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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

NARRATOR: GEORGE MAHI

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INTERVIEWER: Ken W. Baldrige

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INTRODUCTION

George Mahi was born at Iao Valley in Maui on 21 August 1900. His mother died when he was five years old and his father died ten years later when he was fifteen years old. He then came under his older sister's care.

George attended Primary and was baptized when he was nine years old. During his early life he participated in many church activities. He grew up to be a strong member of the Church and helped greatly in bringing two of his brothers into the Church.

He has been a counselor in the Sunday School presidency, an MIA advisor, a Sunday School superintendent, and a branch clerk.

I conducted this interview on 19 August 1980 at the Kahului Stake Center in Kahului, Maui. It was transcribed by Porchai Juntratip; audited by Delle Hamilton; edited, typed, and assembled by Lupe Fuimaono.

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Laie, Hawaii
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SIDE A

[000]

INT

It's the 19th of August 1980. This is Ken Baldrige and I am in the Kahului Stake Center in Kahului, Maui, talking with Brother George Mahi about his experiences of growing up in the Church here in Maui.

Brother Mahi, when and where were you born first of all please?

GM

I was born [on] August 21, 1900, here in [the] island of Maui, Iao Valley.

INT

So you have your eightieth birthday coming up in just a couple of days?

GM

Yes.

INT

Were your family members of the Church at that time?

GM

At that time my mother was the only one. When the missionaries were down here none of our family was [a] member of the Church. But my mother was not yet born either, but my grandparents heard of the Gospel and the person who accepted the Gospel was my grandparents in this village where lots of Hawaiians lived--no other nationality but Hawaiian in this valley.

George Q. Cannon came as a missionary and, of course, his experience of coming over was quite [a] lot of interest among the people of today to know. He was over in Lahaina and he was preaching the Gospel to the natives around there in his language; and, naturally, the Hawaiians could not understand what he was talking about and he could not understand what they were talking about. And this gave him some kind of feeling whether to go home or stay back and try. But this had brought a great interest in the Gospel in its early time because when George Q. Cannon ran into such a condition like this, he felt that something had to be done. The man who was in charge of the mission down here, his name was Clark, he felt that these people cannot hear what they're talking about, so they left. Ten of these missionaries were down here, five left.

A few of them started spreading around. Some went down further in the Pacific waters and two stayed back here on Maui. And with these two, George Q. Cannon felt that nothing can be done with these people unless they learned the language. And so he tried the best he could talking to the people and walking here and there and up the mountain and back, praying everyday he could. Finally, he made his trip over the valley--over from Lahaina coming to Olowalu and from Olowalu going over the ridge. This ridge trip is very dangerous unless you know the place, and he came over to the ridge. The ridge could not easily be explained, unless you went by and saw it.

[100] And years long after this, when I was a young man at that time, my brother and I crossed this ridge. We saw it was not easy to go by. Some place the boulder is so big and you have no way of going, if you get down that place you never can come back again. In other words, if you want to hold a stone [rock], there's nothing. On both sides is the rift or what they call the side of the mountain-side and we were up about six hundred feet high.

INT You were walking along the top of the ridge?

GM Right.

INT The valley on both sides?

GM You can see both sides.

INT Were your grandparents living up there in the valley at that time?

GM No, this was long after they had already gone.

INT You mean they'd gone away from Iao Valley?

GM I mean they died. My grandparents died before I was born. Then my mother died first when I was five years old, and my father died when I was fifteen years old. When we made the trip over it was somewhere between 1927 and 1930.

INT So your grandparents knew George Q. Cannon?

GM Yes.

INT Were they baptized by him?

GM There was no record showing that my grandparents were baptized while he was here, but they were very friendly with George Q. Cannon. He was living together with them in their home up in the valley and all the rest of the people in the village did not like our grandparents for doing that because they were all Protestants and Catholics in this village, except these grandparents of ours who had believed something like that this man came with a good thought and they loved him just like their son.

One day when George Q. Cannon came walking from the valley. As he walked down in the valley, he heard a congregation singing church songs, so that kind of give him a feeling he'd go inside there and see who they are and what he can accomplish. And as he walked inside, the priest met him. George Q. Cannon introduced himself that he was a Mormon missionary, that he was travelling to preach the Gospel. The priest knew that he did not understand the Hawaiian language, so there comes a thought, "Let's make him talk over here and [let's] see what kind of reception he will get from these people who are deaf and cannot hear the language"--well, that's my thinking. That's when he was asked by the priest, "Would you like to talk to this congregation?" He said, "I don't mind." [The priest said], "When I finish with my congregation, you can have them." And when he finished, he told him to go ahead. The priest said in Hawaiian, "We have the Mormon missionary here and he wants to talk to you people. We'll give him a chance when we finish our service." And when he finished, he turned it over to George Q. Cannon.

[200] And George Q. Cannon stood up to speak English. Everything and people were moving around, you can see the action there, they don't hear anything. But there was two men in there that had little schooling from our high school here on Maui--the Lahainaluna High School. And from this he began to talk, then after a while when he finished his talk, he said [to the priest], "Thank you." And then the minister said, "Anytime you come, you come on here and I let you use my congregation."

