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SIDE A

INT It's February 28, 1981, this is Ken Baldrige, I'm on the Hilo Campus at the University of Hawaii, talking with Abraham Makaio, a resident of Hilo, about his experiences in the LDS [Latter-day Saint] Church.

Okay, first of all, let's get some background information, which you might be able to tell me just--where you were born, when you were born, some of those family details.

AM Surely. I was born in Kona, 1909, September 22, to be exact, which approximately makes me seventy-two years before the year is out. I was-- after three years old, we left Kona and gone to Honolulu and after a few years there, we came back to Hilo. I was born a member in the Church you might say my parents were baptized in 1913 and I was baptized in 1918, March 17, 1918. A sad part about my life was that my parents separated and I had to wait for the court decision. In the meantime, I was left in an orphanage, Catholic orphanage, Father Louis Boys' home in Hilo. And I remember it clearly, because the war, the first World War, ended November 11, 1918 and I remember being at the school and there was quite a commotion, the town was lighted up, fireworks was going on and effigy of the Kaiser was being paraded and it's something you cannot forget too easily.

That was in 1918. Then the court awarded me to my father and he took me to his uncle on Oahu, Honolulu, to live with my uncle. Being about nine years old, I thought I should go to school, so I went to St. Louis College, being on the same street, I was on Kukui Street and St. Louis College was on River Street, and Kukui Street, right on the corner there. I asked the minister who was in charge, a priest I should say, and he--the first question he asked me, "What religious denomination do you belong?" I said, "I'm a Mormon." And he says, "I'm sorry, but we only accept Catholics here." Well, that was that, I was concerned.

While living in Honolulu, I never--you know, few nights I would go home and stay with my grandfather. I would sleep in the lumber yard with two other fellows and we would fight milk for breakfast, and bread that the delivery car would come by in the stores and leave their order of bread for the day, and we would snatch off a loaf or two, and a couple of quarts of milk, when the milk man deliver his milk. And this is the life I was living, and my father got wind of it, he decided to bring me to Hilo, to the Hilo Boarding school. By that time, I was age eleven, this is in 1920. I remember going to the first grade and I stayed there until I was advanced to the fifth grade. Then the authorities at the boarding school, Hilo Boarding School, said, "You better come back to boarding school for your academic work." Previously I was going to a public school, Hilo Union School. They felt that the lessons at the Hilo Boarding School was too far advanced academically. In fact, I would say when you're in the third grade, probably you should be taking fifth grade lessons in a boarding school there. It was a industrial school, they had auto mechanics, electrical, carpentry, wood-turning, blacksmithing, and that was quite a school and I enjoyed for the five years that I was there.

In April 5, 1925, I ran away from school. I was now sixteen years old, and I worked on the ship, on the *Haleakala*, which was making runs from Honolulu to Kauai, Mahukona, Lahaina, and would stop in Honolulu and vice versa. And I spent about nine months with the *Haleakala*. And I had an opportunity to be able to pilot the boat on the steering wheel as the bow watchman. The opportunity was given me to read the compass and follow the compass with direction of course, by my superiors, on operating this ship. I would know the lights, blinking different lights that would come on, different areas, Maukonalai, the Kauai, I mean Maui, lights and the Lanai lights and even the Molokai lights, traveling at night and vice versa coming back to Hilo. I would be able to know what lights are on and etcetra.

Now, after leaving boarding school, I found out that the work was still heavy for me, a sugar bag weighed a hundred and twenty-five pounds and a salt peter bag weighed 250 pounds and here, about five feet two, five feet three, I weigh only about a hundred pounds. And my dad felt sorry for me and he asked me what I should--want to go back to school. And I asked him, "Where should I go, if I wanted to go back to school." He said, "Well, you go out and live with your aunt out at Papaikou." Which was six miles off of Hilo. And that I mulled over for a while and decided, "Yes, I think I should do that. But before going out there, can I be working with you?" On the ship that he was working, and that was the *MS Kailua*, that only--it was a motor ship, MS is just what it says, M for motor and S for ship--*Motor Ship Kailua*. That only went around the island of Hawaii. Leaving here Tuesday evenings and arriving back at Saturday morning. So we would spend four days circling the island. We would bring lumber, feed, other necessities that the people out in Mahukona and Kohala may need, and people who would want the same materials over in Kona, at Kailua we would dock, Napo'opo'o and we went come to Ho'okena and to the last plantation on the south of Hawaii is Honuapo, the last before--we'd load sugar there, go and unload all our freight and at our last depot, we would pick sugar up and come back to Hilo and go alongside one of the Matson freighters or Matson boats and pick the sugar right off our boat and load it into the Matson ship for mainland shipment. That's the CH, California-Hawaii sugar people.

After a while, then thought of going back to school. And my aunt was agreeable in me staying with her and attending the Kaniaole School. The amazing thing was, when I was a little boy, my first experience in school was at this very school. I started there as a first grader, but since the separation of my parents, for a couple years or three years or so, I didn't go to school. So that's what we thought it mean my education, eleven years old in the first grade. Nevertheless, the principal there was V.A. Carvalho, and he asked me, "Say son, how old are you?" I said, "Oh I'm sixteen, going to seventeen." "What grade were you when you left school?" "Oh, in the fifth grade." And his remark was, "You an old man, I cannot put you with those twelve year old kids in the fifth grade." But I insisted on going to school. I said, "Gee, you know, I want to go to school." And he says, "The best thing we can do for you son, is to give you a test, a standardized test." That's what they call it at that time. "And whatever grade you make, that's the grade we put you in." So I took the test two weeks before Christmas in 1926, and a week later, I came back to find what results I made. And he was surprised, he was amazed because he says, "You

know, I'm amazed with the knowledge you have. By the way, where did you pick your education, outside of leaving the boarding school fifth grade?" I said, "Well, I worked on a ship and you can learn a lot of things."

Okay, in January, I started in the eighth grade. In June I graduated, six months later I graduated as Salutarian of my class, which is second highest, and I have to give a speech at graduation, and the topic of my speech was, "Sugar, the Lifeblood of Hawaii." But not anymore, sugar is not the lifeblood of Hawaii from my last few year's experience, it's tourism. But I was enlightened that a few days ago, I read, I heard over TV where the president of the HSPA made an announcement that the sugar is coming back to life, and they were very joyous about it. He said that in the last five years that the sugar industry has picked up so it's a very good prospect for the islanders, you might say.

INT That's a great encouragement.

AM It is, it is such a great encouragement. Then I had to--after I graduated from the eighth grade, I came to a junior high school in Hilo. But to come to Hilo, I have to commute on the train. The train would come to our place by eight o'clock in the morning, and school would start at eight thirty. So by the time I got to Hilo, I would have enough time to reach school, to enroll, to start classes on the required time. And the train will not leave Hilo until three, or three thirty and school gets through at two o'clock. I picked up typing for my last half hour, from two to two-thirty. And that's the program. And after one month, not even one month, I was asked by the school football coach, U.S. AhFook, Un Soy AhFook, he asked me, "How about turning out for football?" And I mentioned the fact that, "How am I going to get home following football practices?" He said, "Gee, we'll look for a fellow who commutes from your area, and get him pick you up after football practice, take you home everyday." On that stipulation, I agreed and we finally got a fellow by the name of Nicoba, who lived out, I'd say, another four or five miles up the road from where I live. He lived in Pepekeo, and I lived in Kalaua and he had to pass by my residence and that would be easy. In fact, he dropped me, and I'd catch the train every morning, come to school.

After three--after the football season, I began to wonder if I was doing the right thing. In fact, before the football season, after one month of this kind of experience, I thought, "Gee, this is not for me, I'm going to live in Hilo, where I don't have to be worrying about commuting etcetera. So I went back to the boarding school, Hilo Boarding School, and I found out that the school was defunct after I left. Then it made me realize why they did not look for me after I ran away from school in 1925. Because the school was going to close in June, you know. So the school authorities said, "Oh, if that rascal want to go, let him go." So they didn't bother.

