1-1-2009


Colleen Whitley

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When Thomas Farrar Whitley was called to the Tongan Mission in 1935, he had “never heard of the place.” His reaction was not unusual. In 1935, Tonga was one of the least accessible nations on earth. Whitley and his two companions, Donald Anderson and Floyd Fletcher, spent nearly three months in transit just to get to their mission. They left San Francisco, going by boat through Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia. Then they had to travel back through New Zealand to Fiji, where they waited ten days for a boat going the right direction. When Whitley finally got to Tonga, he made sure he would remember the place.

2. Whitley, Anderson, and Fletcher started from San Francisco on March 6, 1935, on an ocean liner, the S.S. Monterey, with four other missionaries and the family of M. Charles Woods, newly called president of the New Zealand Mission. The ship traveled through the Pacific, dropping two missionaries off in Hawaii, and skirting the northern tip of the Tongan Islands. The ship did not stop, however, since Tonga's major ports were over three hundred miles away in the southernmost group of the island chain. The ship traveled on to Fiji, where the three missionaries expected to find transport to their field. The people who were supposed to meet them, however, were not there, and the Fijian authorities refused to allow them to land since they had no visible means of support. Consequently, they went on to New Zealand with President Woods. Eventually they had to go on to Australia to find a ship that could deliver them to their assigned area. They finally arrived in Tonga two and a half months after they had set out from Salt Lake City. Their return trip in 1938 took another two and a half months, this time going through Hawaii. Thomas Farrar Whitley, *Journal*, March 6–May 18, 1935, in possession of Kristine Whitley Paulos.
He carefully recorded his mission in a daily journal, a set of papers, and some remarkable photographs.\(^3\) Taken together, Whitley’s records capture the traditional life of the Tongan people and reveal the changes that were occurring in the culture. Perhaps most importantly, they demonstrate the remarkable faithfulness of members and missionaries who helped the LDS Church recover from a series of devastating blows that had begun nearly four years earlier.

On August 17, 1932, Newel J. Cutler, president of the Tongan Mission, left Tonga to take his wife, Floy, to Hawaii for medical care. Although President Cutler expected to be back shortly, Sister Cutler’s condition was so severe that her husband was unable to return to Tonga at all. Given the exigencies of communication and travel through the Pacific in the 1930s, it was fifteen months before the new mission president, Reuben Wiberg, arrived.\(^4\) During that interim four missionaries, three Americans and one Tongan, had utterly abandoned their covenants and led members astray. They left disharmony among members of the Church and disgust among Tongans in general.\(^5\)

The Tongan Mission may well have closed had it not been for the faithful service of a strong cadre of dedicated members and missionaries. Both

\(^3\) Transcribed, annotated, and indexed print copies of the journal and papers, as well as records and discs of the scanned photographs, have been placed in the Church History Library, the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, and the Joseph F. Smith Library at BYU–Hawaii along with permission to reproduce those photos and to release materials to interested researchers for personal and scholarly use.

\(^4\) The difficulty of travel through the Pacific in the 1930s is demonstrated by the experiences of Whitley and his companions in coming to Tonga, and further by the adventures the new Tongan Mission President Emile C. Dunn and his family faced the following year when he came to replace Reuben Wiberg as mission president. They left San Francisco on January 5, 1936, but had to wait weeks in Pago Pago, American Samoa, until a ship came by that could take them to Tonga. They did not arrive in Nuku’alofa until March 12. Emile C. Dunn, Journal, January 16 and March 12, 1936, microfilm copy, December 1935–August 1950, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

\(^5\) Maurine Clark Wiberg, “As I Remember,” personal history, unpublished and undated, 11–12, copy provided by Gladys Farmer, Salt Lake City; R. Lanier Britsch, Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 451; Ermel Joseph Morton, history of the LDS Church in Tonga, unpublished mss, copy in possession of Colleen Whitley, copy also available at the Church History Library. All four missionaries were excommunicated and the Americans returned home. The Tongan missionary returned to full fellowship; Whitley’s journal notes his participation in Church activities on several occasions.
their dedication and their way of life are demonstrated in Tom Whitley’s photographs.

