

IN SEARCH OF EARLY HAWAIIANS

-Dorothy L. Behling-

One day in 1987, a beautiful Hawaiian woman came into the Laie Family History Center. She stood in the doorway looking confused and possibly a little apprehensive. Her eyes searched for something familiar. Coming to the library was not like going to church.

"May I help you?", I asked.

The relief was immediately apparent on her face.

"Yes, please," she said, "I'm looking for my family."

She told me the family name she was searching for.

"Oh, I read a great story about a man by that name in "The History of the Hawaiian Mission" (the published manuscript by church historian, Andrew Jenson)."

I told her the story and she was delighted.

"Could we find his membership record? I'd like to write the story and place it with a copy of his membership for our family. It would be such an inspiration."

"Sure, we've got the Church records here on microfilm. We could find it for you, no trouble."

We went to the film of the earliest memberships. But, we looked in vain for his record. I knew he had been baptized and ordained an Elder, that he served a mission to the island of Hawaii, and that he had died in 1852. Where was his record? Was it possible that the membership records were incomplete?

DISCOVERY OF MEMBERSHIP COVERAGE

If the membership record of someone I knew had been baptized in the Church in 1851 could not be found, how many others might also be missing? What was more, I knew that membership records are used to generate temple ordinances. I presumed that the Church had used existing records of deceased members in 1919 to prepare names for proxy work in the new Hawaii Temple. I had seen family group sheets prepared by Abel Mattoon, in the 1950's showing that he had used the records then. But, what about people whose names could not be found on the records? Did this mean that they had not received their temple blessings?

The thought struck my heart with great sadness. I had spent many pleasant hours reading the first three volumes of The History of the Hawaiian Mission and had come to have a great feeling of aloha for those early members of the Church in Hawaii who had to struggle against misunderstanding and persecution. I admired their faith and hoped that modern Hawaiian members would some day think of them as heroes, standard bearers, true saints. How could I be sure that they had not been forgotten?

I determined to go back to The History of the Hawaiian Mission again, scan it, and glean the name of every Hawaiian mentioned. I could then check the TIB (Temple Index Bureau) and the Archive to see if temple work had been done. The effort was tedious and unfortunately, relatively unrewarding. The first volume, of more than 350 pages, yielded less than 100 names. References like "baptized five today" or "baptized fifteen before breakfast" gave me nothing but frustration. The

actual names seldom followed. The people I did find were often those who had been called to priesthood positions, like an Elder, or Branch President, and so a second frustration rose when I realized that in the first eighty or so names on my list only four or five were women.

After reading about a third of Jenson's "Hawaiian Mission History," I stopped, discouraged by the obvious lack of information on Hawaiian people in the mission record I was reading. I gave the meager list to Fran McFarland who had access to the complete TIB for Polynesia at the Kalihi Family History Center. Sister Carrie Kelii and possibly others looked up all the names and cited possible ordinance dates. But, in matching the names one could not be absolutely certain that the person on my list and the one on the Index were indeed the same.

Of the list of about 127 people, it appeared that less than fifteen had temple work. That meant almost ninety percent had no ordinances. I was alarmed! How could this happen? Remembering the Iosepa Colony and that work had been done in the Salt Lake Temple by living Hawaiians before the construction of the Hawaii Temple, I pursued that possibility. Maybe they had gone to the temple themselves. That would explain why they were not listed in the proxy work found in the TIB or in the IGI. But, only a few of the names I had were listed among the Iosepa residents.

It was now clear that there were people who had been baptized into the Church whose records had been lost and who in life or by proxy had not received important temple ordinances. What was the time period that was missing, was the next question.

I searched the original hand-written church membership records preserved on microfilm. As I carefully studied them I began to pay particular attention to the column that listed the date of baptism of each member. The dates were all out of order. There would be someone baptized in 1870 followed by someone in 1863, next someone in 1878, and then one in 1851. My conclusion was that the document we presently have and use as our oldest record of membership, was actually put together in about 1880.

Earlier records did exist. I read journal entries like, "Spent the day at the church working on the records." But those earlier, more complete records were missing for the years 1850 to 1880.