INT Now, during this time, were you back with your father by this time?

AM Yes, we were living with my aunt and he used to--he was still working on the ship and I was attending school.

INT Did you have any association with the Church during this time. . . .

AM Yes, I did, because I was baptized a stone's throw from where the church was, and where I was living. I'd say I was living about five minutes walk from the church, and where I was baptized was in a river below the church, which was a stone's throw.

INT Tell me about your baptism.

AM Well, the baptism, I was baptized by Elder Matson and confirmed a member by Elder John Haia Jr.. Really think this thinking, just yesterday or two days ago, I met one of his nephews, John Haia's nephew, that came as a tourist, and I had the privilege of accomadating these people to a Chinese dinner. Seventeen people were there, this was the Kenneth Gardner family, all in-laws and brothers and sisters were involved in this seventeen. With my wife and I, there were nineteen of us. The, Wilma Gardner wrote, said if we could be kind enough to give them a Hawaiian greeting down at the airport, and make arrangement for their lunch and that's how I met my confirmer's nephew.

Anyway, coming back to my schooling, in fact, at that time when I was baptized, I'm sure that I was ordained a deacon and probably a teacher. But I cannot get ahold of any of these records, you know, so I was, as a said earlier, that I was born in the Church, and my parents were converted, however, in 1913, when they got married, I believe, in 1908. And a few years after that, they were converted in Hilo.

Now, going back to my education, I boarded at the Hilo Boarding School, and to pay off my boarding and lodging, I milked cows, there were twenty-six cows, Holstein cows, with another fellow, that was attending the Hilo High School. He was a senior when I made his acquaintance, by the name of Albert Halea. I found out by mistake that he was also a--his family are members of the Church from Waimea. But I later found out that he was a staunch member of the highly church, probably because the affiliations with other people there, he was a musician and the highly people, highly church members were known for their musical talents. And I think that's how he got involved. But I stayed there, going to the intermediate school, and then finally went up to the sophomore.

The sad part about it was, that my sophomore year, I stayed up to November, and I left school, in 1928. And I worked on the docks, on the docks, and on the lumberyards and for contracting companies until 1929, when I played football for the Lincoln Wreckers athletic club, barefoot league football. And that was quite an affair, we won the championship for six years in a row, in this barefoot league football. Barefoot league--the limit is a hundred and fifty pounds. They limit you up to five pounds, if you hit hundred fifty-five pounds, its okay, but you should be at a hundred and fifty pounds, you know, and there's no limit, weight limit below a hundred and fifty-five pounds. So anyone can play the game if he's strong enough to take the beating and all the pushing around. And as I mentioned, we were champions for six years and I also played basketball for the Lincoln Wreckers.

Now, during my acquaintance with the coach and the manager, which were two Japanese fellows, the coach was Shigeto "Froggy" Yoneda and the

manager, basketball manager, was Frank Takeshiishi. Right now he's a world tour promoter on Ohau and he conducts tours around the world. And Yoneda is retired and my experiences with these gentlemen have paid off, because in six months time, they recommended, they asked me, if I wanted a job, which I was sorely in need of a job, and they told me to appear, dressed up, for an interview at the Hilo Electric Light Company. I did that, and when I went for the interview, the assistant manager was there, by the name of Baranger, William Baranger. The first thing he asked me, "Abe, do you play music?" And I couldn't play music to save my soul. I told him, "I can sing." He said, "Well, we wanted a musician." You know, and that discouraged me for a while, but after further questioning and things, he says, "Okay, will you appear Monday morning as a meter man, meter reader, with starting salary of forty-five dollars." And this was in 1929. Forty-five dollars, okay I accepted it, I wasn't going to question anything. But the surprising part, after a couple of months I was raised, the NRA came in 1930 or 1931 someplace, anyways before the NRA came in, I had a raise of fifteen dollars, I got sixty dollars. Which was--I enjoyed it of course.

Then I worked there, at the Hilo Electric Light for forty-three years. And I've had a lot of run-ins with the Hilo Electric Light management. I was a foreman for our meter department, when I started as a meter man, there were only three meter readers, when they funk'd the meter department, there were nine meter readers and I was the foreman of nine people. Without any recognition in payment. And I complained. In the meantime, they decided to close the department up and made two meter readers in Honoka'a, take care of the northern end, and two in Kona, take care of the other end down there, and three in Hilo, which gave seven meter readers and they employed two in the office. That's how they dispersed of the nine positions in the meter department. Nevertheless, I enjoyed my forty-three years with them.

Coming back to Church, you know the surprising thing was, I wasn't active in church after going to the high school and getting a job and even as far previous to getting married. I was fortunate enough to get married to a LDS girl. Not knowing that we belonged to the same religion until we came the time to get married, who going to perform our marriage ceremony and I found out and she found out, that I was a Mormon and she was a Mormon, so we went to the church and got married in 1936. There's another incident I'd like to relate. Prior to our marriage because of my athletic ability, or participating in athletics, I played football and basketball 1929, 1930 for the Lincoln Wreckers.

Then, in 1932, I took up boxing, I think it was 1931 to be exact and I seven professional fights, the cheapest purse I ever had I think, was sixty-five dollars and the best purse I ever had was, fighting a semi-final with the contender of the Philippines, lightweight contender, champion you might say in a hundred and thirty pound class, which is the junior lightweight. Lightweight is a hundred and thirty-five pounds, so I was in the junior lightweight. I fought him twice and twice it was a draw. And the first fight I fought him when he was living in Hilo, he was out at Pepeekeo and he would come in and that was the first fight I had with him, my first experience. The next time I fought with him was some months later, now he was in the Philippines contending for the lightweight champion in the Philippines and

the both times we fought, were draw fights. The other fights I had was, three knockouts and one decision. Or was it two knockouts and one decision? Probably two knockouts and two decisions and two draws. And the knockout was on a Fourth of July fight that lasted about thirty-two seconds, just come in shake hands, and part and bang the guy was down and that was it, he didn't come up no more. I often wondered what kept him down on the floor he just finally said, "This is it, I've had it, I'm going to quit completely." But that was it.

In my working experience with Hilo Electric as a meter reader, I ran across a good girlfriend of my wife, at the time I didn't pay much attention to my wife. This girl by the name of Florence Juitt says, "Abe, why don't you get a date with Phoebe Stevens?" Which was her close friend and I asked her, would she be the cupid? Would she make the, set up the date for me? She said, yes she would. I was called later that the date was confirmed, that I was supposed to meet her at the theatre on the fourth of July at one o'clock at the Old Empire theatre, that's on the front street of Hilo, its not there anymore, they closed it up and there's a bakery there, I believe, right now. Anyway, I fought on the third and I had a date with my wife on the fourth of July. And she asked me, Phoebe asked--that was my wife's name, Phoebe--she asked me, "Abe what do you do? How come you, where do you work?" Maybe I'm jumping ahead of my time, I courted her from 1931, that was the first time, to--that's when this experience happened, 1931, when I took her to the show. And I've courted her for five years before we got married in 1936.

Now, prior to the time we got married in 1936, I landed in a Tubercular Sanitarium, and that's at Powaili home in Hilo. And when I went there, I was a hundred and twenty-nine pounds and the, I questioned the doctor, "How come I'm in this condition?" He says, "Abe, you're run down, that's all it is. However, I promise you within six months you'll come out of this sanitarium, you'll live there." And that was in 1936 from April to September. And I began wondering shouldn't I settle down and get married? But the thing that strike me most, was during the six months I was in the sanitarium, I didn't take any medication. All the doctor said I needed was rest. And one of the incidents that I can never forget was that I was instrumental in serving beer to the patients who were quite strong and wine. As I said, I was inactive in Church, so it didn't dawn on me that I was doing the wrong thing. But even the nurses mentioned the fact that they never thought they'd see the day where liquor would be rationed during lunch hour to the patients. But the doctor must have felt that the, that was a stimulant to wake the patients up, you know, to give them more incentive to perk up and get out of this rut that they were in.