Provenance and Background of Whitley’s Photographs

While many parts of the world were changing rapidly in the late 1930s, Tonga remained largely untouched. Cars were few and motion pictures were barely beginning to arrive. Few people had cameras, and fewer still took pictures of LDS congregations and activities. Whitley used a camera he describes only as a Kodak and then sent his black-and-white film to New Zealand for processing by Ralph Sanft at his drug and variety store, Ralph’s Reliable Remedies. He mailed several of the finished photos home to friends and family and carried the rest of his prints and negatives back to Salt Lake City with him when his mission ended in 1938. They remained in his possession in his Holladay, Utah, home until his death in 1975. In 1976, his wife, Dorothy, died exactly one year after her husband’s funeral. The negatives and photos were given to Whitley’s son, Tom (my husband), and me, who also live in Salt Lake City. We approached Craig Dransfield of Bountiful, Utah, who produced positive prints from each of the negatives using his collection of frames to fit all sizes of negatives. We then scanned photos and negatives and provided digital or print copies of all of Whitley’s records to family members, Tongan scholars, the LDS Church Archives, BYU, and BYU–Hawaii, along with permission to make copies for interested parties. All of Whitley’s original records, including his photographic negatives, are currently in possession of his daughter, Kristine Whitley Paulos of Provo, Utah.

Tom Whitley was both a talented and an eclectic photographer. He took pictures of a wide range of people, places, and events. The photographs’ value was greatly increased in 2002–2004, when Salote Wolfgramm and her daughters, Tisina Gerber and Taiana Brown, identified almost every person in the more than 130 photographs found to date.

Whitley served nearly his entire mission in Vava’u, the northernmost of Tonga’s three main island groups, home to the Wolfgramm family. Salote Wolfgramm was the Relief Society president for Vava’u during the time the photos were taken (and later for the entire mission), and her

6. Among Whitley’s papers are several letters from Sanft on his letterhead “Ralph’s Reliable Remedies, Ralph Sanft, Ph.C., M.P.S. N.Z. Chemist and Druggist, 201 Symonds Street (Opposite Post Office).” Down the side is a list of his services ranging from imported drugs to dog food. Correspondence from Ralph Sanft to Tom Whitley, in Thomas Farrar Whitley: Missionary Diaries and Records, Tonga 1935–1938, ed. Colleen Whitley (privately published, 2004), 297.
daughters grew up there; in many cases, in addition to names, they have also added the genealogy, marriages, children, occupations, and details from the lives of the people in the photographs. Gerber literally went many extra miles to obtain identifications; she took copies of the pictures to older Tongans now living in the Salt Lake area, to the Tongan ward, and to individuals from specific islands when it was clear that a picture had been taken on those islands.

‘Isileli Kongaika of BYU–Hawaii identified his family members and put Tom and me in contact with them. All of the missionaries named in the pictures were identified by Hyde Dunn, the son of mission president Emile Cranner Dunn and his wife, Evelyn Hyde Dunn. Hyde Dunn was seven years old in 1936 when his father was called to lead the Tongan mission. His father served as mission president for ten years, throughout World War II. In addition, Paul and Carolyn Tuitupou graciously translated records written in Tongan and explained customs and traditions mentioned in the records or evident in the photographs. Carolyn also proofread the article and checked the spelling of names.