The membership records we have reflect those members who were active in 1880, who may have been baptized as early as 1851. What they do not reflect is those baptized members who had died before 1880, or who were sick or inactive at the time of this attempt to correct the membership records. Since the record of membership was probably used for the generation of names for temple work, quite simply, those not listed were in general, not done. Where should I look for those names?

THE SEARCH FOR MORE NAMES OF MEMBERS BAPTIZED BEFORE 1880

I went back to "The History of the Hawaiian Mission" once again, this time with determination not to miss anyone. The first four volumes (1850 to 1880), were read during the course of the next several months. In addition, from the membership records, I began to write down the names of those performing the baptisms of people listed with pre-1880 baptismal dates. I found that many listed as baptizers were not listed as members. They had probably died before 1880.

Then I made a list of the missionaries who had come from Utah between 1850 and 1880. I went to the library catalog to see if BYUH had journals for any of those on the list. There were a few. Some were on film and difficult to read. There was, however, a hardbound copy of John Stillman Woodbury's Journal in two volumes. I think Brother Jerry Loveland had obtained it for the University. Well, I started there. I used every spare minute to read through the heavy volumes.

Not only did I write down all the Hawaiian names I could find, but I also entered the name of every person mentioned who was in any way associated with the missionaries, including those who had opposed the Church or were excommunicated. There were merchants, people who let the missionaries stay the night, ministers who fought against the Church (who, I hoped, like Paul had since seen the light and would accept the work), sea captains, neighbors who had loaned the missionaries a horse, shoes, or a coat, and the names of some women.

The Woodbury journal was a transcription and as I read I was sure that some of the Hawaiian names were not exactly right, but I put them down as they were in the books. It contained information on all three of Woodbury's missions to Hawaii and proved to yield the greatest number of names of any of the dairies or journals.

Afterwards, while using the film sources, I was thrilled when I found several pages in the Thomas Karren Journal that listed the names of many of those who were baptized while he and Nathan Eldon Tanner had been missionaries in the Kohala district of the Big Island. Later, in Salt Lake, these names and dates would be corroborated by entries in Elder Tanner's journal.

In the course of time, I was led to Clements bibliography of materials associated with the LDS Church in Polynesia. I discovered there were valuable sources to be read at BYU Provo and at the Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City. As I proceeded through the materials here in Hawaii over the next two or three years, I constantly had a prayer in my heart that somehow we could get to those sources on the mainland. Maybe they would make copies and share them with the BYUH library. In the meantime, all the information gathered was entered into the computer using the Church program, Personal Ancestral File.

The Institute for Polynesian Studies learned about the project and encouraged me to apply for funds to help me continue the work. They provided computer paper, notebooks, printer ribbon, money for travel expenses, a copy of Clements book, and much appreciated interest in the effort. Soon, it became apparent that I had to go to Utah to continue the effort. The Lord provided a semester where I taught twenty-one credit hours on three campuses. It was a strenuous schedule, and though it frustrated me because I had little time to work on the project, it provided me with the money to go to Salt Lake to continue the search.

I thought I was being led to actually move to the mainland, but when I went to purchase my ticket, I was surprised that it turned out to be a round-trip. Where could I stay in Utah? Midge Oler offered an apartment in their home in Lehi. I was overwhelmed with the generosity of the Olers who invited me to stay there for as long as necessary to complete my work. They even made a trip there to make sure renovation would be complete before I arrived. It was a lovely apartment and perfectly situated half-way between Provo and Salt Lake.

Just before I was to leave Hawaii, Lois Swapp asked me about developing a special project. She hoped we could use the language skills of some of those in Laie to prepare Hawaiian names for the temple. I got an idea but I had to check with Salt Lake. I found out that all the Hawaiian marriage records filmed by the Church had been assigned for extraction during the Year of the Hawaiian, 1987. That effort would generate the ordinance of sealing to spouse for all those on the films.

I asked for permission to extract the same marriage records, but to have them generate baptism and endowments for each bride and groom. I explained that I thought this was necessary because our birth records for that period are so poor. I explained that the people at the State Health Department don't consider their records complete for births until the 1930's. I knew that neither my mother's birth, nor any of her sixteen brothers and sisters, had been registered. I had found this to be the

rule rather than the exception for the time prior to the 1930's.

