

United States Exploring Expedition in 1839. Commodore Wilkes, in his narrative of that expedition, states that they contain 1,650 square miles, divided as follows, viz.,—

Savaii	...	...	700	Apolima	...	...	...	7
Upolu	...	...	560	Manu'a	...	...	...	100
Tutuila	...	...	240	Olosenga	...	...	...	24
Manono	...	...	9	Of'u	...	...	...	10

The principal islands, it will be seen, are Savaii, Upolu, and Tutuila. Savaii, which I was unable to visit, is the largest island. The following description of it is quoted from the work mentioned above :—

"Savaii is the most western island of the Samoan group, and is also the largest, being forty miles in length and twenty in breadth. It is not, however, as populous or as important as several of the others. It differs from any of the others in its appearance, for its shore is low, and the ascent thence to the centre is gradual, except where the cones of a few extinct craters are seen. In the middle of the island a peak rises, which is almost continually enveloped in the clouds, and is the highest land in the group. On account of these clouds, angles could not be taken for determining its height accurately, but it certainly exceeds four thousand feet.

"Another marked difference between Savaii and the other large islands is the want of any permanent streams, a circumstance which may be explained, notwithstanding the frequency of rain, by the porous nature of the rock (vesicular lava) of which it is chiefly composed. Water, however, gushes out near the shore in copious springs; and when heavy and continued rains have occurred, streams are formed in the ravines, but these soon disappear after the rains have ceased.

"The coral reef attached to this island is interrupted to the south and west, where the surf beats full upon the rocky shore. There are, in consequence, but few places where boats can land, and only one harbour for ships, that of Mataatua: even this is unsafe from November to February, when the north-westerly gales prevail.

"The soil is fertile, and was composed, in every part of the island that was visited, of decomposed volcanic rock and vegetable mould."

Upolu is ten miles to the eastward of Savaii, and is next in size. It is about forty miles long and thirteen broad. It has a main ridge extending from east to west, broken here and there into sharp peaks and hummocks. From this main ridge a number of smaller ridges and broad gradual slopes run down to a low shore, which is encircled by a coral reef, interrupted here and there by channels which form the entrances to safe and convenient anchorages for small vessels. At Apia the reef extends across a good-sized bay, and forms a safe and commodious harbour for large ships, which is entered through a deep and clear channel formed by a break in the reef.

Between Savaii and Upolu are two small islands; at the south-east end of Tutuila there is the small island of Aunu'u, and sixty miles to the east of this lies Manu'a. The following description of these islands is taken from an account of the Samoan group, published in 1868, by the Rev. Mr. Powell, in the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*:—

"The first island that comes in sight of voyagers arriving from the eastward is Ta'u (Ta-'oo), the largest of the three islands that constitute the group which the Natives call Manu'a (Ma-noo-a). It is about six miles long, four and a half broad, and sixteen in circumference, and contains one hundred square miles.

"About six miles west of Ta'u is the island of Olosenga (O-la-say-nga). This is a very rocky island, three miles long, five hundred yards wide, and about fifteen hundred feet high. It contains twenty-four square miles. It is precipitous on every side,—least so on the north-east, most on the north and south-west. On the latter side, about two hundred feet from the shore, rises up a mural precipice twelve hundred feet high. The principal village is situated, in times of peace, on the strip of land in front of this precipice. In times of war the people live on the mountain.

"About two miles and a half off the eastern point of the island, a volcanic eruption burst out from the deep ocean in September, 1866.

"Of'u (O-foo), the smallest of the three islands included in the Manu'an group, is neither so high nor so precipitous as Olosenga. It is separated from the latter by only a narrow, shallow strait, about a fourth of a mile wide. A double-pointed crag off its eastern extremity, together with the precipitous, craggy nature of Olosenga, give to the neighbourhood a remarkably romantic appearance.

"The population of the Manu'an group is about 1,500.

"Aunu'u.—Sixty miles west of Of'u is the island of Tutuila (Too-too-ee-la). A mile from Tutuila, off its south-east point, is the little island of Aunu'u (Au-noo'oo). This island is about five miles in circumference. Population, 200.

"Manono.—Two miles from the western point of Upolu, and encircled by its reef, is the island of Manono (Ma-no-no). It is nearly of triangular shape, and less than five miles in circumference. It contains nine square miles. It has a mountain a few hundred feet high, from whose summit can be obtained a splendid view of Upolu and Savaii. It is itself 'one entire garden, in looking at which the eye can scarcely tire.' It has a population of about 1,000. This island held a very extensive political supremacy over Upolu till the war of 1847–54, in which she lost supremacy, and was obliged to take her place on a level with those over whom she formerly exercised much despotic power.

"Apolima (A-po-lee-ma) is about two miles from Manono. It is a crater somewhat resembling a horse-shoe, while its depth may well suggest the idea of the hand with the fingers contracted, which is the meaning of the name. Its highest part is 472 feet above the sea. The population is about 200."

Tutuila, the easternmost and smallest of the three principal islands, is thirty-six miles distant from Upolu. It is seventeen miles long, and its greatest width is five miles. The total Native population of Tutuila is about 4,000. The land is generally mountainous, with steep, sharp-edged ridges, rising here and there into lofty peaks, the highest of which (that of Matafae) is 2,327 feet above the sea, and forms a prominent landmark for the excellent harbour of Pango Pango. As the existence of this harbour so greatly enhances the importance of the Navigators Islands, and as a description of it by a nautical man will be more valuable than any account of it I could give, I quote the following from a