And so in September, I was released, without any medication. And in December of the same year, my wife and I were married. We had a wedding celebration down at the Seaside Club, approximately five hundred people were in attendance and one of her suitors, who was the manager, the manager of the Volcano Hilo Hotel and the Volcano House management was under the Laikugas family, a Greek family and they were responsible for the Volcano House and Nick Laikugas he was a good friend of mine and at one time had an eye for my wife, invited me, invited us, I should say, free of charge, to spend

our honeymoon at the Volcano House; which we gladly accepted. And we spent the time up there.

Now, coming back to my Church activities, from 19--here's an incident I'd like to relate. When I was down at Poamaile home, I begged our Heavenly Father that if I should be released, or cured from my illness, I would serve him. I promised him I would do that, I would serve him. And that did not dawn on me until after I got married. After I got reactivated in the Church, from 1936 to 1944 another eight years until I really took an active part in the Church. And I was reactivated by a home--a cottage meeting, family cottage meeting by a Watson family, Ernest--it's not Ernest, gee, I cannot remember the Watson's, Mr. Watson's first name. But his wife was a member of the Church and, Elizabeth Watson and she's living at this interview, she's eighty-seven years old, right now and she was, I would say, very instrumental in getting me going back to Church, because of her visit, her cottage meetings with my wife and I and her family.

And we went to Church at the Kukuau chapel, which is defunct, it's not there anymore, there's a mortuary standing there now, the Hawaii funeral home. But when the church was there, we attended church in 1944 and it was in a deplorable condition, we needed a new church, no two ways about it, or something should be done, because the roof was leaking. And at times it was necessary to open your umbrellas in the church. And I inquired, "Is there any building fund program in the Church?" And the presiding elder confirmed that there is no funds, so I thought, my next question to him was, "Can we start one?" And you know, I was made--because of my remarks, a few months later I was made the branch president of that particular branch, the Kukuau Branch, replacing William Meyers. He was the branch president. He was called--he was released and called to serve on the district presidency as counselor to the district president. And in his absence, I was his replacement. When the mission president came to Hilo at conference, right off the pulpit, mission president then was Castle H. Merveys, he says, "Well, we're going to release the branch president and we're going to put in a new branch president and the new branch president is seated on the front seat. He doesn't know it right now, but Abraham Makaio is your new branch president." Was I thunderstruck! You know, I didn't know whether to accept or reject, but since Mrs. Watson's home teaching, Elizabeth Watson's home teaching encouraged me and since I made a vow that I would serve the Lord, what better time to serve the Lord than right now, you know.

INT Now, let me reconstruct the Church, now you were baptized about nine years old.

AM Right. On March 17, 1917.

INT Okay, so about eight years.

AM Eight and three-fourths, so eight and a half.

INT You were baptized in the stream by this missionary.

AM By Elder Matson and Elder Haya.

INT Were there other members that were baptized at that time?

AM I believe there was, but you know, it's been so long that I cannot remember, but I think there was a couple other baptisms, besides myself.

INT So, after you were baptized, you were still with your mother, or your parents were together for a little while.

AM They were separated, they had their divorce proceedings, and so I was awarded to my father.

INT Okay, so you were not with your mother.

AM No, I was living with my aunt and I attended the Kalaniana'ole School.

INT Did you go to any church meetings at all?

AM At Haleama'i, yes, I used to attend their services there after I was baptized. Yes, I did. In fact, we were living up in a plantation; my dad was a dump car driver, he used to pick up all the refuse and things like that to bring in the camps you know. And that's what happened, that was in 1917. Then when the separation came about and I got left in an orphanage, I was a ward of the court, so the court left me in the orphanage, Father Louis Boys' Home.

INT Haleama'i, was that a chapel or a whole other school or what?

AM It's a branch, Haleama'i Branch, which. . . .

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

AM . . . big gulch to Pepeekeo, the outskirts of Pepeekeo, which is a radius of about nine miles, four and a half each way, or three and a half each way.

INT Was there actually a chapel?

AM Yes, the chapel is still there, I think it is used by some people are renting it right now. I haven't been there for some time, so I was told it is still there. And there was a dispute on the land, who really owned the land, whether the Church owned it, or the person who gave it to the Church, because his progenitors asked me the question, "Who owns this then? According to my dad," he said, "we just loaned the Church, just providing they have a church there. If they don't have any church, we'd like to have the property back." That's the son's understanding. So I checked it out and I found out that the Church has a deed to the place so that squashed that rubble, you know.

And coming back to the Kukuau Branch, so I became the branch president. The first thing I did was install our--what do you call--building fund program, by pledges. And the pledge was five dollars per family, and two-fifty for each individual, a member who is living with the family that's working. Started

with Kukuau Branch first. Then President Maveys says, asks me why don't I cover the whole island and get their support, after all this is a central, the capital of the island of Hawaii is in Hilo, want something beautiful. I had the--I suggest sure, that would be fine. So, I had two counselors, Henry P. Ching, and let's see now, who was the other counselor, oh I cannot even remember. My wife was the secretary, so we had record minutes and we had records of things and we put on promotions, luaus, to raise additional funds, and we canvassed the whole island.

There were five districts on this island at the time, the Humakua District, the Kohala District, the North and South Corner District, and the Ka'u District. Puna came into Hilo as far as O'okala and from O'okala on, its Honokaa up to Kukuihaele. From Waimea was Kohala, to Kohala proper and North and South corner and then there was Ka'u, Volcano to Waiohinu and a little beyond that, probably another ten miles beyond Waiohinu, that was it. You know, at that time there were twenty-six chapels on the island of Hawaii. And Kukuau, Halemai was one of them. Presently, there's two stakes with seven chapels each, probably half since modernization and automobile traffic, automobile means of travel and eliminate a lot of the chapels.

INT Well that's interesting that there would be so many chapels. During this time, what was the image of the Church? Would you say that the Church was fairly well recognized or was it the subject of some prejudice?

AM The Church was fully recognized, they did speak of the Mormons, oh yes. We had different public officials, Mormons who were running for office, and they were quite recognized. Hilo was active, Waimea was active, Kohala was active with Brother [William K.] Sproat [OH-15A] there, Bill Sproat, he would keep the thing going and in Kona you had the Edmunds and some other families there, Kahikinas and oh shucks, there's another brother that I forgot his name, he's still around. And then in Ka'u you had the Joseph, oh I cannot even remember his name, the Sumanads. We tried to get [William H.] Meinecke [OH-46] involved in the gospel. I know Bill Sproat, interviewed him, I had a chance to interview Mr. Meinecke. In fact, when I interviewed him he was about eighty-three years old.

Anyway, coming back to the building fund program, we raised something like twenty-five thousand dollars. By this time, the mission presidents have changed and the new mission president who came in was E. Wesley Smith. And we--I secured sixteen acres from the, in fact spoke for, I wouldn't say secure, I'd say speak for sixteen acres where the St. Joseph's School is presently standing, at a thousand dollars an acre. Sixteen acres, sixteen thousand. I mentioned this fact to E. Wesley Smith, about the property, he wasn't in favor of it, he fell in love with the present site where the church now stands, eight acres, beautiful grounds, the nice manager's home that he visualized could be used into a mission home and let the saints here build their own church center.

Okay, this went about, but we were still a district here. In 1947, we vacated the old Kukuau area, we came into the 1373 Kilauea Avenue, the present stake center, where the present stake center is, we were a district at that time. And

the thing that I was concerned with was the cost of the new site. When we approached these people to purchase the property, they wanted a hundred and thirty thousand dollars. And all we had was twenty-five thousand. We couldn't meet our one-third, which the Church required, so I discouraged President Smith. I said, "Let's wait until we have more money." Then okay, stopped for a couple of years.

