



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."*

# Notes from the Field



**Institute for Intercultural Studies**

Spring 2002

## ***Beyond the Mead Centennial: What's Next?***

**by Mary Catherine Bateson**

Since 1996 the resources of the Institute for Intercultural Studies have been devoted to preparation for the Margaret Mead centennial in 2001. We have tried to emphasize that the goal of this effort was not to celebrate an individual from the past but to make ideas associated with Mead and with anthropology available for the future. This distinction was not always easy to affirm and actual centennial programs went in whatever direction interested the sponsors. Overall, however, we saw the centennial as a vehicle for the more general purposes of the Institute. We hoped to invite others to look through Mead's eyes at the value of the world's many cultures and to share her vision of enhanced communication without the loss of distinctiveness, and we hoped to strengthen the public understanding of anthropological research and interdisciplinary cooperation.

According to its charter, the Institute for Intercultural Studies was founded "to stimulate or conduct scholarly or scientific research and writing dealing with the behavior, customs, psychology and social organization of the various peoples and nations of the world, with special attention to those peoples and those aspects of their life which are most likely to affect intercultural and international relations; to further the diffusion of knowledge of such research; to furnish scholarships and fellowships, and to extend any other aid, financial or otherwise, to those engaged in such research or writing; to publish and to encourage the publication of books, pamphlets, periodicals and other writings

dealing with such research; to sponsor the creation and display or dissemination of works of art or performance that promote international and intercultural relations and that advance understanding of anthropology's contribution; to receive funds from donors for the promotion of the above enumerated aims; and to do all things incidental or necessary to achieve the foregoing purposes."

Some centennial programs will continue to unfold. While the reissuing of Mead's writings is almost complete, a number of conferences about Mead's ideas will be published in their entirety and books continue to appear. One effect of the centennial has been to bring scholars working on different aspects of the Mead legacy into communication with each other: ethnographers with scholars of gender, those concerned with the war against terrorism with students of World War II. On March 22 a number of such scholars gathered at their own expense at the Library of Congress, where the Mead collection is now essentially complete and accessible, for a day long exploration of the ways in which they have used the collection's resources, ranging from a journal kept by Mead's mother during her infancy to the project planned by Mead with photographer Ken Heyman shortly before her death. Furthermore, the intensive review of Mead's career at the American Anthropological Association and in other places have made a new generation aware of her breadth.

The Institute will continue its concern with sustaining the ethnographic tradition of its founder, but the events of 2001 have made us sharply aware of the need to seek intercultural understanding through research and to promote its dissemination through a variety of media, both domestically and internationally. We are immensely grateful to those who have supported the Institute during the Mead centennial and hope our many friends will stay with us.



## ***Web News: Three online presentations from the Library of Congress***

**"The Interplay of Cultures: Whither the US in the World?"** - the December 3-4, 2001, Library of Congress Mead Centennial symposium, is online as a cybercast. Visit [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) and click on the "The Library Today," click on "Cybercasts from the Library;" and click on "The Interplay of Cultures: Margaret Mead Symposium." (Direct URL is [www.loc.gov/loc/video/mead/](http://www.loc.gov/loc/video/mead/))

**"Margaret Mead: Human Nature and the Power of Culture,"** the Mead Centennial exhibit at the Library of Congress, ended May 30, 2002. It will remain available online. Visit [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) and click on "Exhibitions: An Online Gallery."

**"Archival Gold,"** a March 22, 2002, Library of Congress symposium on the uses of the Mead archive, will be available in cybercast soon!

## In the Field: Changing Images of Samoa

Margaret Mead went to Samoa in 1925 to do her first field work on the island of Ta'u, one of the Manua group in American Samoa. This was the only field trip on which Mead was photographer, using the "box



brownie" camera that had come into fashion. Mead wrote up this field trip in her 1928 best-seller, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which included her photos, used sparingly for illustration.

Twelve of Mead's photos were published in the first edition of *Coming of Age*, but omitted in subsequent editions and completely forgotten when the 2000 reissue was planned — it was based on later editions because of Mead's cumulative prefaces. Few of the classic's many thousand readers have seen these photographs, brought forward in recent presentations by Sharon Tiffany, comparing Mead's choice of images with popular contemporary ideas about Samoa.