Whitley’s records include a daily journal, correspondence, genealogy, programs, membership lists, financial statements, and statistics. Both his papers and his journal contain spelling and punctuation at variance with modern norms in both English and Tongan, as do several of the other journals and manuscripts cited here. There are several reasons for these variances. Tongan spelling and grammar was regularized in 1943 when the Tongan Privy Council established norms. For example, they declared that “b” and “p,” which are not phonemic in Tonga, would always be represented by a “p.” They also replaced the “g” with an “ng” to differentiate it from the “n.” Consequently the nation of “Toga” is now written as “Tonga.” In addition, in the 1930s, simplified English spelling was being touted by individuals and organizations ranging from George Bernard Shaw to Time magazine. In several cases cited in this article, so many variant spellings exist in a single quotation that the number of [sic]s in the text would be more intrusive than they would be helpful. In all quotations used here, spelling and grammar have been retained as in the original documents, although some traditional punctuation has been added for clarity.

7. The senior Dunns returned to Tonga as labor missionaries and once again as mission president, serving a total of nine missions between them. Hyde Dunn also returned to Tonga as a missionary twice, once in 1950 as a labor missionary building schools and again in 1993 with his wife, Cleona. Hyde and Cleona Dunn, interviewed by Tom and Colleen Whitley, Brigham City, Utah, September 2, 2000; Hyde Dunn, correspondence with Colleen Whitley, 1999–2004.
Today Tonga is a stronghold in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The nation has the highest per capita LDS Church membership of any nation in the world. Its members attend the temple and send missionaries to other parts of the world. This stands in sharp contrast to the situation seventy-four years ago when Thomas Farrar Whitley began keeping his records, in both words and photographs, of the way of life in Tonga and, even more, of the faithful members and missionaries who overcame tremendous difficulties to salvage and strengthen the faltering Church.


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The Tongan Islands

Tonga's way of life in the 1930s was dictated by its geography. Tonga is a chain of tropical islands scattered over nearly 400 miles of ocean, with most of the population living in one of the three major island groups. The farthest south, Tongatapu, is the home of the capital, Nuku'alofa, and the center of trade and business. Ha'apai, located approximately in the middle, is known to LDS Church members as the area in which Elder John H. Groberg served much of his mission. Vava'u, the farthest north, is the area in which Tom Whitley served nearly all of his mission.

Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.
Tin Can Mail

The northernmost Tongan island is Niuafou’ou, where the ocean currents are sufficiently predictable that letters sealed in tin cans could be dropped from a passing boat to drift into the island. From there, the letters were mailed more conventionally when a ship heading the right direction passed by. As a result, Niuafou’ou became famous as Tin Can Island. Tom sent this letter to his future wife, Dorothy Gundersen, on March 16, 1935. At the same time, he mailed one to himself at the Tongan Mission Headquarters in Nuku’alofa. Dorothy received her letter in Utah a month later, but the one Tom mailed to himself didn’t arrive until June 28.

Houses

Everything from jobs to housing depended on locally available materials. These typical Tongan homes, made of pandanus leaves and the round end design used in Tonga for centuries, feature the homes of Fifita Motua and Sep Tu'akelas and were next door to the Ha'alaufuli missionary home and chapel.

Photo identification by Salote Wolgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
The Langi family of Ha'alaufuli was among the most faithful Church members in Vava'u. They are shown here breaking coconut shells and collecting the meat. Left to right, with the eventual married names of young women and girls in parentheses: the father, Saia Langi, holding an ax, Sione Makihele, Tupou Leo'ta (Latu), Telela Pauni, Vaingana 'Unga, Hakau Makilele ('Unga), Luseane 'Otuafi (Pauni), Lulama Langi ('Unga) and Saia's wife, 'Ana. The area is fenced to protect the food from pigs, which had been brought to the islands by white traders and, with no natural predators, quickly became a menace. "Chief of Police—a Mr. Ballard... told us of the Pig menace; he's killed 2000 Pigs in 2 or 3 years; it's a serious problem," wrote Tom Whitley. It's also one of the reasons roast pig was such a common part of the diet and so popular for feasts.