One day while working, the police came look for me and pick me up and says, "They want you at Doc Hill's office and they have some questions to ask you." So, I accomodated the police officer and came up to Doc Hill's, but before going into the office, I ran into President E. Wesley Smith and he pulled me on the side, he says, "Abe, Doc wants to sell the property." My first concern was, "How much is it?" He says, "Abe, he wants seventy-five thousand." Which was forty somewhat thousand dropped from the original cost of a hundred and thirty thousand dollars. In fact, the original cost, the sellers were Consulate, Consulate and Case, attorneys at a hundred and thirty. When Doc Hill offered me the price, he says, "Abe, I understand you people were concerned with the property down here and I'd like to sell it." So I asked Doc Hill, I says, "How much you want to sell it for?" He says, "Oh, ninety-five thousand." At the time. So I told Doc, "Look, we don't have the money, we'll--don't depend on us," I told him. And he threatened me, he says, "Abe either you're going to buy it or I'm going to sell it to the University of Hawaii, or to Hirosis Nursery." My reply to him was, "Go ahead and sell Doc, go ahead and sell. You can sell it at that price, you sell. But this I promise you, Doc, if we buy your property, we will pay you cash, cash on the property and I know darn well that's what you want, cash." He didn't say nothing. The next time I was called in, now he was ready to sell for seventy-five thousand. We had the money, we had our thirty percent; buy is the next thing we did. And we purchased.

INT That the property where the chapel is now?

AM Right. That's where the property, eight acres. Then the next thing is to raise money to build the building. So my next question to E. Wesley Smith was, "How we going to build a chapel?" You see, you know what his remark was to me? "Don't worry, my cousin is the President of the Church, George Albert Smith, we'll get the money from him." (laughter) I was astounded you know. Well if that's what he said, good and well with me. But we still had some monies, and the original cost of the chapel is ninety-eight thousand. And our thirty percent of that was another thirty thousand. And you know, I found out later that all we owned of that eight acres was 1.2 acres, is our church property and the other area, the other 6.9, or 6.so, belongs to the Church itself.

You know, I've been wondering all this time, "Why didn't the Church utilize that properties that just leave it there for the last, this is 1980 and we purchased the thing in 1950, thirty years been idle. We could have turned over that thing three, four times, five times over. And of course, I was asked, "What would you suggest?" I said, "Put in an old folks' home in there." You know, you get a steady income. Or, lease it to some people, a hundred years' lease, alright, you know. You know the surprising thing that happened while I was in this building program? My son-in-law came to me, he--that's another story about my son-in-law, maybe someday we'll relate that--he was manager of the First

Hawaiian Bank in Hilo. He came to me, he says, "Abe, how much you think the Church want to sell the property?" My first question was, "You got a buyer?" He says, "Yes." That's a million dollars, would that be alright? Even with a million dollars I won't sell, at least, I would suggest to this, I wasn't in the driver's seat, but my suggestion, I would suggest this. And I found out later, the Church was offered two million dollars, right to the date, today, about six months ago. So there you know, two million dollars, and they come back to me, "Abe, sell?" "No, lease." That's what I believe in, leasing. But when they put up that kind of money, I sure as the sun rises, they're going to subdivide it and real estate. They're going to pick up their two million like that. Ten lots, they sell, they pick up their money, twenty-thousand a lot, or maybe not that much all of a sudden, but they can build the frontage of it, they can put in a stores, and businesses and build rent houses and all--they can make their money back, I'd say within twenty years they'd get their two million dollars back.

But nevertheless, continuing my involvment in the Church, I moved in the meantime from Kukuau I moved to Keaukaha. You see I live--I had my own property on 594 Hinano Street. And there was a buyer that--a couple of people wanted to buy property and they came to see me if we were willing to sell our property. Now our girls were growing up at the time, they were in their teens, I'd say eighteen years, and they were learning hula dancing, and they wanted to be--live among the natives and Keaukaha was an area where the natives are. And the instructor, the hula dance instructor lived in Keaukaha, so the girls were inclined to and force dad to move down to Keaukaha. And my son was born in 1946, and you know, would be a proper time to move and so we moved in 1951.

We sold the property for a miserable sum of twelve thousand dollars. I found out later, after two or three years that I could have sold it for forty thousand, or thirty-five thousand and that made me realize the value of stupidity, the ignorance of stupidity, you know. I would--I am dissapointed in land transaction, going up to 1971, I could have bought property for a dollar an acre, hundred acres, hundred dollars, I could have bought the upper mountain view, fifty dollars an acre. A fellow up there had a hundred fifty acres, willing to sell it for fifteen thousand, which makes it a hundred and fifty dollars an acre. But the fifty dollars an acre was from Hawaiian--Aloha Airlines, I had some stock in Aloha, so they came up to me and told me, "Abe, how about trading? We take your stock, and for every fifty shares we get, we give you one acre of land." And this shows me how stupid can a man get. I purchased this stock at twenty-five cents a share, fifty shares would be what? Twelve and a half? Approximately? Less than twelve and a half, let's see, twelve and a half would be fifty cents a share. Anyway, fifty shares would be fifty dollars, no, let's see, at my cost, fifty shares would be twenty-five, fifty-five, twelve-fifty to be exact, twelve-fifty. Imagine! I had two hundred and fifty shares, I could have got five acres. You know, just today, you know what they're selling land down there? Twenty-five thousand dollars an acre, thirty thousand dollars an acre. Imagine thirty thousand dollars an acre, five acres, hundred and fifty thousand dollars an acre.

INT Well when it gets to the land, people certainly think of their lost opportunities.

AM Right, right.

INT So, you were down in. . . .

AM Keokaha.

INT Keokaha. You were not branch president?

AM No. I moved down to Keaukaha, I purchased a property from another fellow there, by the name of Matsu, Seichi Matsu, who was a member of the Church. He was leaving to go to Honolulu. And this here house was twenty-four years old. Or probably twenty years, I would say, because I stayed down there another--1951-1971--twenty years, right. Yes, the house must have been about twenty years old. And I purchased the house, well, just the house alone, six thousand dollars, the lot was Hawaiian Homes lot, so I had to become a attendant of Hawaiian Homes to secure the land, which gave me the privilege to pick the land up. I stayed there up to 1951, but during the course of my twenty years at Keaukaha--I mean to 1971, rather--during my twenty years of residence in Keaukaha, I became branch president of Keaukaha Branch. And again, a building fund program. (laughter) Seems to me everyplace I go I'm involved with the Church building program. And a lot of times I'm amazed how many chapels go up. They don't talk it by months or years or days, what they talk about a minute. Every two and a half or three minutes a new chapel going up. That's something, I don't know what words to--flabbergasted--to see how fast the Church is coming up. Then. . . .

INT It demonstrated that you must have been a pretty good fundraiser, you know. How did you raise the money for. . . .

AM No, I was a good herder, you might say, I keep all the sheep in line. I wouldn't say I was a good fundraiser, but anyway, we got the program going, that's the main thing. We got the people secured. You know, speaking of fundraising, just the other month or so, couple of months ago, we had to raise some funds for the Pahoa Ward. And all the leaders of the stake were called in to meet at the Keaukaha chapel. Not knowing what the stipulation was all about, but we had a feeling that it was some kind of fund program, you know. And it finally came to the figure that they needed fifty-eight thousand, I mean fifty thousand to start the Pahoa church immediately and the funds needed was urgent. So there were approximately a hundred and fifty people there, I would say a hundred and fifty people there, probably seventy-five families that pledged. After they picked up all the pledge slips, the group that was there contributed fifty-eight thousand dollars. Eight thousand more than they actually needed, all they wanted was fifty thousand. And that made me realize the strength of the Church then and the power of the priesthood.

