

The Hanelts' transit and visit to Samoa and Tonga were unusually wet ("Remembering that month of September 1972, all I can think of is rain.") and hastened their departure for drier horizons.

From the north of Tonga, most yachts head westward to Fiji, but not *SKYLARK*. Nuku'alofa, on the southernmost Tongan island of Tongatapu, was another of those South Sea names which had been calling me all those years, so we worked our way through the Tongan Vava'u Group, past Tofua Island, where Fletcher Christian set Captain Bligh adrift in a *BOUNTY* longboat. The last port we made in the Vava'u Group was the little village of Matamaki on the island of Nuapapu. The population turned out to be 20 adults, 52 children,

children in the village were there. All the boys went with Jim Elliot (a good friend from Long Beach, California, who joined us in Papeete) Peter, and me. All the girls went with Kristi.

"They want to show us the school," said Kristi, after a long gesticulating conversation. We walked along the beach, picking up shells, and headed up the hill to the one-room school. After meeting the teacher and seeing the kids' work, we toured the village and met the parents. We were invited to go lobster fishing the next morning and, on the way back to *SKYLARK* that afternoon, Robby challenged Peter to an outrigger canoe race. Although they meant to race in a straight line, outrigger canoes, to the uninitiated, are difficult to steer and the course was quite a zigzag.

In addition to Tahiti and Moorea, SKYLARK also made callings at the Marquesas, the Tuamotus and all of the Society Islands during a three-month stay in French Polynesia.

Ashot (Photo 5) of Kristi steering *SKYLARK* through the reef protecting Robinson's Cove at Papetoai Bay, Moorea. It is late afternoon and we are departing on an overnight sail to the Society Island of Huahine . . .

On August 10, 1972, almost exactly the day on which our visas expired, we took on a full load of fuel and supplies at the tropical village of Uteroa, Raiatea, then slipped our lines and headed down the lagoon to Pai Pai Passe, where we took departure for Pago Pago, American Samoa, 1134 miles to the west . . .

We were in Pago Pago for three weeks and endured three storms while there. Unfortunately, the harbor is polluted due to two big fish canneries and, combined with inclement weather, we did not find Pago Pago the image of paradise conjured by its romantic name. Still, we did meet wonderful people and established a friendship with crews of several yachts whom we would meet again and again in the ensuing months and miles. My brother, Peter, on a three-month holiday, was able to meet us in Pago Pago so that, as soon as he was aboard, and the stormy weather had stopped, we departed for the Kingdom of Tonga, 340 miles to the south.

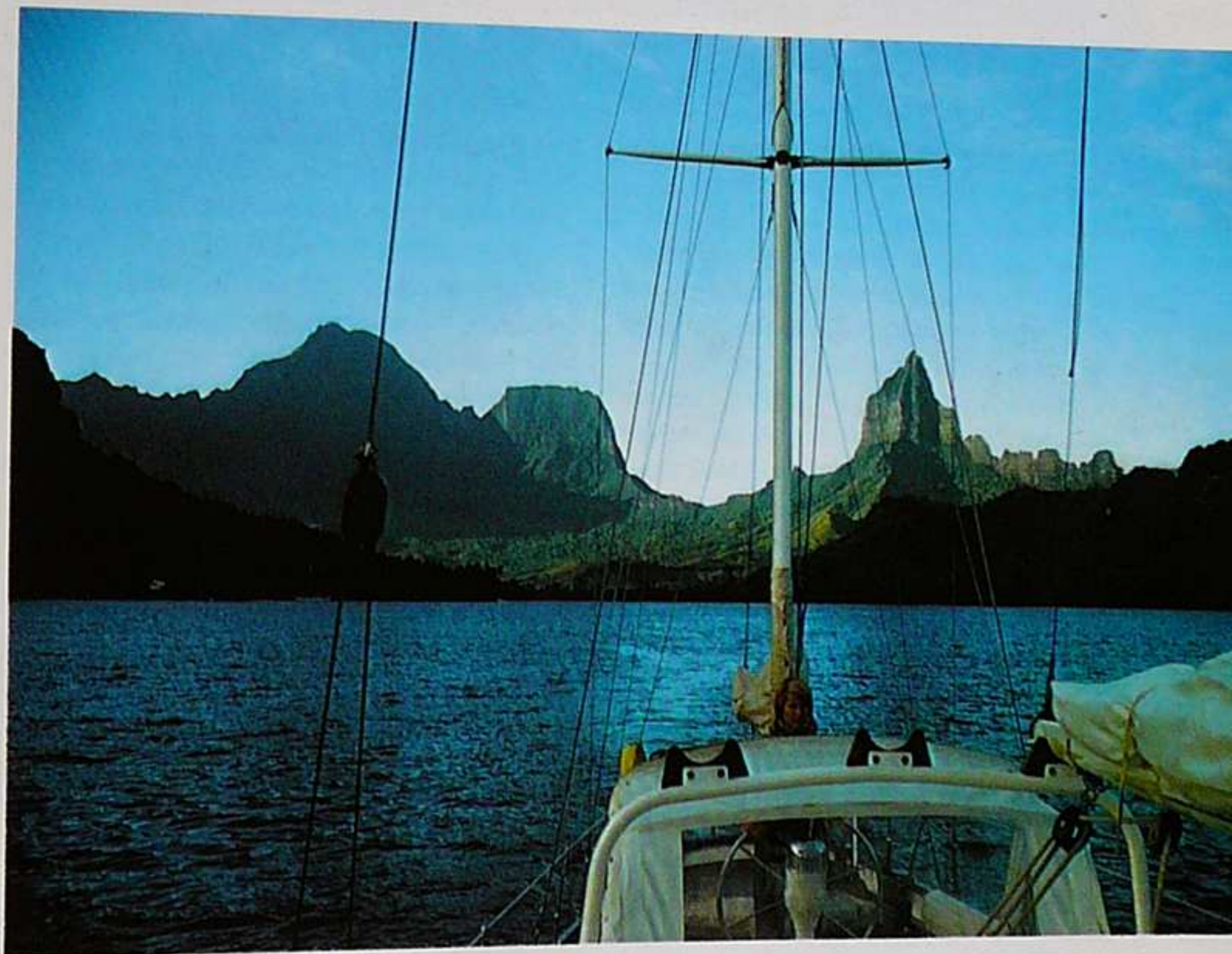


PHOTO 5

20 horses, 130 pigs, 252 chickens and 15 dogs. And they all came down to greet us! We anchored just off the small village of thatched huts and soon *SKYLARK* was surrounded by outrigger canoes full of children.

We had candy for the youngsters and enjoyed visiting. We could see quite a crowd on the shore, too.

"I guess they want us to come in," said Kristi.

"Well," I said, "let's not keep them waiting."

We put our dinghy in the water and were convoyed ashore by a dozen canoes. School must have been let out for our arrival as it seemed like all 52

"Look out where you're going!" yelled Peter as Robby swerved out of control in front of him. Peter's crew-member was bailing madly as each stroke of the paddle brought quarts of water aboard.

"I am looking where I'm going," gasped Rob, "only the boat won't go that way!" His crew members, three of them, giggled with delight.