Richard Fluhman, the Senior Extraction Specialist assigned to Hawaii and Polynesia, gave encouragement and permission to proceed, contingent upon local Priesthood support. So in the fleeting days before my departure for the mainland, we organized a small group of volunteers who began the task of extracting the selected films. With only a couple of days of instruction, I left them to their work.

FIRST TRIP TO UTAH

During this trip which began in September 1990, several miracles occurred allowing me to obtain a car and stretch my funds to cover a great deal of travel, computer support and help me to get on with the project. I began recording some of the shorter journals, and then was impressed to go back to the John Stillman Woodbury journals. Permission was obtained to have access to his original little notebooks. There were about six or seven volumes written in a tiny hand to conserve space in each precious leather-bound notebook. Several of the names copied from the transcription were corrected, missing sections were discovered, and a little volume came to light that had not been included in the two hardbound volumes I had used.

That little volume was Woodbury's personal record of his baptisms. I wept at this discovery. It clarified the information found in the text of the journal and was the second source to yield a large number of female names.

Although there were many remarkable occurrences during those days, two will serve as examples of how the Lord's hand was at work. In about October, I ran into a former research buddy, whose name shall be anonymous. When I had last seen him, he had been struggling to support his small family by working in genealogy. That October found him employed by the Family History Center as a consultant. He was a lot more secure and seemed content.

He had counseled me back in 1985 when we were both working on German lines that I needed to return to Hawaii and work on my Hawaiian family. I had explained that our records were not complete, that I didn't read Hawaiian, and that even when my mother was alive we had not been able to do much with the Hawaiian part of the family lines. Now that she was dead I felt it might well be hopeless. He was silent for awhile then insisted again, and again that I needed to return.

I had to tell him about what had happened at home: how the Lord had sent Edith McKinzie to Laie nearly every day during the summer of 1987, how she had become my special tutor for Hawaiian Genealogy, how Edith had led me to a microfilm that Henry Lindsay had shot, how we found it to be the genealogy collection of "Baby Ethel" (my mother's first cousin)--linking us with Keawepoepoe and to the Kumuhonua Chant, reaching essentially back to Adam. I had to tell him about the early LDS members discovered without ordinances and the gleanings from the journals. I believed in my heart that the spirit had worked through him that day in 1985 and had taught me about one of my missions.

His response was to take me aside and speak to me with unusual solemnity. "You know you can't stay here," he said, "You must go back." "I know", I replied quieted by his intensity. "I have a round-trip ticket."

"If you don't go back, thousands of Hawaiians will not be able to find their families. You will be able to help many people to find their genealogies. You will be given information and if you do not teach it, you will be held accountable. You must learn to magnify your skills by teaching and organizing others. You cannot do this work alone."

There were other things he said that day in the Family History center. The encounter left me dazed. Some of my friends challenged his inspiration. I had an

appointment the following day with Elder Kikuchi. After taking care of our business, I took opportunity to share with him what my friend had said. I asked his opinion. He simply said, "There are many members that have powerful gifts of the spirit. Sounds good to me." It was for me an important confirmation of my mission and a revelation of the solemn responsibility entrusted to me.

The next circumstance deserving of mention has to do with some papers that were found in the tabernacle at the time of the recent renovation. When the workers pulled down some shelving, they found six large ledger sized hand-written sheets with Hawaiian column headings. At the moment one of the men was about to throw the ancient papers in the trash, a friend of mine happened by, Trina Sabin. She asked if she could have the papers and she took them home not knowing what they were exactly, but believing them to be valuable. Later, upon hearing about my collecting names of early LDS members, she gave them to me saying, "Dottie, I think these will belong in your project."

I had kept the papers for almost a year and had taken them with me to Utah, wondering just where they should fit. Suddenly, one afternoon in late December, it was as if a light focused and pure intelligence descended from above like dew distilling. In that instant, with no premeditation, I knew exactly how the documents should fit and what I should do to determine if they contained information already in the Church records.

I did as I was prompted, checked the two films where the material should have been and within an hour had verified to my own satisfaction that these papers which were over 100 years old, were records from the Kauai Mission District and contained information that was not on the other available records of the Church.

I immediately began to put the information from them into the computer but, it was not until I returned to Laie in January that I recognized the full impact of these precious fragile pages. They turned out to be some district records from Kauai, written at the same time as our other records, about 1880. There was no evidence of damage from termites or silverfish and no cockroaches had eaten off the ink. Angels must have preserved them. And no wonder. They contain information that is providing temple blessings for over 900 people.