Now, another similar experience happened to me, now in my own ward at Ainaola. Three weeks ago, or thereabouts, we had a ward budget dinner and we needed funds to offset our indebtedness, we owed the state something like thirty-one thousand dollars, I think. At one sitting, our membership, our families in our ward was a hundred and fifty-eight families. Actively, forty-

four families, actively involved in the Church. Out of that forty-four there were twenty somewhat families that attended this fundraising. And we raised twenty thousand dollars. To be frank, there were nineteen, seventeen, or thereabouts, families that were in attendance and they raised the seventeen thousand dollars. The other families who should have been there, begged for an excuse, but they pledged before they were let off the hook. So they were the ones that brought in the extra three thousand dollars, which made it twenty thousand dollars.

INT Thousand dollars a family.

AM Approximately a thousand dollars a family. You see, my wife and I, and our daughter, made two pledges. We were asked the families required to meet eight hundred and forty-eight dollars. So my wife and I met our pledge and our daughter must have made the difference of maybe another eight hundred dollars, I don't know, I did not inquire what she pledged. After all, that's her *kuleana*, her business. Coming back to my church involvement, after I was released as branch president from Keaukaha, I stayed down there, and I finally moved up here to Paniewa off the Hawaiian Homes commission lands. We were still attending Keaukaha, and after about a year or so, they divided the boundaries and started a new ward, that's the Ainaola Ward. They took part of Kilauea Two and part of Keaukaha, and formed the Ainaola Ward. To tell you the truth, all the wards in Hilo, originally from Kukuau. Even the Keaukaha Ward was a branch of Kukuau, which was the first church. Then the Kilauea One, Kilauea Two, also from Kukuau, Ainaola, also from Kukuau and part of Keaukaha.

INT So when you were branch president at--well let's see, I guess Brother Meyers was branch president before you. Was that the only branch on this side of the island at that time?

AM There was one at Keaukaha, one in Hilo, one at Haleamai, one in Honomu, one in Laupahoehoe, Kialani, one in Ookala. No, I wouldn't say Okalakaeao, a subsidiary branch. And then there was Honoka'a and then Waimea there was one, Kukuihaele there was one, I think there was about five, four probably in Kohala, three, four at the most. And then there was in Kona, another group of them and in Ka'u there was another three or four, which probably totalled up to about twenty-six as I formerly mentioned. But right now the thing is divided in two stakes, the Hilo Hawaii Stake, and the Kona Hawaii Stake, which consists of approximately in the Hilo Stake, six branches and one ward. And the Kona Stake, another six wards.

INT But here, right around what we know today as Hilo Stake, or at least in the Hilo area. . . .

AM There's four wards.

INT . . . most everything grew out of Kukuau.

- AM Right, which gives, which constitutes the Keaukaha Ward, the Ainaola Ward, the Kilauea First Ward, Kilauea Second Ward; four wards that constitute the Hilo area.
- INT Now were you branch president when that chapel was built, the one that is there now?
- AM Both chapels. I mean, when Keaukaha was built, no, I was released, I was already released, but I assisted in building the chapel, with a brother by the name of Hutchings that came from Salt Lake as a professional man. He was the superintendant, he constructed the chapels. The sisters helped building the chapels, bringing dinner, luncheons and--you know, there was no busier bunch of fellows working on that chapel that I've ever known, you know. Being at my age presently, they were quite busy, oh yes, they concentrated.
- INT What were some of the fundraising activities for that chapel?
- AM You know, the surprising thing that often made me wonder, why the fundraising in our district, or stake, is not continuous, is not a continuous thing. Each ward should have a fundraising program too, you know. We may be here today and gone tomorrow and tomorrow people who need additional help. So if we can help them out when, in our progress in the Church, it will be a tremendous help to them when the need comes. It's just like to me, a chapel being just like a food storage, you got to take care of the young Abe. I mean the young Abe got to take care of the old Abe. You know, and income is a no income, you got a fixed income and the inflation cost is going so high, what did the young Abe do for the old Abe? Nothing doing, he didn't do it. And that reminded me of the church program, you know, that thing should be a continuous thing.
- So now, when we have our tithing settlement and monthly contributions to the Church, I go right down the program and say, "Tithing so much, fast offering so much, budget so much, building program so much, missionary so much, what have you so much." That should be a continuous thing. Instead just concentrating on tithing or concentrate on fast offering and forget the rest. So I divide my contributions accordingly, because my stake president told me, "Abe I want to--" he had a PPI with me and this was the question he asked me, "When you make your contributions to the Church, do you itemize all of what you contribute?" I says, "I itemize my tithing, I itemize my budget--no, I itemize my tithing and my fast offering. The budget? I give the balance to the budget, let them figure out where they want to put the money." He bawled me out for it. He says, "If the Lord questions you, just as I did, what you going to tell him? You got no figures to show, no place to go. So hereafter, please itemize." So I've been doing that for the last six months probably, itemize everything.
- INT Now when you were branch president at Kukuau, were there, much involvement by the missionaries?
- AM Yes. Now, speaking of the missionaries. You know, during the war, now that's when I became active, after the war, 1944, the war was still on. You know, in

my travels as a meter reader, I used to go into all the barracks, the military barracks, I had a identification to allow me to go in. I used to pick these fellows up and bring them up Pohakuloa, they had a liking to me, so they would come in and give me food. Surplus food you know. They said, "We know you're having a hard time, here's a couple of ham, a couple of sacks of something else, a sack of potatoes." And this food, I would come back and give it to the missionaries. I know they would enjoy it. And I would do that. And this was a turnover for me at the time because I was beginning to become active in the Church. Prior to that I used to trade in liquor. I'd say, "Well what do you want?" "Oh, I want a bottle of scotch." Then okay, I give them a bottle of scotch or black label or case of beer, and that's how they became to be very friendly.

And after I realized it was wrong and I was going to church, it was wrong. Stop all the monkeyshines and the friendship parted, they moved away. In fact, there were a couple of brethren that were in the service at that time. A director from Salt Lake, Theodore Tuttle, who was a member of the seventy, he was a lieutenant in the service and he camped at Pohakuloa, I think with the twenty-seventh division. And then there was another brother by the name of Sonny, Alma Sonny, you know. He was in the service also. And there were a few others that--I've forgotten their names--that were members of the Church. And these brethren would come down, come to services at Kukuau and it was a leaking chapel and a lot of these brethren made contributions to the building fund. Not an enormous amount, but to keep the cause going, you know, encouragement.

INT Well, that's great. We have only about two minutes left, so. . . .

AM Continuation some other time?

INT Well, is there anything else that you think we ought to. . . .

AM Yes, I would like to mention the fact that I've had the privilege of meeting, out of the twelve presidents of the Church, I've had the opportunity of meeting six of them.

INT Oh, I know what I wanted to get, just very briefly, there's not much time now, the story of your guiding Elder Kimball and Matthew Cowley.

AM Yes, that was quite an experience, we had the two mission presidents, President Kimball, he was a junior apostle at that time and Matthew Cowley. And Matthew Cowley was a comic, you know. He was an attorney and he wanted to see the night life of Hilo. So I took him to our Mamo Street down here. He wanted to--I took him to Japanese Noodle, and this was one thirty in the morning. President Kimball went to sleep and I took Brother Cowley to the, to this noodle shop at one thirty in the morning. Next morning, going to Volcano, I mean going to Kona, we had to cross the Saddle Road, we had two cars. There was E. Wesley Smith, President Kimball and myself in one car. The other car was Henry P. Ching the driver, Matthew Cowley, and the mission, Japanese mission president--gee, I can't get his name, he. . . .

INT Winneg?