Truck with copra

Lihati ’Unga, son of Sioeli ’Unga, about to become the driver, stands in front of a truck, one of only four trucks in Vava’u at the time. It was owned by Lever Brothers manager Fredrich Wolfgramm and appears to bear bags of copra, dried coconut. On top of the truck, left to right, are Taukoho Langi, Motulalo Latu, Sione Makihele, and Tali Kivaha Langi. Ald Moli stands at the back. The house in the background was owned by Fifita Motua and was only two doors away from the missionary home.

Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
Mission Photos of Tonga

Copra house

Once the copra was harvested, it went to the beach at 'Uiha, Ha'apai, to the Fale Fua Niu, the copra house, the building on the right. There dried copra was weighed and payment made to those who brought it in.

Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
Loading copra onto a boat for shipping

Copra was loaded on boats like this one at the wharf. Whitley observed that the copra is "packed in sacks—weighing I should judge 150 lbs apiece—about 30 sacks are piled on the trucks—which are on tracks something like mine tracks; the boys (no matter how old they're boys) are the engines."

Whitley journal, May 14, 1935.
Baptisms were conducted in the ocean, like this one in the liku, the cliff or rocky side of the island. Hyde Dunn thinks this place is Kei-tahi, where he was baptized, and the man performing the baptism may be Saia Langi. Photo identification by Hyde Dunn.
Because so little cash was available, most members paid their tithing in things they grew or caught. Some of it could be shipped or sold for cash, but much of it was given to the poor or used for church activities. Here Elders Sylvan Rindlisbacher and Tom Whitley stand in front of the tithing house in Ha’alaufuli holding a contribution.

Photo identification by Hyde Dunn.

Tithing house
Crossing the water

Travel in Tonga inevitably involves crossing water. The Tongan Islands have both volcanic and coral bases; as a result, in several places coral reefs and sandbars provide easy access from one island to another. “Went to organize a Relief Society at the Koloa—to get there we walked & waded thru the sea in bare feet—would that be a good picture to see me with my pants rolled up and shoes in hand wading from one island to another—at low tide of course,” wrote Tom.

For land travel, missionaries sometimes used bicycles or horses, but in most cases, it was easier simply to walk, even from one island to another. In Nuku’alofa, the capital in the south, the mission owned some cars: a 1935 Ford, a 1926 Chevrolet, and a 1922 Essex. “In 1941, when Tungi, the husband of Queen Salote, died, the venerable Ford was requisitioned to bring his body from Pelehake to Nuku’alofa,” remembers Hyde Dunn.

The ship Tolofi

In June 1936, the Church bought a used sailboat to make transportation easier among the islands in Vava'u. Elders Tom Whitley and Verrill Wilford Draper painted it green and white and named it Tolofi, “Dorothy,” after Whitley’s sweetheart in Utah. The boat even became a missionary tool. When it won a race on Boxing Day, Whitley observed, “Every one will be talking ‘Mamoga’ [Mormon] for a while.” The Tolofi was used for years to ferry members, missionaries, and visiting General Authorities from island to island. In off times, missionaries used it for fishing, which they did both to sustain themselves and to provide items they could sell to raise money for Church needs.

Hyde and Cleona Dunn, interview with Tom and Colleen Whitley, Brigham City, Utah, September 2, 2000; Hyde Dunn, correspondence with Colleen Whitley, 1999–2004; Whitley journal, December 26, 1936.
'Iki Tupou Fulivai with his wife and baby

Missionaries from the LDS Church initially entered Tonga in 1891 but withdrew six years later, when extensive proselytizing had produced only a handful of members, not all of whom remained faithful. When missionaries returned in 1907, Nopele 'Iki Tupou Fulivai invited some of the first LDS missionaries to teach in Neiafu, where they opened a branch and a school. When the Tongan government instituted education in Vava'u in the 1930s, 'Iki Tupou Fulivai became one of the first students to graduate. His wife, Levatai, was part Fijian and worked in the Relief Society. Fulivai had contact with many people from different parts of the Pacific because he was the pilot who helped bring large ships into Neiafu harbor with Fredrich Wolfgramm's boat, Olga. Wolfgramm's daughter, Olga, was named after his boat. Levatai later married Tevita Fauese.