I was in Utah from about September to January, at which time I returned to Hawaii as per my ticket. But, I was not finished. There were journals I had not had time to read. So while I put the new-found information in the computer, I began to plan my return for March or April. The Oler family again invited me to stay with them in Laie as I worked on the project. It was as if they were supporting a missionary. They insisted that I keep any money I earned for the project. The Lord truly blessed me by allowing me to become a part of this wonderful family. Words will never be able to express the deep affection, gratitude and love I have for the Olers. The ultimate success of this project and the blessing it will be in the lives of thousands of Hawaiian people is really a result of their unwavering support. This is true Christian charity, the spirit of Aloha in its finest form.

As soon as I arrived back in Hawaii, the Lord provide me with employment as a substitute for three people at BYU. This allowed me to finish out the semester and leave for Utah again in April.

SECOND TRIP TO UTAH

During this second trip which ended in September, I had several people volunteer to help me read the journals. Kathy Hemingway from Oregon, and Lynn Christy from Provo had both been students at CCH when I was. They spent many hours reading and taking notes. Another former BYUH student, Brian Sullivan also became involved in the project. I bought notebooks for each of the readers and later

transcribed what they had found. They each found the same frustration I had experienced as they read: baptisms mentioned many, many times--but no names.

I was led to meet Bill Kelly and his wife, Nani. They put me in touch with Hawaiians in Utah. Through him I was able to speak to the Hawaiian Civic Club about Genealogy. As a result of this opportunity two women volunteered to continue reading the journals and one man shared his Mahi Family charts. I had received a copy earlier, but this was a more recent update.

When it was time to return to the islands I found myself without money and facing some heavy expenses. The Institute for Polynesian Studies came to my rescue with the needed funding and I was able to ship all my books and research materials and some household goods.

At this point I am reminded that this effort was not without adversity and affliction. I had kept my things in the storage area in Utah when I had left in December of 1985. When I got back I found that someone had broken in and taken a lot of my things: the TV, the stereo, the vacuum cleaner, my electric wok, and other kitchen appliances, and some treasured ceramic pieces. I guess it was a good thing, though, because I wouldn't have been able to afford to send them all to Hawaii, anyway.

Illness, too has come to hinder the work, but has not been allowed to stay. Priesthood blessings are stronger than physical afflictions when they are caused by that power that desires to halt this work. But, back to Salt Lake.

A couple of days before I left there, I was told about a new Church program that allowed members to submit names directly to the Temple. Richard Fluhman introduced me to the people in charge of Temple Ready. I prepared some names I had found for submission. The people in the Temple Ready department told me the program was in the pilot stages, and encouraged me to have our Priesthood leaders request that we be included in the study. When I returned to Laie I told Brother Miles, the Director of the Laie Family History Center, about the program. He sent in a request and Laie now has the only program available in Hawaii. We have had Temple Ready for over a year and many people have learned to take advantage of this simplified system of submission.

Temple Ready allows any member to check and see if ordinances have been completed for persons in his family by comparing his information with the entries in the IGI or International Genealogical Index. There are, however, a couple of problems in the system. Right now the IGI contains all the temple work from 1970 to 1988 and only a small fraction of the work done between 1842 and 1970. Through the Family Extraction Program, all the ordinance work done prior to 1970 will be entered into the computer. October is the deadline for all the materials to be turned in. Next year, in the 100th anniversary of the Genealogical Society, they hope to have the IGI complete with all the names of persons for whom proxy temple work has been done in this entire dispensation.

But, right now, we have to be very careful in checking previous work. We need to be aware that during the early days of the Hawaii Temple, a great many chants were used as a basic source for submission. These may not show up in the IGI until at best, next year. However, there is a complication even with this truly milestone accomplishment.

Early records often referred to Hawaii as T.H. (Territory of Hawaii) or as the Sandwich Islands. No one told the computer about these designations so, not recognizing the terms, the computer put such entries in World Misc/Antarctica in the newest fiche version of the IGI. There are fifty-four fiche, over 100,000 misplaced entries, some of which are from Hawaii, Tonga, Samoa, and New Zealand.