The village of Ta'u was restudied in 1953-54 by Lowell Holmes, now professor emeritus at the University of Kansas, Wichita. Holmes has returned to Samoa repeatedly since then as it has lost the protective isolation that made Mead choose it and that made it contrast sharply with the areas of Western Samoa where



Derek Freeman did his main work. In *Quest for the Real Samoa: The Mead/Freeman Controversy & Beyond*, which appeared four years after Freeman's attack on Mead, Holmes presented his findings as the only other anthropologist who had done extended work on that island. The book included a long list of detailed corrections, many concerning terminology, but Holmes reports that "the validity of her Samoan research is remarkably high." (P.103) Holmes has returned to Samoa half a dozen times and published an additional book on Ta'u, *Samoan Village, Then and Now* with Ellen R. Holmes. In his remarks on how Ta'u has changed through time, he emphasizes the effects of technology and the choices opened up by transportation.

### Mead Centennial Highlights

**1996** IIS announces plans to commemorate Mead's Centenary in 2001

**1997** Mead Centennial Working Group convenes in Fairfax VA

**1998** Margaret Mead postage stamp issued by USPS as part of "Celebrate the Century" series

— Mead Centennial web site on line at [www.mead2001.org](http://www.mead2001.org)

**1999 March:** Symposium: "Mead and the Creation of the Educated Person," Vassar College

**September:** First Mead2001 Award

to "Educate the Children" of Nepal

**2000** Mattel Commemorative Miniature 1920s Postal Van with Mead stamp image issued

**July:** Second Mead2001 Award to Americans for Indian Opportunity's Ambassador Program

**October:** Exhibit: "Unforgettable Women," including Mead, opens at Women's Museum in Dallas

— Tribute to Mead's efforts for global health: Nursing Academic International Congress, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

**2001 February:** Special session:

"Reflections on Pacific Ethnography in the Mead Centennial," Social Anthropology of Oceania (ASOA)

**March:** Reopening of Mead's Hall of Pacific Peoples at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, NY

— "Change the World" Weekend, honoring Mead's tradition, University of Rochester

— Special session, "In the Spirit of Margaret Mead," Israel Anthropological Association

— Third Mead2001 Award to City at Peace, Washington DC

**April:** Symposium: "Continuing Controversies: Barnard College looks at Mead's legacy"

**September:** Panel on Mead, University of Verona, Italy

— Panel on Mead, European Association of Body Therapists, Egmont, The Netherlands

**October:** Symposia: "Margaret Mead: Her Life as a Woman in Science" and "Anthropology and its Multiple Publics;" and photographic exhibit, "Margaret Mead and New York City" at New York Academy of Sciences





## Ta'u Then and Now

by Lowell D. Holmes and  
Ellen R. Holmes

If Margaret Mead could return to the island of Ta'u today, the changes would be startling, beginning with the mode of transportation. In earlier days, one arrived at Ta'u aboard an infrequently scheduled inter-island schooner and then was rowed ashore in a long boat over a turbulent reef.

Today, there is a new, safe concrete landing strip in Fitiuta village. Ta'u island residents and visitors are now dependent on air transportation; only an occasional government boat brings in supplies and

takes passengers if necessary. During Mead's research on the island, the 8-mile trip between Fitiuta and Ta'u Village was a long walk over the mountain. Today a modern road connects the villages, and cars and other motor vehicles have been in use on the island for over 25 years.

When Mead was in Ta'u village, every dwelling was a traditional *fale*, and when Holmes worked there in 1954, all but six out of 89 houses were of traditional style and materials. None remain. As the result of devastating hurricanes in 1966, 1987 and 1990, the people have been encouraged to construct houses of more durable materials, primarily poured concrete or concrete blocks. All have electricity, most households have access to telephone service, and some have television.

Today, bananas, breadfruit, coconuts, fish, pork and chicken are staple foods in the Samoan diet, supplemented by a variety of imported American foods which are available.

Clothing styles are a mixture of traditional and American: the lavalava (wraparound) is ubiquitous, but t-shirts, athletic shoes, sweatshirts and pants (in spite of the climate), shorts, and jeans are also in demand.

Census data indicate that while the population of American Samoa has increased from 20,051 in 1960 to 57,291 in 2000, the population of Manu'a islands

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— Centennial events beginning with panel: "The Public Intellectual in American life," George Mason University, Fairfax VA

**October:** Inauguration of Margaret Mead Behavioral Sciences Building, University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg, PA

**October-November:** Mead's early films on Bali, Jakarta International Film Festival, Indonesia

**October-November:** 25th Anniversary Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY

**October-March '02:** Mead lecture series: Robert Levine, "Toward an Anthropology of Childhood;" Sergei Arutiunov, "Anthropology and International Studies;" Raymond McDermott, "Margaret Mead on Learning;" Mary Catherine Bateson, "Participant Observer: Margaret Mead and Culture in Transition," Brown University, Providence, RI