AM Winneg, right, Winneg. The three of them in the other car. They went up first and on the Saddle, they got a flat. And I came in the back, I stopped, and I see Brother Cowley, his hands in his pocket, walking around. But you can notice right there, the difference between the two men. Brother Kimball took his coat off and went to help Brother Ching. When I seen that, I bumped Brother Cowley; I said, "Isn't that your companion that you came with?" He said, "Yes." I said, "How is it you're not helping your companion?" You know what his remark was? "If he wants to work, let him work." (laughter) And that shows you what kind of person he was, you know, he was full of fun. He really didn't mean that, you know, I know honestly well. He said, "Well, every man to his own opinion. He wants to work, go ahead and work." I found out later that he was an attorney. And I found out later that President Kimball was a store keeper.

And President Kimball bore his testimony to us when he was first called to become an apostle. And this experience is thrilling. You know, in Arizona, in Tampa, Arizona where he was living, he had a store there, and he used to take orders from different people to make deliveries. And the buffings of Satan would approach him. In fact Satan himself would appear to him. He would say, "Hey Spencer, you think you're worthy to become an apostle of the Lord? Think it over, you're nothing but a store keeper. You don't have the means to become an apostle. Forget it." And discouraged him in other ways, by temptations. It was quite a fight for, I can see that it was quite an experience for President Kimball. That's the first time I met him, in 1972, I mean in 1948, or 1946, thereabouts.

The next time I met him, he was President of the Quorum of the Twelve now. And he called me, he says, "Abe, I want to have a PPI with you." We were a district at that time. And I went down, he was staying at the Traveler Lodge. I went up to his room, "Tell me Abe, would you like to," after greeting each other and talking and he asked me, "Do you have any suggestions for the Hilo district?" I told him, "Yes, I have a suggestion." He said, "What is it?" "Remove the district president."

END OF SIDE B

SIDE C

INT Okay, you were having this PPI with President Kimball then. Tell me more about that.

AM Well, first thing President Kimball asked me was, "Would you like to make a-- some suggestions on what would improve the district? Any thoughts you may have that would improve this area." My first remark was, "Have the district president removed." And he asked me, "Why?" And I says, "I cannot serve a president that would threaten members, to beat them up." And he let me, after other commands, I was relieved of my interview with him. But coming downstairs, I met his counselor, the president's counselor. And he asked me, "By the way, what did President Kimball ask you?" And then I told him, I told him what happened, I told him about removing our district president. And it so happened, this brother was the counselor, first counselor. It didn't dawn on me, you know, his remark was, "Abe, what am I going to do now, without a job?" You know, I was flabbergasted too, not thinking, I made a remark. I

should have kept my mouth shut, don't say nothing, just, "Well something pro and con and that was it." You know, silence is golden at times and this was one of the times that I missed out. Anyway, you know, after two months or so, this brother that went to visit him, was called to serve a mission in Japan, he was a mission president in the Nagoya mission. So, a release was a blessing to him, and he accepted, and he went.

INT This is the one that was the district president, or the counselor?

AM The counselor, the first counselor, the first or second counselor. The president that released district president, he probably had been bringing in names such--I don't want to take any honor for it, or anything like that, maybe I should keep quiet. Silence is golden at times, maybe this is a time I should really keep quiet. Nevertheless, that was one of the incidents. The next time I met President Kimball, was at Laie in 1978. That's the third time. This was when the time that he says the priesthood is for all men, regardless color, creed or whatever. And I thought that was the greatest thing that ever happened to the Church. You know, for a hundred and fifty years or thereabout, the priesthood was only for those without the strain of Cain. And now, revelation come about that even they could have the priesthood; which I think is proper.

INT The mission had been, in 1947, the missionaries had quite a major role to play in the Church, did that decline as . . .

AM Right, I have photographs of a gathering, missionary gathering, ninety-two missionaries, present, that covered the Hilo district alone, which is an area of twenty-five miles up this way and twelve miles up this, probably fifteen miles, and an area, a radius of forty miles, between two ends, twenty miles.

INT So, twenty-five miles up towards Honoka'a, right.

AM Yes, and fifteen miles up to Ola, this way, maybe up to Mountain View, Mountain View. Another, we say, ninety-two of them. And this is only the Hilo proper. And this was following the war, or approximately about that time, 1945, 1946. Because Kimball had his picture in there, and Matthew Cowley was in there, maybe 1948, that's when it was taken. Just the Hilo missionaries. Another picture, there were other times when the missionaries come in. I have a book full of missionary names, lined up and taking about five pages. One of the missionaries in there they have a folder, an album of missionary activities, my activities with the Church. Building of the chapel and the locations and the cost of the chapel and remarks made by dignitaries in Hilo, the--in fact, a write-up was written by the *Tribune Herald*, by a Mrs. Maxine Hughes. She was the interviewer. She interviewed me on how the funds were raised and things of that nature, and I have a clipping on it.

And you know, my family is another thing again. My daughter was a Miss Aloha Hawaii, and here's an incident you'd probably like to know. She flew, she became Miss Aloha, and she was employed by the airlines. And she made periodical trips, global. To Germany, to England, to South America, to Japan and Philippines, promotions, Hawaiian Airlines promotions. And after that

probably, she got involved with the Jack Ho, which is my son-in-law, and got married. He was in the service at that time, Jack. And he was a lieutenant in the service and I knew that they got married. And she got into an accident. They had two dogs in the back, the dogs were killed, going down Kaneohe, looking for a home area, a homesite, you know, there was a house on the--open house, that they wanted to purchase and they were down there and she got into an accident and was brought to the hospital in Honolulu and she took twenty-three pints of blood, and we were called, we were at a party at that time, Hilo Electric party, and it was a Saturday evening. And we left the following morning for Honolulu. And her husband, who was Jack Ho at the time, called in the Catholic Priest to give her, her last rites and I didn't feel too happy about it. So I decided that we call in our elders and we give her a blessing to live; not to bury her, but to live. So I called upon Brother Kanahele and Brother Parker, they came in, they blessed her that she would live. And lo and behold, she's living today. She had a child afterwards, couple of children, and that's a testimony to me already.

I mean, what more blessing do I need. My name for instance, Abraham Kapua Helani, in Hawaiian is a flower of heaven. And Makaio, which means Matthew in English. Abraham, flower of heaven, Matthew. With a monica like that, how can a guy go wrong? And I often wondered about that and of course, the Lord has blessed us. Just last year my wife was in the hospital, she had an abcess, liver abcess and her temperature, when I took her to the--at home was ninety-nine, so I called the rescue squad to pick her up. Brought her up, up to the hospital, about an hour or so, her temperature was a hundred and seven. In fact, they had to ice pack her, to keep her temperature down, and that's the best thing they did. By three o'clock, the temperature was down to a hundred and three and by five o'clock was down to ninety-nine, so they brought her into the ward, not ward, into the incentive ward--yes, that's right--and give her special care. She was up there for thirty-one days, July 27, to August 27. August 27, they brought her home. Now she's strong as a bull again.

Prior to that, when I retired from Hilo Electric the same thing happened to her, this time she was cancerous, she worked for OEO, traveling to Kau, she stopped at the Volcano House, not the Volcano House, but the way station up at the volcano, to buy a lunch, you know, packaged lunch and coming out, she stumbled over the gasoline pump and fractured her hand. And she continued to Kau and did her work with OEO and come home. Coming home, I told her to see the doctor. She came home about two o'clock. So, went to the doctor, it was this fellow, Doctor--he passed away since--and he took her to the hospital and told the doctor to give her a thorough check. And he claimed that she was cancerous. She had a tumor as big as my fist in her pancreas, that's where the cancer was.