Jacob Olsen

Among the faithful Saints in Tonga were several immigrants. Jacob Olsen, shown here with an unidentified child, came from Norway and had joined the Church in Tonga in 1898. “The elders then left (about two years later) Jacob went to Samoa & they left the books [records] with him. He came back [to Tonga] in 1908 & assisted in opening the mission again,” wrote Tom Whitley. When Whitley arrived in Tonga, Jacob and his wife, Fua Lupe of Tefisi, lived at Leimatua. Olsen filled many callings and helped translate the Book of Mormon into Tongan. When Jacob died, Whitley took care of the funeral and wrote to Jacob’s family in Fredrikstad, Norway, informing them of his death. Whitley’s future brother-in-law, Orson Gundersen, then a missionary in Norway, reported that since the family was prominent, a notice appeared in Norwegian newspapers. It said Jacob Olsen had died in Tonga and funeral services were conducted by Pastor Tom Whitley. The name of Pastor Whitley’s church, however, was printed in English, so few readers were able to connect Jacob’s pastor with the Mormon missionaries in Norway.

The Methodist Church at Ha’alaufu

Malakai Manu (on the white horse) and Tom Whitley (on the dark horse) pose in front of the old Methodist Church at Ha’alaufu. They are facing the main road and the Tapu Hia, or Holy Place, home to the LDS chapel, missionary home, social hall, and tithing hut. The bell in the Wesleyan chapter rang every morning at six for early services, and the minister’s voice could clearly be heard from the street outside. When this chapel burned down, the Mormons helped in building a new one.

The minister of the Wesleyan Methodists and Whitley had many long talks and, in time, the relationship between the two churches improved to the point that, as Tom wrote, “We were all invited to go to a bo hiva [evening meeting with singing] in the Wesly. church tonite in Ha’al [Ha’alaufu]—all of us went saints & all—Misi Emile [President Emile Dunn] spoke & so did F. Motua [a local member] for the Mormons—Our choir sang . . . After meeting every one was talking about Emiles talk & the Mormon Choir.” The next day the two congregations assembled again for more pragmatic purposes: “Worked on Fence today—had all the Wesly. come over & help—Our boys bargained with them to fix & get the posts—they would fix a feed. When it was all ready & we were about half way thru the fence—we hit for kai [food] at the liku [coral or cliff side of the island]—I never saw so much kai . . . what a feed—many talks given—everyone happy because of the peace among all the churches here—before it has been so different.”

Many Tongans were called as missionaries within their own country. Here Tom Whitley stands with Kitione (Gideon) Maile, a pioneer in the Church in Nukunuku, Tongatapu. This photo was probably taken while Maile was serving as a missionary in Vava'u. Although he was illiterate, Maile had a profound knowledge of the gospel and could quote the Bible easily. His sermons became legendary.

Photo identification by Salote Wolframmm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown. Hyde Dunn interviews; notations on a print of the picture; Shumway, Tongan Saints, 13; Eric Shumway, telephone interview by Anastasia Sutherland, 2003.
Tēvita Mapa

New member Tēvita (David) Mapa is shown here with Elders Verrill Wilford Draper (left) and Thomas Whitley (center). One of the first ordinances Whitley performed after he arrived in Tonga was the confirmation of Tēvita Mapa: “Yesterday (Sunday) ... we had a baptism service after morning service & 7 or 8 were baptized—In the afternoon they were confirmed members—I confirmed a brother David Mapa & Henry Mafi This Bro. Mapa is Sect. to the premier of Tonga—he’s been investigating the Church for quite a long time & regardless of the opposesion from his family & his employer & friends he has joined the Church & he’s a wonderful man—I look forward to the time when he’ll be a leader in the work here in Tonga & I feel that he will be an instrument in the Lord’s hands to do a great work—I felt at that time to give him that blessing.”

