

My Samoan Chief

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newsletterOutlookNew Outlook1891-1894: Second, third, and fourth years at Vailima, The end
Fay Calkins Fay G. Calkins Fay Alailima Fay Alailima Fay G. CALKINS John Bettridge Stair
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Stevenson

this is an engaging autobiographical account of a young american woman s life in her samoan husband s native home fay calkins a descendant of puritan settlers met vai ala ilima a descendant of samoan chiefs while working on her doctoral dissertation in the library of congress after an unconventional courtship and a typical american wedding they set out for western samoa where fay was to find a way of life totally new and charming if at times frustrating and confusing soon after her arrival in the islands the bride of a few months found herself with a family of seven boys in a wide range of ages sent by relatives to live with the new couple she was stymied by the economics of trying to support numerous guests relatives and a growing family and still contribute to the lavish feasts that were given on any pretext feasts where the guests brought baskets in which to take home as much of the largesse as they could carry fay tried to introduce american institutions a credit union a co op a work schedule and hourly wages on the banana plantation begun by her and her husband in each instance she quickly learned that samoans were unwilling or unable to grasp her western ideas of input equaling output of personal property or of payment received for work done despite these frustrations and disappointments however life among the people of her samoan chief was for fay happy and productive

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