**November-December:** Four half-day sessions on "The Legacy of Margaret Mead," AAA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

**November-January '02:** Exhibit:

"Margaret Mead: Anthropological and Cultural Reflections," Binghamton University Art Museum at SUNY

**November-May '02:** Exhibit: "Margaret Mead: Human Nature and the Power of Culture," Library of Congress, Washington, DC

**December:** Symposium: "The Interplay of Cultures," at the Library of Congress; co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution

— WAMU radio, Diane Rehm special: "Margaret Mead: To Cherish the Life of the World"

— "Margaret Mead Spirit Week" celebration, Margaret Mead Middle School, Sammamish, WA

— Commemoration of Mead's life read into the Congressional Record by Senator Clinton (D-NY)

**December 16, 2001:**  
Happy 100th birthday,  
Margaret Mead!

**2002 March:** Final Mead2001 Award given to Sambhavna Clinic of Bhopal, India

**2002 and beyond:**  
Mead's legacy continues...

## Bhopal People's Health & Documentation Clinic (Sambhavna Clinic) wins Final Mead2001 Award



The  
**MEAD2001**  
Awards

The winner of the Spring 2002 Mead2001 Award -- the final such award to be given in conjunction with the Mead2001 Centennial celebration -- is the Bhopal People's Health and Documentation Clinic, also known as "Sambhavna Clinic." The Mead2001 Awards have honored organizations that reflect Mead's broad sense of the relevance of anthropology to social action.



This free clinic, opened in September, 1996, is run by doctors, scientists, social workers, researchers and volunteers who combine alternative therapies with Western medicine to treat people who are still suffering from the effects of the Union Carbide gas leak of December 2-3, 1984, that killed 16,000 people in Bhopal.

Sathyu Sarangi, an engineer turned activist, originally came to Bhopal the day after the disaster. He immediately got involved with relief efforts. Recognizing that the need for sustained care was not being met after public attention to the disaster ebbed, he helped found the Sambhavna Trust (in 1995), and the clinic. He currently serves as Sambhavna's managing trustee.



Sarangi

### Ta'u... Then and Now

(Continued from Page 3)

(Ta'u, Ofu and Olosega) has been declining from a high of 2,983 in 1950 to 1,378 in 2000. Ta'u village had 700 residents in 1954; in 2000, there were only 380, and average household size was 5 people, considerably smaller than in earlier years. This decline is primarily due to the lack of economic development in this small, isolated part of the territory. Many young people leave Ta'u after high school to seek better opportunities on the main island of Tutuila, or in Hawaii or mainland U.S.

Today, 79% of the adult population of Ta'u have completed high school or a higher level of education, with another 11.8% who have at least a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education. Although Samoan is the language of choice at home, only 2% of those age 5 or over do not speak English.

Unlike Hawaii, Samoan land rights have been preserved, and except for a small percentage of government land, families still control their traditional land. Extended family households are common; and the role of matai (chief), who is responsible for family welfare and its representative in the village council, is still valued. Ceremonial events continue to be associated with display of oratorical skills, group dancing, and elaborate gift exchanges.

The work of Sambhavna's community health workers is focused on a total population of over ten thousand people in five severely affected communities, all of whom are eligible for free medical care at the clinic.

Clinic workers see as many as 110 people a day. The Sambhavna approach emphasizes treatments based on Ayurveda (a system of indigenous, herbal-centered Indian medicine) and yoga. Sambhavna also strives to involve individuals and communities in the improvement of health and health care; to encourage participatory monitoring and research methods; and to pioneer community-centered health care innovations.

Patients practice yoga on a spacious lean-to on a terrace with walls decorated with paintings by local children. The first floor of the clinic has a room for Ayurvedic massage and a library where information, documents and articles related to the gas leak accident are readily available to the survivors. There are three cubicles for doctors, a computer room, a pathology laboratory and a facility for regular cervical screening, pap smears, and treatment of cervical cancer. Sambhavna is the only facility in the city to conduct regular pap smears.



Yoga at the Clinic

Sambhavna participants work on promoting harmony between Hindu and Muslim communities, making Union Carbide and the Indian government accountable for continuing environmental damage, and inventing and promoting ways to empower communities.

Sambhavna's outreach spans the globe. The clinic, which does not accept any money from corporations, has received grants and donations from thousands of people around the world.



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**For more on this and other Mead2001 Award winners,  
visit [www.mead2001.org](http://www.mead2001.org)**

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We welcome your comments and suggestions! Send your thoughts to the above address, or e-mail us at [info@mead2001.org](mailto:info@mead2001.org). This edition prepared by W. Christensen.

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