Okay, that was in 1972. [In] 1971, December, when I took her to the hospital, she was 174 pounds, or thereabouts. I brought her home in May, Mother's Day, she was 117 pounds, she must have lost sixty somewhat pounds. The doctor gave up, he said, "Take her home, to die." She wanted to die at home, so I brought her home, and the Lord really responded to my cry again. I asked her, you know, "What would you want to eat?" I said, "You probably have a few days, a few weeks to live. Anything you would want, I would give it to you. Even

liquor." I mentioned that fact. You know what she told me? "No such thing. I want all the fruits you can get, all the vegetables, that's what I'm going to rely on." And today she's back to 174 pounds again. In fact, she was about that until she went to the doctor this last July. The doctor told her, "You've got to cut down weight." So she left there, 150 pounds, 149 pounds. So she's trying to maintain that weight in her 150's. But she's robust, you know, sassy as ever, (laughter) full of life. And she's sixty-nine. I'm going on to seventy-two. So, she's strong and very--she raises flowers and that's what she putters around with, digging around the yard and getting into a fuss with me. I raise, I'm trying to start a garden, you know what the prophet said to have a home garden. So, I'm going try be a model to the rest of our brethren in our stake. I'm going to invite them, "Eh, come down, I want to show you people what a home garden looks like, come on down." I got the onions planted, the beans, cabbage, peanuts, tomatoes.

INT Is that your assignment on the high council now?

AM No. My assignment on the high council is magazine, the *Church News*, and home teaching. So I've been pounding these brethren on magazine and *Church News*. See, the *Church News* is going to expire in March and then in April is expiration month. Then May, June--April, May, June, is magazine drive. Then I'll be pushing magazine. I make sure every ward has a poster, in fact the *Church News* drive is now on for your ward, its my poster. So then I put, "The prophet wants an *Ensign* in every LDS home" and sometimes I change it to something else. That's what's for the magazine drive. But we've done, we're not the best, we got about thirty-one percent of our membership subscribing to the magazine. And about twenty-one percent to the *Church News*. But, I feel we should do better than that. In fact, out of our population families, eight hundred and thereabouts, we sold 479 magazines last year. So the theme of, "An LDS magazine in every LDS home," should waken every family, you know.

But there are a lot of inactive families that need the encouragement and I strongly believe that the strength of the Church lies with home teaching. We have a monthly attendance, the best home teaching program--the best home teaching for the month. The Keaukaha Ward has taken the best home teaching for the year 1980, for twelve months in a row. Now I take a count of attendance at sacrament meeting. You know, they don't even place first in sacrament meeting attendance. So, that home teaching is the difference between quality home teaching and record home teaching, just for record's sake, you know. My ward, out of the twelve months, we have eight months, top ward, as far as sacrament attendance is concerned. So when we had our drive, you know, for budget drive, all the families were there attending sacrament meeting. They know the value of supporting the Church, where the Church stands. They are fully convinced to the doctrines of the Church, that's how I feel about it. I know I am.

Prior to this, maybe some twenty years ago, not--or thirty-five years ago--not that strong. But a lot of indications showed me the Lord answers prayers. The Lord says, "I am bound when you do what I say, but when you do not what I say, you have no promise," D and C 82:10. And he further says in D and C

130:20, 21, " There is a law irrevocably decreed in the heavens before the foundations of the earth upon which all blessings are predicated. And when we receive any blessings from God, it is by obedience to that law, upon which it is predicated." And I'm a firm believer in these two, D and C. I'm a believer.

INT When you started obeying the commandments then, right after the war, you got thoroughly involved in Church and have been quite involved ever since then.

AM Right. Of course, you know, I relax at times. I'm a--I love fishing. During the war, the harbor was closed, no Japanese can go out fishing, and that was their livelihood, all the Japanese fisherman. So, the sandpans were stranded down there, sandpan basin. The rain came, the sandpans sunk, and I picked one up in 1945. No, in 1941, the war--the latter part of 1941, December, 1942, the latter, about the middle of 1942. You know all these six months these sandpans in there, they get water-logged and sandpans sink and up for sale. I got, I bought a sandpan for seventy-five dollars, a hundred dollars, you know. And the guy said, "Go ahead, take the sandpan." And so I have it hoisted up, dry dock it, paint it, two and a half horsepower, you know. All I want is shoreline fishing, I'm not going out deepsea fishing, forget it. I get eaten up by the sharks out there. I stay close to shore, I'm a shoreline fisherman. And two and a half horsepower just enough for two people, three people at the most. But the missionaries, it's their job, because I would invite them to go out fishing, you know, we would go out fishing, just for the relaxation, they'd enjoy it. Oh yes, that was--and you see, there were two of us that bought the sandpan, and the crowd I work with at the Hilo Electric finally, a half a dozen people got involved, they all bought shares, they bought shares into the sandpan.

There was a fellow by the name of Brown, J.M. Brown, he was the accountant of the Hilo Electric Company. And he liked his beer, you know. And a lot of times, we'd go under the bridge down at Waieka, we don't even pass the bridge, we'd park the sandpan under the bridge, go across the walk there, there was a bar there, we'd end up in the bar. And when they'd close the bar up at eleven o'clock or thereabouts, we'd come into our sandpan boat and go back up the river, park it for the night.

But there were a lot of times I'd go fishing and I'd bring the sandpan home full with fish. It got to a time when my wife got sick of cleaning fish, We'd give it away, where we were living. And finally I sold the sandpan, double the price I bought it. I bought it at--no, triple, quadruple--I bought the sandpan at seventy-five dollars and I sold it for three hundred dollars. And the fellow had to carry the sandpan from Hilo, on a truck, And bring it to Kawaihae, and when he took the sandpan off the truck, to put it into the water, it dropped, and the hull opened up, and that was the end of that sandpan. What a disappointing thing, after you buy a sandpan and you find out you haul it there for nothing. And the fellow is still living, Edwin Castillo.

INT So, you mentioned taking the missionaries out, so you were somewhat affiliated with the Church, even though you were not active yourself.

AM Yes, that was in the, 1943, '44, because that's when home teaching was coming, I was being involved in the, going to the Watson's for home teaching and the missionaries would come there and I would meet them. In fact, one time I had six missionaries living in my house. Board and live there and from there they go tracting. Brother Sproat sent two strangers to my house, that I didn't know who they were. All they came with their script, not even script or bag. They come and they said, "William Sproat sent us. Are you Abraham Makaio?" I said, "Yes, I am." "Well, he said that you would put us up for the night." And I said, "Come on in, come on in." I had four bedrooms you know, if I can take care of six missionaries, what's two more? (laughter) While the missionaries were there at the time. That was Brother Clinton Kanahale, and I think it was Forsythe, Adam Forsythe [OH-112] or Wallace, oh yes, that was Wallace Forsythe. He's not living anymore, they used to run the Laie bakery. And these two rascals were something, you know, these two guys. They walked, they were afraid to ride the bus because may go to the wrong place. But they gave them a pretty good idea of where my house was and they found our home. In the evening they came. You would think Brother Sproat would give me a buzz, you know, which he did, but I didn't pay much attention because he's full of, he's clowny, I didn't know if he was honest or what. But these two brothers showed up.

INT Well, that's great. That's quite a story.

AM Yes, in fact, our son, when my wife was pregnant, I was close to management, Hilo Electric management, in fact, they wanted me to break up the union, Hilo Electric union. And I tried, and I couldn't do it. Because of that, I was expelled from my union. In fact, the real reason I was expelled from my union, they wanted, I wanted the union to be affiliated with the insurance program. And I approached the president and told him, "Why can't our union be involved with the IPW, the International Public Electrical Workers insurance program?" He says, "Oh, we don't have the money." I said, "I know why you don't have the money because you blow it up yourselves. You folks having beer busts every month." And because of my remarks, I got a letter, "You're expelled from your remarks," that the officers had--you're fired. And I thought, well, I save about nine bucks a month for paying dues. But it bothered me, you know.

