

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**GERMAN EMBASSY IN LONDON**

**Records relating to Samoa, 1886-1906**

**Reels M794-801**

**Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes  
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Federal Republic of Germany**

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**Filmed: 1970**

## HISTORICAL NOTE

From the mid nineteenth century onwards, Samoa was the centre of German interests in the Pacific. The Hamburg firm of J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn established a trading base in Samoa in 1857 and ten years later laid out its first copra plantation. By 1879 its cotton and copra plantations covered 4337 acres and employed 1210 labourers, mostly recruited in the New Hebrides and Gilbert Islands. The firm went bankrupt in that year and its interests were taken over by the Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln zu Hamburg (DHPG). By 1877 Germans controlled 87% of the Samoan export trade.

In 1878-79 Germany, Britain and the United States all secured treaties with the Fijian Government led by Malieota Laupera. Continued internal chaos and rivalries came to a head in 1888 with a Fijian rising led by a chief Mata'afa and the ambush of a German naval landing party. The German consul responded by annexing Samoa. Aware of American concerns, Bismarck invited British and American delegates to attend meetings in Berlin and they worked out a system of tripartite control. The tridominium lasted ten years, but failed to bring order to Samoa. In 1893-94 there was civil war and the authorities exiled Mata'afa to the Marshall Islands. He returned in 1899 and his forces gained control of the islands, but they alienated British and American officials. An international commission recommended rule by one power and this was achieved by the partition treaties of November – December 1899. The United States gained control of Tutuila in eastern Samoa, while Upolu, Savai'i and the other western islands became German possessions. Britain acquired exclusive rights in Tonga.

Wilhelm Solf was appointed the first governor of German Samoa in 1900. He remained in the post until 1911.

The Imperial Colonial Department (Reichskolonialamt) was created in 1907. Colonial administration had previously been a responsibility of the Colonial Department (Kolonialabteilung), which was set up within German Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) in 1890. The heads of the Kolonialabteilung were:

Friedrich R. Krauel (1890)

Paul Kayser (1890-96)

Oswald von Richthofen (1896-1898)

Gerhard von Buchka (1898-1900)

Oscar W. Stübel (1900-5)

Ernst II, Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg (1905-6)

Bernhard Dernburg (1906-7)

The German ambassadors in London during these years were Paul von Hatzfeldt (1885-1901) and Paul Wolff Metternich (1901-12).

## GERMAN EMBASSY IN LONDON

### Records relating to Samoa

The records filmed consist mainly of despatches relating to Samoa sent between the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin and the German Embassy in London between 1886 and 1906. The despatches sent to the Ambassador in London frequently contain copies of documents from other sources, such as reports of the German consul in Samoa and correspondence with the United States Government. There are also copies of the German Weissbücher and British 'Blue Books' on Samoa. In addition, there is correspondence between the German Embassy and the British Foreign Office.

The records are bound in chronological order in 18 volumes, with volumes 12-17 divided into two parts. Volume 2, the first volume filmed, is numbered, but no numbers appear on volumes 3-11. Within each volume, the documents appear on the film in reverse order, presumably because they were bound that way. This needs to be kept in mind when there are two parts of a volume, or when a volume extends over two reels. For instance, the documents in volume 17, part 2, cover an earlier chronological period than those in volume 17, part 1.

The early volumes contain the title 'Kaiserliche Deutsche Botschaft: Akten betr. Samoa'.

#### Reel M794

Voume 2	1 Nov. 1886 – 25 June 1887	Packet 199/2
Volume [3]	28 June 1887 – 28 Dec. 1887	Packet 200

#### Reel M795

Volume [3]	28 June 1887 – 28 Dec. 1887	Packet 200
Volume [4]	Dec. 1887 – Jan. 1889	Packet 200
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#### Reel M796

Volume [5]	15 Feb. 1889 – 12 Dec. 1889	Packet 201
Volume [6]	11 Jan. 1890 – 1 May 1891	Packet 201
Volume [7]	1 Jan. 1892 – 29 Dec. 1892	Packet 202

## Reel M797

Volume [7]		1 Jan. 1892 – 29 Dec. 1892	Packet 202
Volume [8]		Jan. – Sept. 1893	Packet 202
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Volume [10]		1 May 1894 – 30 Sept. 1894	Packet 203

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Volume [10]		1 May 1894 – 30 Sept. 1894	Packet 203
Volume [11]		1 Oct. 1894 – Dec. 1895	Part 203
Volume 12	Pts 1-2	Jan. 1896 – Sept. 1898	Packet 204
Volume 13	Part 1	1 Oct. 1898 – March 1899	Packet 204

## Reel M799

Volume 13	Parts 1-2	1 Oct. 1898 – March 1899	Packet 204
Volume 14	Parts 1-2	1 April 1899 – June 1899	Packet 205
Volume 15	Part 1	1 July 1899 – 28 Oct. 1899	Packet 205

## Reel M800

Volume 15	Parts 1-2	1 July 1899 – 28 Oct. 1899	Packet 205
Volume 16	Parts 1-2	Sept. – Nov. 1899	Packet 206
Volume 17	Part 1	1 Nov. 1899 – 31 Dec. 1900	Packet 206

## Reel M801

Volume 17	Parts 1-2	1 Nov. 1899 – 31 Dec. 1900	Packet 206
Volume 18		1 Jan. 1901 – Dec. 1904	Packet 207
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