Tēvita Mapa did indeed become a leader in the work in Tonga. Following his baptism, Queen Salote Piloevu Tupou, reacting to the bad reputation of the LDS Church, offered him a noble’s title if he would leave the Church. He refused the title and served the LDS Church valiantly in several positions including president of the Tongatapu District until his death in 1945. His legacy continued through his family. His son, Penisimani (Peni) Lātūsela Mapa, served as a high councilor and mission translation officer. The tradition has continued into the present generation.

Four women in mourning

British missionaries had introduced Christianity in the late eighteenth century, and English emissaries of both church and state added to or altered local customs. In 1890, Tonga became a part of the British Empire, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church was named the official state church of Tonga. British customs induced some changes in dress and behavior. At the same time, Tongans still maintained their own traditions. These four women, from left to right, Lepeka Kinikini, 'Ana-Malia Kinikini (who married Tavu Hakau), Foli'aki Pekipaki Kinikini, and 'Ofa Ulii, from 'Uiha, Ha'api, are in mourning. They are wearing both British black dresses and Tongan lavalavas, with woven mats tied around their waists with ropes made from braided horse hairs. Another Victorian fashion required mature women to wear clothes that covered them from wrist to ankle. For years that custom affected LDS sister missionaries, who were advised to dress in pastels with sleeves to the wrist and wear full-length lavalavas under their skirts. Even today immediate family members may wear black for up to a year after a death, though distant relatives wear black for a shorter period. Almost everyone wears black at funerals, and when Queen Salote died in 1965, everyone in the entire country wore black, and entertainments and movie theaters closed down for a year. Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown. Interviews with Carolyn and Paul Tuitupou, 2000–2004.
A group of faithful sisters stands with Tom Whitley in front of the Ha'alufuli chapel. The elders’ house, in the background, was most remembered for the bees that inhabited its walls. *Back row, left to right:* Hokau Makihele 'Unga, Tom Whitley, Ida Pauni, 'Ana Langi, Seine Sipaika (who married Founiteni Ika Koula), and Luseane Latu. *Front row, left to right:* 'Ana Pauni (married name Kalama-foni), Telela Pauni, Luseane 'Otuafi Pauni, and Luisa Pauni. The boy in the background is Motulalo Latu. Eric Shumway observes that the sisters truly “mothered” the Church through difficult times.

Relief Society sisters at work

Relief Society sisters from Ha'alaufuli Branch sit beside the chapel weaving tapakau mats for the floor. At the far left are 'Ofa Kongaika Naeata and 'Ana Falesi'u Pa'uni. The young girl is 'Ana Pa'oongo Latu, and her mother, Manu Mei Mo'unga Latu, sits next to her. Behind them, leaning forward, is Lase'ane Latu, and behind her is Salote Fakatou Wolfgramm, and the baby with her is probably her son Charles. Salote Wolfgramm and her daughters, Tisina Gerber and Taiana Brown, have identified almost all of the people in Tom Whitley's Tongan photos, including this one. At the right are 'Ana Tu'ifeleunga Langi and Ana Lieti Wolfgramm.

Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
'Ofa Naeta, Thomas Farrar Whitley, Tom Whitley Naeata

Among those faithful saints whose descendants continue to build the Church were Viliami and 'Ofa Naeata. 'Ofa is shown here, with Tom Whitley holding her eldest son, Thomas Whitley Naeata. The Naeatas were second generation members of the Church; both were very active and worked in various callings. One of their sons, Mosese, served as president of the Papua New Guinea Mission, the first Tongan called to serve as a mission president outside of Tonga. Thomas Whitley Naeata recently retired, having worked as an electrician for BYU–Hawaii. He has served in many callings, including bishop of a Tongan ward in Hawaii. Thomas Naeata used “Whitley” as a middle name for each of his sons, and his children have continued the tradition of including the Whitley name for each of his grandsons. They have thus unknowingly helped to fulfill one of the promises in Thomas Farrar Whitley’s patriarchal blessing: “Thy name shall be handed down in future generations.” Hyde Dunn observes that they are sitting in front of a wall made of woven tapa, which is mulberry bark pounded thin enough for weaving. It was a common building material before World War II, but the skill is almost entirely lost now.