INT That was very generous of the minister, wasn't it?

GM Yes.

INT Now, you said your grandparents had passed away before you were born, and your father and mother, when you were quite young. Who was it that told you the stories about your grandparents?

GM It carried from on down because my family had kept this George Q. Cannon there. But they only picked that up from mouth to mouth. And it wasn't a story that we could get it packed in our mind and stayed, you see. Some of the family kept this record and they repeat these things.

[Anyway], and so when George Q. Cannon came back the second time, he went up and see the old folks; this minister asked him again, "If you like to talk, you can have my congregation." He said, "All right," and he stood up. This time he spoke in Hawaiian, and a better Hawaiian than the minister can put out. Everybody there was surprised, everybody there kind of glad, too. Then the minister forbids all members of that valley, "Don't keep the Mormon elders. They are no good, they like to take your wife, they like to take your daughters." See, all those slangs were used there. And so when the time came, George Q. Cannon was already warned in the valley by these people and by the members who were not members of the Church [except for] my grandparents. And they spread all the news, "Don't keep the Mormons. The Mormon elders [are] no good." And [in] all the valley [it] spread on, but my grandparents did not follow them. My grandparents stood there.

But here's the story of my grandparents. They had lived together [as] husband and wife for twenty-two years with no children. And the news spread up in the valley telling them not to house "no more Mormon in your house." My grandparents told George Q. Cannon that they're told not to accept [any of] the Mormon missionaries in their homes because they were no good, they were this, they were that. When George Q. Cannon heard that, that was the time that he felt that he would not get into this couple's house anymore. Not because he hated the story that came from them [and] he said this in Hawaiian, "E like nakanui o nau pistole." It means, "As many apostles Christ had during His lifetime here on earth, so shall it be the amount of children that come to your home." Knowing that this couple [had been] married [for] that length of time and had no children, and because the people were trying to take him away from these parents, he said, "Who am I to hurt these people, this couple here [is] so nice to me? And for me to come here and all these people hate them?" So [when] he left he told the couple that, "As many apostles Christ had during His lifetime here on earth so shall it be the amount of children that come to your house." You guess, tell me how many children came.

INT Do they have the twelve children then?

GM Fourteen children.

INT Fourteen?

GM Two died, twelve lived.

INT That's tremendous! How about your father's family? Did they join about that same time?

GM My father's family was nothing. They believed in God, but you know how different nationalities [believe]? They had their own views of believing God. They look at the sun as a god to them. They look at the stars and the moon and everything--even the trees--this is created by God and if this is the thing we eat, God gives us to eat. You know, things like that. But we, Hawaiian people, went wild on those such ideas. They think that everything that they must do and say is from the god that they believe. I think you've heard about the Hawaiians as being like the olden days of Abraham or Noah; they went freely and worshipped whatever they wanted.

[300]

The Hawaiians had that same feelings, and they have powerful voice. They can tell you something and it will happen; maybe it's just lucky and then they say, "See, I told you?" That's how this thing happened, when he said, "As many apostles Christ had, so shall it be the multitude that come [to you]," and they had twelve children. And from those children my mother was the only faithful one. I had an uncle, younger than my mother. He became involved in the branch and his name was known as one of the leaders there. And, how much, that I don't know. They did not say much about their days. The stories did not come out so clear and plain. But my mother as she married my father, I don't know whether they were married or lived like that 'til we were born. But I feel that they were not married. They lived as husband and wife, they had children and the first child was a girl who died at infancy. The second child was [also] a girl, who was born five years before my mother died, and she lived 'til she was forty years old and she died.

INT What was your mother's family's name--the one that knew George Q. Cannon?

GM Kuehu.

INT What's your first memory as a child?

GM Well, my first memory as a child, that's a very good question. My first memory is knowing who took care of me. I was old, I was about ten years old and didn't go to school because I had some complication, my health wasn't too good. But some of the family--my sister we stayed with--was going to Primary, and sometimes we joined with them and we all be girls and boys. But most girls were more interested in the Church than the boys were; I was a little boy at that time. I was going there when I was six, seven years old.

And then as I grew, I saw a lot of things going on. They baptized people; I saw the baptisms performed. But because of my condition, I never go to school. I did not have much experience at all.

Then when it came to this time in church, I saw this member of our family--up in the valley--was ordained. He was ordained as a priest in the Church; his age was eighteen. When I saw that, it was the first time I saw somebody, you know, and I felt proud because he's my relative. And then after a while as I was sitting down at the first row, they called him to talk, and this boy was at that age--he was a Chinese-mix--and then he started talking. He said that he was glad that he was ordained in the Church. When I heard him talking, I wondered if I'm gonna stand in front of a crowd like that and talk to the congregation.