And a month, a year later, not even a year, I'd say about eight months later, the union president was fired. He was stealing copper from the company and selling it. And one of my arguments was, my department with nine boys, no foreman. The power plant, five on a shift, each shift had a foreman. The warehouse, where the union president was, had four people, with him as the fourth person, and he was the foreman. How is it, my department nine people, do not have a foreman? They said, "Oh, the superintendant can take care of you." I said, "Yes, when we Hona Ka'a, we spend two nights there, is he there with us? When we are out at Volcano, or down to Ka'u, another sixty-five miles up this way, is he there with us? I'm responsible."

In fact, I had a couple of cases where a couple of my boys got drunk, and they were hauled in to the police department, in jail for attempted rape. And I had to go get them out. And I called the attendant, the district attorney at that time,

and said, "What can I do to get these fellows out?" He said, "Abe, you raise the money and pay the bail and I tell them to let them out so they can go to work the next morning." Where I going get four hundred dollards to raise. The bail was two hundred dollars per person out at Honoka'a. So, fortunately I had a couple of good friends out there, the Doctor Okata and Doctor Carter and the innkeeper. And I went to see the innkeeper, I told him, "Look, can I give you a promissary note from each of these fellows, let them sign the promissary note." He knew the situation I was in, you know, two hundred dollars a piece, bail them out. He said, "Oh sure, anytime." So we got--brought them out, bail them out. And to this day, management does not know what happened out there. Nothing was mentioned to the management, and these fellows enjoyed until they retired. That's what I mean by confidence, and I had the confidence enough that the Lord would take care of me providing I throw the mop, providing I meet him halfway, at least.

So when our son was born, before my wife was pregnant, she was working in the same company I worked, Hilo Electric, in the appliance department. And the manager, general manager was James Hendersen, and James Hendersen became manager through his labor. He came from Scotland at the Honahina Plantation, started out as a blacksmith. And he saved his money, he invested, and he bought the Hilo sugar mill. He became manager of that. Then he invested into transportation and he sold the transportation, he bought shares into the Hilo Electric. He became fifty-one percent. In fact, not quite fifty-one percent, I'd say probably thirty-five percent and with another manager up at Hakalau, Ross, John M. Ross, they controlled the fifty-one percent. And he took over Hilo Electric. So all these ins and outs I knew about it.

And there was a politician, Doc Hill. You remember the other person we bought the property from, the Church property? He wanted to take over Hilo Electric, and he would call me and says, "Abe, how do you think I can take over Hilo Electric?" I said, "Doc, you have to have fifty-one percent, that's the only way I can see." And he would introduce me to a savings program, save five dollars a month to buy in to his company, which I'm sorry I did not do. Five dollars, sixty dollars a year, ten years, six hundred dollars. I would get some portion of reality investment, which they have holdings in real estate, they have holdings in automobile, they have holdings in the hotel, Naniloa Hotel, he had holdings in a laundry deal. That's the kind of person you want to--in fact, one of my close friends, when I was playing basketball, his name was Cook, Lofty Cook. And we used to go hunting together Volcano, up to Volcano, and stay up there overnight with a fellow that works up the Volcano National Park, Jimmy Higashita. And we would talk a lot of things, you know, all kinds of ways to raise money and things like that. Their advice to me, "Abe," in fact the attorneys advised to me also, "Abe, you want to make money, you go with the people who make money. Affiliate with them. They're going to feel sorry for you, they're going to show you how to make money."

So a lot of my friends were the bankers, real estate people, and the attorneys I used to hang around with, Tom Okino and Karl Smith we used to play basketball with. Butch Karl Smith and a couple others, you know. And that's what they're about, they tell me, "Abe, you're in the wrong profession. You shouldn't be a meter reader, you should be an attorney, go to school." And I

often wondered, even right now, like going to your class, for instance. I also go to CES [Church Educational System] every Monday, couple of hours, with Jan Smith--Jan Felix--you know, just to get more educated, you know, be able to know what's going on. And I've often wondered if at my age, can I go pick up some other schooling? Because I know how to type, all self taught, I learned my own--you know, when I was going to high school, I gave up my typing program to play football. And afterwards I took classes in typing and I gave that up and then I found out the importance of typing. What I'd like learn is shorthand, so I can sit down and scribble, write out what people are talking about. Never too old to learn.

INT Yes, never too old to learn. Right, they have programs right here on the Hilo campus, I think.

AM Age, there's no age barrier, I presume.

INT No, in fact as a senior citizen there would be either a reduction on tuition.

AM Cost, tuition, yes, I know that, that I know. Anyways--I mean, anyways the wrong word, in Pheobe's case, my wife's case, this Doctor Mitchell, that was his name, Mitchell. I forgot the first name, anyway, he passed away. Now, when my wife was up here last year, for her abcess on her liver, the doctor, Paul Matsumoto operated, I inquired if he ran across, you know, in his operation, whether he's seen the tumor, how big is the tumor, I'm concerned. He told me, "Abe, this big, that's how big the tumor is, the size of a macadamia nut, that's how big it is." I said, "There's no chance of eradicate the thing completely?" He said, "Well, maybe, I don't know, but that's how big it is." I said, "You didn't bother with it, no?" He knew about the case, he knew about the tumor, he looked for it too, he said, he looked for it, he says its the size of a macadamia nut. Macadamia nut it about that big, you know, depends, no bigger than that.

INT About an inch in diameter.

AM Probably so, from the size of a fist.

INT Well, it reduced considerably since.

AM Yes, it has, is has. So it's ten to five, probably. . . .

INT Yes, we better call this to a close. Well, I really appreciate this, you've given me a lot of good information about the Church here.

AM Of course, my different position, I was a mission, my wife and I were mission, MIA supervisors in 1962, I believe, 1962-64, when Harry V. Brooks was mission president, he called us to serve as mission supervisors, replacing the other two when their time expired. So we served there about two and a half years, three years. We put on *Promised Valley*, the show *Promised Valley*. We took it to every island. We started off here and we took some character from here, had some from there and went to Oahu, went to Molokai, went to Kauai and promoted *Promised Valley*, which I thought was a beautiful play. And there

was the instructor that helped us out, Mrs. Isabel, she's a republican representative, just got nominated last year, to the state legislature. Hopes are beginning to fruit now, you know.

INT Now, is she LDS?

AM Pardon me?

INT Is she LDS?

AM Well, probably. At that time she wasn't, she was willing to come out and help us out. Probably now she is, I never, dawned on me, you know, I could have asked the question, maybe I should call her up and tell her, "Look the Lord has blessed you so much, how about joining the Church? I know you believe in the Church, otherwise you wouldn't be helping us in our *Promised Valley* production." You know, nows the time to. . . .

INT That's quite an achievement to take something that size to all the other islands.

AM Yes, we took our props and everything.

INT Where was you cast from? Here in Hilo?

AM Part of--most of them were, the main characters were from Hilo because every mission, I mean every district, was supposed to put on the same play. We sent fliers out and things like that, and then we finally ended up bringing the main characters along so that, all we had was a few rehearsals and away we go.

INT So you had the nucleus of the cast and then go into a district and use the rest of their. . . .

AM Caleb and the rest of the characters.

INT I see.

AM It's a sweetheart story, with the cast. We had the locust, you know, the scene where the locust invaded all the wheatfields and things like that.

INT Well, that's great. So that must have been quite an experience for your MIA activities.

AM Yes, we were awarded the, when we were released, in fact before we were released, we were awarded the MIA medallion for achievement. With the green and gold ribbon on it.

INT Well, that's great.

AM The size of a dollar, the glory of God is intelligence, you know that medallion. Have you knocked the thing off?

INT No, it's still going, I just want to thank you again for. . . .

AM Well, I have other stories, but you know your time is--when are you leaving for home? This evening?

INT Yes the plane leaves at six, and I was going to talk to Brother Davy Mai, and I need time for that, but I feel like we need to get down to the. . . .

AM Yes, we go down to the--oh, where are your things at?

INT Right here, everything is right here.
END OF INTERVIEW