When the compact disk version comes out later this year, they will NOT have corrected this error.

Soon, as they get more of the kinks out of the system, they tell me Temple Ready will be available in every Stake Center in the world--probably by the beginning of next year. This means that we must be "akamai" when using the disks. We need to search BOTH Hawaii and World Misc./Antarctica before assuming work on the ancient chants has not been done. And until all the work is really on the disks and available for the Temple Ready program, we must also rely on the complete TIB and Archives to help us find work done before 1970. This search all four places, is an act of gratitude, even reference for the work of many others who have loved "Namakua" just as we do.

Otherwise ten, twenty, even fifty people may submit the same 1,000 names and each will not find the completed work in the Hawaiian section of the U.S and Canada, the computer will clear all the work to be done again and over a 100,000 hours will be wasted on duplication. Others are waiting. We need to concentrate on them.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The Early LDS Church Member Project has yielded a little over 2,900 names, though there may have been 10,000 to 15,000 members in that time period. I am not disheartened by these numbers, however. The Lord taught me a great lesson which helps me be hopeful. When researching one of my grandfather's lines I had spent a good part of one year and bits and pieces of another seven years to find exactly 250 family lines, most of which went to the 1500's and some as far as the 1000's. I thought I had done pretty well. I had honed my research skills and had produced more than many ever hope for in a lifetime. I thought I had scraped the bottom of the barrel and could say I had "finished". However, after I quit a full-time position at BYU Provo, the Lord brought me back to the library in Salt Lake. And in just twelve days, He led me by remarkable means to another 250 family lines!

I learned by this that if we will do our part, he will give us the rest. If we do the work for these 2,900 precious early members, the Lord will lead us to any other records that may exist or even send back the people, that not one will be lost.

The extraction of the marriage records has produced nearly 20,000 cards at present and has a potential for 150,000 to 200,000 when all the films are finished. Betty Dumaran and Lorraine Kaya of the Kahului, Maui Family History Center have recently begun on a film in that set. Linda Fonsalves of the Kauai Family History Center has also begun work on marriage records from her island. Jean Piena and some friends from the Single Adult program will proof-read the cards before submission. This part of the program is going forward very well.

The third project to emerge is the correlation of the chants on the computer so that Hawaiians everywhere can see the connections and the completed ordinances. This is a huge undertaking, but with the help of Nina Yoshida, Adam and Francis Forsythe, Jessie Ching and other interested researchers, we are moving along on this. The intent is to bring together all the chants recorded in the Hawaiian Language Newspapers that have been published in Edith McKinzie's books, along with those of Abraham Fornander, Samuel Kamakau, Mary Kawena Pukui, John Papa Ii, and others preserved in the Bishop Museum or the State Archives. We hope to receive information that is had only in families at this point so that they can be added to the total picture. The Lord helped the Hawaiian people to preserve a great heritage. Our job is to organize it on the computer, find the gaps and provide the work.

TEMPLE WORK

We have begun to put the names from all of these sources into the temple. We

have approached the four Stake Presidents in Laie for permission to invite their wards to participate. After the Bishop and other leaders accept the involvement, we prepare a list of about 200 names and place them in the family file of the temple under the name of the ward. They are then responsible to arrange for baptism, initiatory work, endowments and sealings as if they were their own family lines. In this manner we have assigned about 2,000 names over the last two months. We hope to include all the stakes on the island in this effort. With everyone's commitment and dedication, I believe we can exhaust all the record we have in three years, clear up the chants in about five years, and then, having done our all, we can, without need for excuse, ask the Lord to give us the rest.

When I pondered over why the early members had to be found now, I was impressed with a very clear thought. The Lord is planning his return. He wants his Hawaiian friends to be with him. We can help that happen by providing them with their temple blessings. And as we act on the information provided to us and show the Lord we are true to His trust in us, He will give us all the rest.

This work is not for the millennium, it is to prepare for the millennium. It is to make sure that all those converted in the Spirit World by the teaching of those who already have their ordinances, like Joseph Smith, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, Jonathan Napela, or even Wakea Aikanaka, Umi-a-Liloa, and others will be able to stand clothed with their ordinances and testify of Christ at his coming. That our Hawaiian ancestors may have that great privilege is the end to which we all should diligently work, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.