[400]

There was an older, a very nice fellow who came down here--I think his name is Roseter--he was the one that became very friendly with us. His wife was a good organist and I loved the music that she played. And all of a sudden, the following Sunday when I got there again--because it gave me a lot of interest when this young man stood up and talked--and I thought, "I was proud of him," not knowing anything that I will run into. The following Sunday, I was approached by this missionary Roseter, he said, "Brother Mahi, we're going to ordain you a deacon." And I did not know what that [was], but now I [was] suddenly thinking if I'm going to be ordained and I am going to stand in front of the congregation and talk--and that kind of makes me feel that I wish I didn't come to church. And sure enough, I was ordained a deacon. But when I was ordained, my sister--that was [the] one who we depended on since my father and mother had gone--was sitting in the front seat; and when she heard me say a few words, she was very proud of me. But she did not dare to show any sign [of] how she felt.

After church, we walked home to the valley. When we got home, as usual, my sister likes us to pray first before we'd go and eat, so she did that. Then she break into tears and she said this, "You know, of all things, you made me proud today. You stood up and talked, and I appreciate that very much." Kind of make me feel good too from home. I thought she was going to tell me [that] the way I talked did not [make sense or something like that], you know, but it gave me a good build-up. That following Sunday I went back to church. There, I grew from deacon up to priest and from that time I put on my mind that, "This is it, I would go to church and do everything that I think I could if they give it to me." And then I did.

INT Tell me, what do you remember about being baptized?

GM I was baptized in the river, out in the open. They told us that [when we] come get a white pants. [In] those days in Hawaii we don't go with white pants, we go with pants or without pants. So anyway, we ask, "Do we have to have white pants? They say, "It'll be nice." So we got a white pants alright, then I was baptized. That day when I was baptized, I was alone, just myself. I was baptized by this man named Porter, I forgot what his first name [was].

INT Is he one of the haole missionaries?

GM Yes, one of the early missionaries, and he baptized me.

INT Were you eight years old at that time, do you remember, or were you older?

GM I was nine years old when I was baptized.

INT What was Primary like? Did they have Primary in the branch at that time?

GM We did have Primary, but [in] Primary we had all sizes. You know, there was somebody I think was about eighteen or twenty years old. And they're all together--[the] boys and girls--but the girls were more active. But the boys were not too active. My sister was one of them, but my older sister was not around because she was doing like the rest of the girls, you know, "I'll go when I like," and just stay away from it. But when I got involved in the Church, I tried to work with my two brothers who were in the service. They were in the service when I was in Honolulu and we got to go together, I tried to get them to come along with us. But in the service they were stationed away from Honolulu, sometimes [in] some other parts of Oahu. They didn't take them away but they were about to be shipped over to Europe where they had [the] First World War. They were about to be shipped [when] the war stopped, so they didn't get to go overseas. And then, of course, when they got through from there, they still hang on in the service as the national guard.

I was home, here in Maui. I was involved in church work. I was trying to make them see [that] I liked them to go to church. I'd say, "Go to church and be this, be that." Well, my brother next to me hated my teaching because he got into some kind of mischief and these things that he had done could cause him his life, but I tried to talk to him. When I talked to him about those things I told him, "Go to church and you will be all right." So the wife was glad because I was able to help him. The wife was not a member of the Church, but because I talked to Halden, my brother, of these things--he was working stevedore and he can do anything he want; he can run around the deck and all those things, and things began to lose [theft] on the ship and he was one of them [who took things from the ship]--he straightened up, stayed away from this crazy ideas and then he joined the Church.

[500] When he was baptized we worked on my other brother and we got him in to the Church, too. Well, for him it wasn't so hard, but he loved his liquor. And so when he turned to be a member of the Church, we got them straightened up. This was how I brought my family into the Church. The next step I tried to teach them [was] to get the priesthood. Then after a while I told them to go into the temple. After a while we started talking about genealogy and then they got involved [in] all these things. And while I stand back and look, I think if I were not a member of the Church, my two brothers would never become members of the Church, because they had their good time and what they were doing is a pleasure. To them something like this [was] great, but to us we know it's wrong.

But my sister was the one that helped me. This sister--that is living --when she was one year old, she died. Her body was on view. The family was visiting, crying with a loud voice--Have you ever gone to [a] Hawaiian funeral? You hear them crying. My aunt came inside and told my mother, "Why don't you call the elders?" And my mother said, "Call who?" "Call the elders."--Now these people, including my mother, are not members of the Church, so when my mother heard again the second time my aunt said to call elders, my mother called the elders.

These men came up [where] the body was on view. Well, those days we had [a] taro patch bank here and then walk through the house. And here people was out in the taro patch bank, crying. When he [the elders] reached inside he saw the familiar face, which is my aunt, and he said, "What are these people doing here?" And here was a stiff [body] laying here, and my aunt said [to my mother] like this, "Look at them." And my mother looked at them and said, "Why these elders come inside here and tell me like this? The person is dead!" And yet that was on her mind, she did not say this out to him, but "Why did they come here and talk like that?" So he told my mother, "Tell them all to go out." And they walked out and the Hawaiians were bitter about that because [they were] sending them out there and they were all Protestants. And so after a while my mother heard him praying in Hawaiian. After his prayer, he administered to the dead person on this board in the middle of this room and he blessed them and called them back, saying, "Come back, your work is not done yet." And, you know, when he finished there was life in the child, and she lives 'til today. And that's my sister.

