make the passage to shore through the narrow channel. Water kegs were filled and women made themselves available to the Frenchmen. More and more canoes full of Samoan men kept arriving until an estimated 1,500 Samoans were on shore or close to the boats on the beach. In a scuffle of unknown cause, a Samoan woman was hurt in the eye. De Langle got his men back in the long boats, but restraining hands and low tide slowed the retreat. Stones were thrown by the Samoans. De Langle was hit, fell from the boat into the water and killed. Eleven more, including the physician, were killed before the French party were able to swim the channel or wade over the reef to reach the cutters. Their flight was aided by the Samoan's attention to pillage of the long boats abandoned on the beach. Canoes which approached the cutters were kept at bay by repeated volleys of rifle fire. About 20 wounded Frenchmen were returned to the ships. No bodies were recovered.

In spite of urgings from his officers and crew, La Perouse refrained from retaliation. He could have used cannon on the canoes and the village with great loss of Samoan life. The above is a synthesis of the La Perouse version. It is noted that 12 killed was the European total. There are only 11 names on the monument. One of the wounded may have died after return to his ship.

Christian missionaries stationed in Samoa in the early 1800's added details which explain some of the events. At the time of the anchorage, the island of Tutuila was controlled by the chiefs of Upolu, a larger Samoan island to the West. The Upolu chiefs were at Fagasa Village when La Perouse traded beads. There was some resentment by the Upolu chiefs at the new goods received. One of the Upolu chiefs may have been mistreated aboard the Boussole, or thought himself mistreated. Revenge for this was sought. The mistreated chief may have been injured aboard the ship and died later on shore. Fagasa was under the guns of the ships, and this location was dangerous for action against the Frenchmen. When de Langle and his men entered Aasu Bay they apparently were vulnerable. The Upolu fleet left Fagasa and entered Aasu to look for a pretext. This accounts for the build up of canoes and Samoans at Aasu. The attack came not from the people of Aasu, but from the visiting chiefs and warriors from Upolu.

After the attack and the looting of the long boats, the Upolu fleet departed with the usual tribute and with loot from the boats. The Aasu Samoans, following traditional burial customs, wrapped the French bodies in bark cloth and buried them. Their location was revealed to a Catholic priest from France only after the Samoans were assured that the intent was not exhumation (declaration of war in Samoan tradition) but honor. The monument over the grave resulted. It is not known how many Samoans were killed. This is the Samoan version of the attack as related through several missionary sources.



In 1832, the surgeon of the British ship Recovery wrote of Samoa: "The natives of this group are proverbially noted for the ferocity of their nature, their uncivilized state, for the implacable hatred towards their enemies, and for the subtle and revengeful dispositions evinced toward those who chance to offend them." This was their reputation among European sailors following the La Perouse visit. This reputation served to keep Samoa Samoan and out of European hands through the late 1800's.



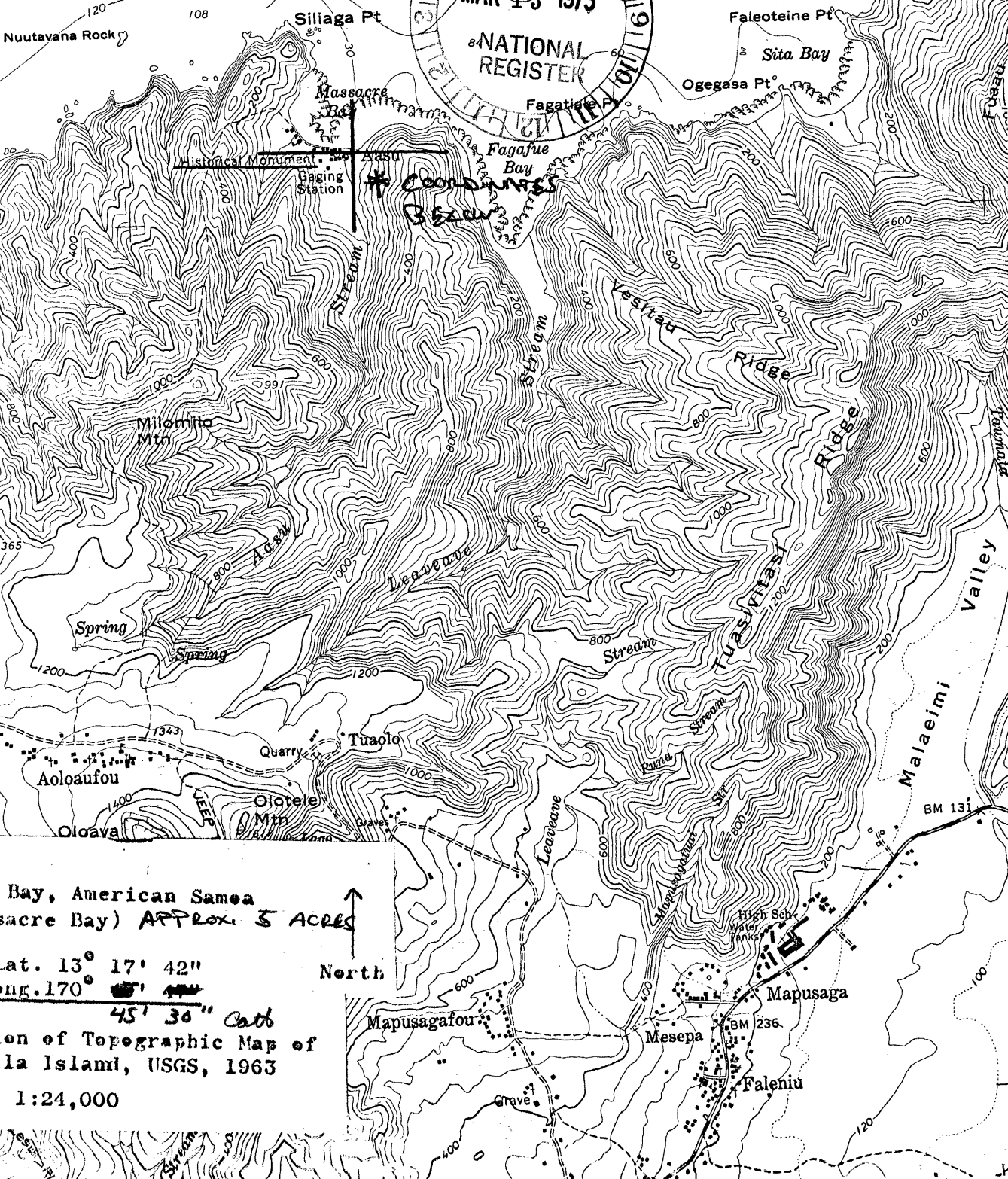
Fagasa Bay →

Nuussina Pt

Cape Lars

Tafaga Cove

Agalua Rock



*\* COORDINATES  
GIVEN*

Aasu Bay, American Samoa  
(Massacre Bay) APPROX. 5 ACRES

\* So. Lat. 13° 17' 42"  
W. Long. 170° 45' 36" *Calc*

Portion of Topographic Map of  
Tutuila Island, USGS, 1963

Scale 1:24,000

North ↑