Tongan baby

“[It] is the custom here when a babe is a year old to thank the Lord for the child coming thru the first & most critical year of his or her life,” wrote Tom Whitley. When Salote Wolfgramm and her daughters, Tisina Gerber and Taiana Brown, looked at this picture, they all immediately said, “That’s a Naeata baby.” If they are right, this is a picture of Tom Whitley Naeata, son of ‘Ofa and Viliami Naeata.

Whitley journal, June 12, 1935.
Two groups of fishermen

Upper photo: On the back of the photograph, Tom Whitley wrote, “These men are all elders & good ones too.” Left to right: Viliami Naeata Koloti, Vili Kalisiti‘ane Wolfgramm, Sosaia Langi, Tom Whitley, Sosaia Naeata.


Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown. Eric Shumway, telephone interview by Anastasia Sutherland, 2003. Shumway said that not only were the men good elders, but their families have continued to serve faithfully as well.
Saia Langi

Saia Langi was one of the stalwart members of the Church at Ha’alaufuli, serving in callings ranging from scout leader to branch president.

Photo identification by Salote Wolfgamm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
Tom Whitley, Hiva Fifita, and the Dunn children ready to paint

Missionaries preach, baptize, and paint. Here Tom Whitley gets some help with a service project from Hiva Fifita, who was employed in the mission home, and Hyde and Karen Dunn, eldest children of President Emile and Evelyn Hyde Dunn. On June 27, 1937, Whitley recorded the baptisms of both Hiva Fifita and Hyde Dunn.

Photo identification by Hyde Dunn.
Elder Victor Lee died of typhoid fever in Ha’alaufuli in 1932. In 1935, President Reuben Wiberg, accompanied by members and missionaries, went to Ha’alaufuli to set up a headstone on his grave. The inscription reads, “Victor Lee, An elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Born at Afton, Wyo. USA, Oct. 22, 1909, Died in Tonga Aug. 2, 1932. While valiant as a shepherd of the flock, he was called to the fold of eternity.”
Ha‘alaufuli Branch

Members of the Ha‘alaufuli Branch pose behind the missionary home.


Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown, with assistance on spelling from Lorraine Aston.
Picnic at the beach
Kai Tunu, a Branch picnic at Otuata Beach, Ha'alaufuli, clockwise, from lower left: Siosa Kupu Halaufia, unidentified (back to the camera), Ula Naeata, Levai Tai, with an unidentified baby behind her, Sione Vaipalangi Lattu, Aliisi Langi, Tupou Moheofo Mana Vahitau, Tom Whitley, Tiohoni Otto Wolgramm, Fana'afi Vaitai, Vea Naeata, Onesi Wolgramm, Made Wolfe Wolgramm, Asinate Halaufia Manavaheta, Tafoi Otuati, Sanfi, Stone 'Ulufo-nua, Epalahame Kuma Tu'aone, Sioeli Fusiloa 'Unga, Hyde Dunn observes that Epalahame Tu'aone baptized him.

Photo identification by Salote Wolgramm, Tisina Gerber, and Taiana Brown.
Two views of Neiafu Harbor

The harbor at Neiafu in Vava’u was regarded as one of the busiest and most beautiful in the islands. The buildings on the far right house several significant trading firms from whom both natives and missionaries purchased essentials and luxuries: Burns Phillips, Morris Hedstrom, and Lever Brothers. In the right foreground are the wharf and rails to carry copra to the waiting boats. The white buildings to the right of it house customer services for people leaving or arriving in Vava’u.

Photo identification by Salote Wolfgramm, Tisina Gerber, Taiana Brown, and Hyde Dunn.