INT That's your older sister today?

GM Yes, she is older than us, she's 85 years old; but she was the younger sister. The older sister died. So she's the only one [now].

INT You mentioned that after you were baptized and had been ordained, what are some of the experiences that you remember in connection with your branch? Where was the branch located, bytheway? What kind of a meetinghouse was it?

GM It was a chapel and it was a pretty old chapel. [In] the old days we used to have the bells--dang! dang! dang!--and the bells would sound right up to the valley. Then when we hear that bell, the first bell [means it's] time to go to church. Then we walked down half hour before the meeting start. The second bell we'd get closer, and then the third bell we better be inside. That's the kind of experience we used to have.

INT So when you hear the bell ring in the LDS chapel you know it's time to go to the meetings then?

GM Well, we usually go ahead most times, but you know, you don't get too much interested when you're young. But you can hear if the bell is ringing then you'd better walk fast. But before the bell rings we'd check up the time. If we start one hour ahead of time, it's better. We'd meet friends. We'd go around and talk. But when you have no mind to go to church but the parents are waiting, my father would like to see us go.

But he would not go with us, but for my case he took me to church. He took me because I was not feeling too good. My life wasn't too good. I could have been a dead person. My case was serious and the doctor treated me well. Well, again this happened to go back again [of] how I got interested in the Church--it's this Primary teacher who visited us up in the valley. She would come and see us and if she knew that I'm sick, she would come back to town and pick [me] up--those days we did not have automobiles. What we had was horse cart, and we have a hack. She hired this hack and came up [to] Iao Valley, picked me up, took me to the doctor. And I think from what kindness she had done has given me this life to live this long.

- INT Do you remember the name of this Primary teacher?
- GM Yes, Sister Lilikikipi. She was the one.
- INT When you went to church on Sunday, did they have the meetings something like they do now, there's Sunday School and then there's Sacrament meeting, separate?
- GM [600] Well, they [were] not exactly separate, but they had the meetings all in one day. The Relief Society and the priesthood they were separated [but] in the same room. There were the fathers [on] one side and mothers [on] one side. Then after a while we got more, then we started [to] separate [into] classes out in the lawn in the front part of the chapel [where] there was a big monkey-pod tree [which] gave us great shade. So there was a class [in] one corner there and a class right here and a class right by the tree, and so all [the] young people was around. And the teachers was those who learned the Gospel and tried their best. They have to teach the ones like us that [were] big and we call it lolo. Lolo means slow.
- INT So the chapel was just a one-room building, was it?
- GM That's right, just one room. And those chapels [in] those days they had the steeple and then the bell-room and then down to the chapel.
- INT Did the haole missionaries come quite regularly to the Church or was it after the local branch president?
- GM The missionaries would go but very few member brethren would join those who are strong, and they understand. They were there every Sunday. And they would come in a way that they are particular in life, you see. They come with coats, they don't come without coats. They honored the priesthood very highly and they'd come with a coat and when they go home they leave their coats and hang them on the nail. They did not just go to put them on a chair or throw them on a bed. No, they're so particular with their coats and to them that's the covering of the priesthood. They did this very highly and that man became a very powerful man. He was the man that prayed for my sister, that brought her back to life.
- INT What was his name?
- GM His name was David Kuaiaina.
- INT What church positions did you have as a young man?
- GM As a young man, I was involved in the Sunday School as second counselor; I was involved in the MIA as second counselor; I was Sunday School superintendent; and [I was also] branch clerk.
- INT So you had quite a variety of jobs then?
- GM Yes, we did not have enough men.
- INT Did you have several of these jobs all at one time as a young man?
- GM Well, I had the Sunday School job where I was involved with the MIA. I was also called as a branch clerk and then later I was [called] as a district clerk.

- INT Were there any haoles or Japanese or anything else in the branch at that time or was it all Hawaiians?
- GM All Hawaiians. The only time we got mixed with other different nationalities, was at that time when I was made counselor to the Sunday School [president]. We had one Portuguese--the Portuguese are very hard. They had their own faith and they are strong Catholic, but this man here became involved in the Church, became a good leader and lived according to its teachings. All the Portuguese and all the Catholic hated him, but it was nothing to him. His brothers [were] surprised to see him doing that. But his brothers and his sisters passed on and he worked for them in the temple. He died very long ago.
- INT What was his name?
- GM Henry M. Sill--M is for Moroni.
- INT Who was the branch president during most of these years--your teenage years?
- GM During my time when my sister was involved in that problem like that where she died, it was my uncle--my mother's youngest brother. Then after him, came this man--well, I was not sure if Kuaiaina was the branch president or somebody else, but Kuaiaina was also involved in the branch presidency. And there's another man Levi Hoopii, this man was also known as a great speaker. He wasn't afraid to talk. He was not afraid to say things that he know is helpful to the Church.
- INT Now you mentioned how the other churches felt toward some of their own members, as Brother Sill, that became Mormons. How did they feel toward Mormons in general? Did you feel that you were persecuted or disliked as a result of being a Mormon?
- GM We didn't care. For my feeling I didn't care because I wasn't attending the Catholic school. I attended the public school, you see. But my two brothers and my sisters they were attending Catholic school. [700] So for me I didn't care in regardless of what they talk about me. But my two brothers they were at Catholic school and they [were] kind of afraid because everyday in school they had certain kind of habit in school. I think they had a prayer [or] something like that, then you have to make the sign of the cross; and they liked you to go to church. Sunday they liked to see you in church. But my two brothers sometimes they'd go there and sometimes they'd go with me.
- INT So they did feel some difficulties?
- GM Yes.
- INT How old were you when you left Maui?
- GM I was thirty-five years old.
- INT Okay, thirty-five. So you left then in 1935?
- Let's talk about some of the early years. Do you remember when the flu epidemic hit, for example, in 1918? Do you remember that?

GM: Nineteen eighteen, the flu?

INT: Just about the time that World War I ended.

GM: We had quite a bit, but at that time, 1918, I was in Honolulu. I was visiting there because my father had gone and my sister--the oldest one--was in Honolulu, and my brother was in the service. I started traveling there too because there was nobody home. When I stayed there in Honolulu, we'd hear this whistle. Everytime there was advancement made by the allies, we hear the whistle blow and when this whistle blow, we're so happy. We know that we're getting another step ahead. So those days we were kind of scared because war was something dangerous to us. We thought that that's where our life is going to be right there. They either kill us at home here or take us away.

INT: So you were seventeen when the war started or when we got involved in the war.

GM: Yes, the First World War.

INT: But you didn't have to register?

GM: No, no.

INT: Probably would have [to] pretty quick, the war kept going there, wouldn't you? Or your health may have kept you out?

GM: I don't know, I think we were lucky there were no drafting at that time. But the Second World War, yes.

INT: They drafted on the mainland, but maybe not here.

GM: I think so, my two brothers go in because they were in the national guard. They were happy because they like to hold guns and shoot at anything. They just let this target fly up and if you crack them, Gee! everybody praise you and give you a tap on the back. But I wasn't like that. If they give me the gun, I soon give it back. Whenever the thing is flying over here, I'm shooting over there. You're so excited, you like to blast that shot, that bullet. I don't think I am helping you at all much.

INT: For the activities in the branch during the time that you were a young man, what type of functions did they have? Did they have socials? Did they get together for parties or picnics?

GM: There was. But these come under the Primary or under the Sunday School class. They take us once or twice a year--Oh, I think better than that--they'd take us where we wanted to go. We hiked, we walked up the valley and there we'd take food and some plates, we'd take bathing clothes and we all go swimming. After we swim, we would have this lunch. We'd get together and our teachers--most of them all sisters who cared more for the children than menfolks--and they let us have fun.

[761] END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

[000]

INT When you say up in the mountains, where did you go?

GM Hike up in the mountain, the Table Land, you know?

INT Iao Valley?

GM Yes, yes.

INT Where was the chapel located, bytheway?

GM The chapel was located far away from town and it's down Happy Valley, this place here is forgotten today. Now [that] we're [talking], I think it's a nice thing that we should remember this spot, whether this place is sold or used by a private owner. But at least the area--the road and the site--I know the walkway to the chapel is still there.

INT So this is in Happy Valley?

GM Down in Happy Valley--Gee, I wish I could take you there, but.... Next time you come back, you tell JJ [to] call me up. Then he can take us over there, we'll show you the place.

INT Well, we can drive over there afterwards.

So I interrupted you, you were telling me about some of the Primary parties that you had up in the mountain.

GM We'd take food and we'd go up on the mountain but there were two places. We'd go up Table Land--they called it Table Land because this is the higher land in between the two streams. One stream on the left, another stream on the right and you go up there. But to have food and all, we must be by a place where we can get water. And we would climb up this Table Land, then come walking down on a hillside. It's fun! All is quite an experience. That is where I began to see the pleasure of our visiting up in the valley. In other words, there is a place to remember because we would come through brushes, and these brushes were so high it covered the road. And upon this area, we would go with horses and when we get tourists or people like that--somebody that we like to show up there--we'd tell them to get off the horses and there's two choices they can take: to go before the horse or come behind the horse. So one of the guides--like one of us who's well-known in the valley--would go down to the end and wait down there for every horse that comes there, you get it and tie it so that when the man who is riding that horse will find his horse. If you let them go like that, you'll never find them. So we'll have fun like that. Some of us will go down and the rest of them behind, then we can catch the horses and tie them up.

[100] But this were pass that we are coming today, some places [that are] cold you don't see the sky. But the place is so deep the natives used that place so much that the horse slid down all the time and every time they dived down and dig this place. When it rains [the water] comes there and take all this loose soil away. So it becomes a big, pretty deep place. Some places is higher than a horse and, of course, these brushes [weeds] that grow over, sometimes cover.

But my father is always the one that goes up there because he used the trail quite a lot, he trim it. At least you can see the sky, you get light, you know. And he'd ask us if we'd like ride on a horse, don't get off, don't whip the horse, don't force it. If the horse falls down just let it go like that. It would come up by itself. But if you get scared and whip and they try to struggle --because the pass is narrow--and if you juggle around there, you might get killed inside there.

INT So the path would only be two or three feet wide then, wasn't it?

GM Yes, one was less than that, two feet-two and a half feet.

INT So were these church gatherings that were going up on this trails, like this?

GM No, we never take the youngsters on a horse only when we take some special people, older people, go up there and come back.

INT For instance, tour groups, primarily, that come in?

GM Yes. But the Primary we'd come down together with then and if we get any horses with us, the horses go first and the children come behind. Our food come from the level at the end of the route to the place-- or this swimming pool, we would call it.

INT This was at the Table Land you are speaking about?

GM Yes, but the Table Land is above, the swimming pool is way down, about one mile away from the Table Land.

INT Now, this is up in the Iao Valley?

GM Oh, this is up in the Iao Valley. We get down there the food is there. Actually, we'd go swimming all we want to. We'd get tired and we'd come up, change and put on our dry clothes. And sometimes we pretend that we don't like to carry our wet clothes home, we just throw [them] there and come back. Our senior family would ask, "Where is your clothing?" "Oh, I don't know," but we just threw it away because we did not like to bring our wet clothes. After a while, they caught on our tricks. They said, "You go swim with those clothes and come back with them."

INT Do you remember any district conferences?

GM Gee, yes. We have had district conferences, but it's the kind [where] the missionaries would come and join with us. Mostly, the old folks get the most benefit because we were too young to hear of these things. They always put us with the younger people, you see. But older folks would have a better chance they would hear somebody there [who came to speak]. I can't remember who was our visitors. Oh yes, I can tell you this, I remember mission President Samuel Woolley [when] he came over here. Because they were the only family that was closer to the Hawaiians. Their hearts were all for the Hawaiians. They were willing and they were helpful. Of course, they taught the Hawaiians a lot of things; but the Hawaiians.... [Laugh]

INT When the temple was being built in Laie, was there much interest
[200] here in Maui concerning that?

GM To me, yes, because I began to learn something. I hear something about the temple and there were ordinance work in there, you know, [like] baptism--[things] like that. But we did not have the privilege of going there. Mostly they would be picking up people from right in the island of Oahu. Because this caused quite an expense in picking up these young people here, go down there, and to host them. [Not] until we had the privilege to do some temple work. And I think I was about twenty-four years old when we had that chance to go and do baptismal work down there. But I didn't go, I waited 'til I went to Honolulu and stayed; then I got involved to take a group to Laie. I went first for my own endowment, then I went again to do somebody else's. Then I started thinking that, to help others, we began to gather names, and most of the names we gathered was people on the outside islands who cannot do work, so we in Oahu go do the work. Of course, we get these names from the temple.

INT Do you remember when President [David O.] McKay came over here in 1921?

GM Yes.

INT Did you see him?

GM I did.

INT Tell me about that meeting. How many branches were there here in this part of Maui, do you know?

GM There's a branch in Hana. There was a branch at Nahiku, that's right close to Hana and they didn't use too much of that building; they [finally] got rid of that chapel. Then next to that one is Keanae. And next to Keanae--this is a very interesting place which they call Kailua, it was something like a schoolhouse, far off from the main branch here in West Maui. Central Maui [is] from Kahului up to Haiku. Then from there on, it's West Maui. But we had branches from Hana, Nahiku, Keanae, Kailua, Pauwela, and Haiku. Paia, Kahului, and Pulehu are in Central Maui.

INT This meeting that President McKay came over to--I know they went up to Pulehu--is that the meeting where you saw him, or were there more than one meeting?

GM More than one meeting I saw him. Now what was the story that you know about President McKay here in Hawaii?

INT Well, I know that he came over, met with the missionaries, and it was here that they discussed the importance of having a school. And then it was the experience that they had up in Pulehu with E. Wesley Smith and Hugh Cannon, I'm familiar with that story there. But I'm interested in what your observations were when he came over. Do you
[300] remember the meeting that you attended? Now, of course, he was not the president of the Church, he was an apostle.

GM He was an apostle.

INT Was he the first apostle that you have seen?

GM No, I don't think so. Let me see. Gee, that's a good question. I think he was the first one. Of course, Joseph the Smith, now we got the Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, Joseph F. Smith.

INT Now Joseph F. Smith was president of the Church during much of your early life.

GM That's right.

INT Until 1918.

GM And President McKay was an apostle then.

INT Right.

GM Then his son Joseph Fielding Smith became the number [ten prophet], right after President McKay as the president of the Church; then Harold B. Lee, now it's President [Spencer W.] Kimball.

INT When President McKay was here, did he meet with congregations in various branches, or was he just here at the meeting at Pulehu?

GM Just at Pulehu.

INT That was the only meeting he went to.

GM Well, no. In 1921 we didn't have this Kahului chapel yet. So Pulehu was a great place. Everytime they had a meeting it was something big to us, but we local people had to travel, we had to pay our way to go up there and it was kind of hard for us.

INT How did you travel to get up there to Pulehu?

GM We'd hire a carriage-car, it would take maybe about ten or fifteen people and then we would go up there.

INT When you say a carriage-car, do you mean horse-drawn?

GM Yes, horse[-drawn], we call it stage-carriage. And then we'd ride on this car and it's a lot of fun.

INT But there were cars and trucks here in Maui by that time?

GM Yes, I think we had automobiles already. [But I'm not sure.]

INT But most of your travels was in the stage coach type of thing?

GM Yes, from branch to branch right in Wailuku here. We had Waihee, Waiehu, Wailuku and Waikapu. They called these four places in Hawaiian, Nawaieha--the four waters, because we got Waiehu, Waihee, Wailuku, Waikapu.

INT So there were branches in all of these places?

GM Right.

- INT So these carriages would travel around from branch to branch, pick the people up and take them up to Pulehu?
- GM We who hire it, it would take us over there where the conference is going on. If it's in Waikapu, we'd all go to Waikapu. If in Waihee, we'd all go to Waihee. It was good though. We enjoyed it because the spirit was real good. You'd meet somebody that you know you just see them, but when you go to their branch, then you can get to talk to them. They were all kinds of Hawaiians.
- INT So it was about 1935 when you went over to Oahu?
- GM Yes.
- INT So, you were here then when the Depression started?
- GM Right.
- INT Did you feel the effect pretty much here in Maui?
- GM Actually, we did not know anything that we were suffering of, food [or anything] like that, because we had our taro--we were planting our taro--we made our own poi, we go fishing for our own [fish]. We like meat, but very seldom we eat meat. It doesn't make us crave for it, but we love this one thing, salt-salmon.
- INT When the stake was organized over on Oahu in 1935, was there much excitement about that here on Maui or not much attention paid?
- GM [400] Well, not much with us. We didn't feel too much about this. At that time when the stake was organized, I was in Honolulu. I was happy because before the stake was organized, they made us go around as stake missionaries. There we meet people, we talked, and the Gospel became bigger and bigger each time. And so when Oahu was made a stake, the next place was Laie. But I think Laie and Oahu [were made stakes] almost [at] the same time. I don't know, I am not sure.
- INT The one stake took in the whole island.
- GM Yes, one stake took over the whole island, then after that they separated. They had Laie because Laie was big enough and there were more people down there [at] that end. Then the one above in Oahu, we get people that come from Maui, Hawaii, and all outside islands; and they piled up in Palolo; and members of the Church began to get weak because they just feel like, "Why should we go to the church of these people here in Honolulu." There were differences in the people there, they didn't all cooperate too good. But it was not Oahu's fault, it was the fault of the island people. If you go up and talk to them, they'd talk to you. If you don't talk to them, nobody says boo hoo or what, see. So the best way is to go and talk to them.
- INT When the Temple was dedicated in 1919, do you remember anything about that here on Maui?
- GM Well not much here in Maui, but in Honolulu it was a big day.
- INT Did you go over?

GM I didn't go. What did you say nineteen what?

INT Nineteen nineteen.

GM Nineteen nineteen. I didn't go. But we had a plan [that] the next time we will go, but in 1919, we left [it alone] because people were going from different islands to this conference down in Laie. They went with a group such as a group of singers from each island and this brought them to Laie and that's how many of them [that] went to the Temple. Because while they're singing they might have made it worthwhile by going for their endowments. We did not go but one of my sisters--the one that's still [alive]--she went and I was glad she went because she had the desire of going to see this thing, and she wanted to know what it's all about. She became a temple member and she stick to it; and through her life, I began to do the same.

She is not married. I don't know maybe I am a little bit off the subject. Now I [am] going to tell you this. One day I was reading her patriarchal blessing. I read mine, but when I read her's and the blessing was telling that she would have children in her home and that she will love them and these children will love her. When I read this patriarchal blessing, I said, "This is funny, she is not married and she'd have children?" Here then the blessing was pronounced upon her. You know, just lately I started thinking I was the same way, I had an adopted son, but we never have worked for him in the temple. I baptized him but I cannot seal him to me--me and my wife separated and divorced. But when I looked at my sister's case, I began to think, "She had all these children that came and stayed with her--or with us in our family--were adopted children," you see. And yet, in the beginning I felt there was something wrong with this patriarchal blessing, my sister is not married and she has children?

INT So it was all the adopted children?

GM That's right. Through that, her desire is all with these children. And every pray she renders out she will ask her blessings upon these children. And when I think of that I say, "Oh, I see it now. I'd better take back my idea." Now I know that the patriarch is not blessing anybody for nothing. He is blessing [them with] something that the Lord gives him to pronounce on that person and he or she is. And that gives me a great appreciation of the Gospel.

INT Is there anything else that you can think of, Brother Mahi, about the Church here on Maui in those early days that might help give us a picture of what the Church is like at that time?

GM [500] Well, I know my first experience in church. When we were having some Christmas celebration and we were told to take certain parts in the program, and they would make us to be one boy and one girl and we'll do some part, either talk or something like that. And just so happened [that there was] this boy [he was] much older than me--he was old, his mother died and his father was alone--and then this boy was home. There was a neighbor--they lived very closeby--and [among] these people, there was a sister, and this girl became the wife of this old man. And this old man, his name was Kuaiaina--you got his name there already--he married this young man's sister. This was his fourth wife.

The first wife died; the second wife, they got into the Church; the third wife, I think she died too. But this fourth wife was this young girl. And now I was thinking like this, "How come, how come they married like this?" And I felt, "Well maybe if he married in the temple maybe it's something different" you see. I didn't know too much about the Church. And after a while we were taught in class that if you marry your wife, and how many wives you get as long as she is free or something like that. So I started thinking, "Well, maybe my life will be like that, too." I don't know. I am eighty years old, but I don't think I will get married to any wife. My wife and I did not work out well because we divorced before my time that I went into the Temple.

INT Well, the Church goes back a long ways on Maui and this kinds of help fill in a bit about what it was like, especially during the early 1900's and 1920's up to 1920 before you went over to Oahu.

In the 1920's were there quite a few Mormons or not very many?

GM Oh, not many. As I said to you a little while ago about this man Kuaiaina, he was a very faithful man and he honored his priesthood; that's why I said when he took off his coat, he'd make sure his coat is on the nail and he would not like anybody to touch it, just leave it alone. And later on we found out [that] every time he went administering, he'd go with that coat and he administers [to] the sick. And he was the one that I said who administered [to] my sister when she was on the death table there. And not only that there were many other people he had performed [on].

There was a[nother] case where one of the sisters got drowned and he administered to her. I don't remember the name, but he administered to her and brought that person back to life. That I could believe because of what they had done to my sister.

INT Did you see him administer to your sister?

GM No, I was too young, I mean, I wasn't even born.

INT You were not even born, I see. One other question I wondered about: When you first started going to church, were they speaking Hawaiian in the Church.

GM Yes, yes, mostly Hawaiian. But when the missionary was there, then we were given [the challenge] to speak in English. Yes, we tried to talk the best we can, but mostly in Hawaiian so that everybody else understood. We had lessons given out, and when we go to the Primary in some classes we had to speak in Hawaiian.

INT When was this discontinued, speaking in Hawaiian?

GM Well, I think in about 1917 [or] something like that, just about the beginning of the war.

INT Beginning of World War I, during that time?

GM Yes, within that time.

- INT So after World War I most of the services were conducted in English?
- GM English, yes.
- INT What did they call the chapel where you met, the one in Happy Valley? What was the name of the branch?
- GM Well, they called it Mokuhau Branch, really Wailuku Branch but we call it Mokuhau Branch because it's down that valley.
- INT Is that what eventually became the Wailuku Branch?
- GM That's right.
- [600]
INT So that was one of the early branches here in Central Maui. Well, Brother Mahi, those are the questions I was interested primarily in. Is there anything else you can think of that might be well for us to include on this, kind of covering the period between 1900 and 1935 here on the island of Maui?
- GM Yes--Now I can see how I have neglected so many things instead of keeping it--I used to remember when the stake here was organized, and I used to remember the wards here, we had Kahului One and Kahului Two. Kahului One will take this side of the stream going up Iao Valley and everybody on this area was the Kahului First Ward. And from this road here going up to Iao, all that on the other side of the road is the Second Ward; and all this on this side of the road is the First Ward. But we, the Mahi's, lived up that valley. We are on this side of the stream, it runs this way from the road to the stream. We're on this side of the stream, but we went to the Second Ward. That is the only thing I can't understand. I say, well, maybe we're special people, I think.
- Goerge Q. Cannon had a good experience and he was not afraid when he pronounced what he told my grandparents. In Hawaiian words it's beautiful, you know: "As many apostles Christ had during His lifetime here on earth, so shall be the amount of children to come to your home." And in the way of explaining it in Hawaiian it is very beautiful and that's what happens. They had fourteen children.
- INT That's quite a posterity.
- GM Yes.
- INT Well, this has been very good, Brother Mahi, I appreciate your taking the time to talk with me about the Church here on Maui.
- GGM I wish you give me a better chance to think first, but now anyway, your questions were simple and easy and it was answered; but if it wasn't answered, I don't know.
- INT Well, perhaps we have a chance to get together again sometime.
- GM I hope so. I appreciate this very much.
- [649] END OF INTERVIEW.