"I WOULD THAT YE SHOULD REMEMBER"
(Mosiah 1:6)
by Ruth W. Austin

As a child growing up in Hawaii, I found myself envying those of my friends who had grandparents living near them. My only contact with the ones who were living was through the mail and one brief encounter when Mother took us to Utah where we spent nine months living with her parents. By then, I was six years old and have kept a pretty clear picture of those times. Grandfather and Grandmother Smith seemed so old to me. And kind of distant. They weren't the type to take me on their knee and really talk to me. My other grandfather had died by the time I was two years old and I only had contact with his wife, my grandmother, for a short period at the same time I met my other grandparents. I felt something was missing from my life. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I think it was the beginning of a lifetime adventure - that of learning about myself - who I was and where my roots were.

As I grew to maturity and had children of my own, I began to wonder about those persons whose names appeared on my pedigree chart. One in particular stood out, that of my father's father, Samuel E. Woolley. He was the one who died when I was about two. I had heard his name mentioned all of my life. Hawaiians would come up to me at church and say, "Mo'opuna wahine - Samuel E. Woolley's." They said it so lovingly that I began to wonder just who this Samuel E. Woolley was and what he was like. I longed to know him.

Then one day my niece, Elizabeth Woolley Riegels, approached me and suggested that we write a history of Grandpa Woolley. It was an exciting challenge. And so we began what turned out to be a year-long search into the past. We spent many happy hours listening to some of the people who had known Grandpa tell us stories and give their impressions of him. All of this was recorded on tape. As we gained momentum in our project, others in the family became interested. They sent pictures, wrote down their impressions of him and shared portions of their journals that had reference to Grandpa.

Before long, it was decided that upon completion of the history, we should plan a family reunion. My sister and two brothers and their children and grandchildren gathered at Laie Cemetery, one Saturday
morning in June of 1981, to plant a tree in memory of Grandpa. (He really is buried in Grantsville, Utah.) Everyone took hold of the spade and helped dig the hole and plant the tree. Prayers were said and each grandchild spoke a few words. Then we all proceeded to Punaluu to have a family luau complete with imu prepared by our sons. It was a great day - one that all will long remember.

Shortly after, while on a trip to Salt Lake City, I stopped by at the Church Historian's offices to check their card file and see if they had any articles written about Grandpa. Under his name I found some twenty-three journals listed. These were written during his early years as a missionary to Hawaii and then ones written later when he became President of the Hawaiian Mission. These were in the Archives of the Church. I dashed upstairs to the Archives section and asked about these. It was agreed that they would make a microfilm copy of the journals for me. When I returned to Hawaii, I began to read these.

At first, they didn't seem too interesting to me and I was also deeply involved in genealogical research in other areas so I set them aside for a later day. The years passed but every now and then I would run across a roll of film and think, "I should get started on this soon." But something else would always get in the way. Finally the time was right. But how to get the journals from a microfilm form to a form that was readable to everyone? I decided the only way was to photocopy the journals, page by page, so I could type them up at home. The project was going to take time and so I went out to BYU-Hawaii to the library and talked to them. It was agreed that I would pay a student to photocopy the journals and also reimburse the library for the use of the machine. Within a few months I had a copy of the journals in my hands.

Then the job of typing them was next. It was fascinating. I found myself totally involved. I'd get up in the morning, put the breakfast dishes in the sink, make up the beds, and sit down at the typewriter where I would remain until just before my husband returned from work. A wonderful thing was happening. I was getting to know my grandfather, after all these years! To know his character, his trials, his joys. The things he did that made him someone special in the eyes of those dear people whom I had interviewed, years ago.

At about this point, Dr. Lance Chase met me in the temple, one night, and asked me what I was working on. I told him of my project with the
journals and he became interested. He asked if he could read some of what I had copied so I took several journals out to Laie for him to go over.

Some time later, I got a call from him asking if I could come out and talk with him and several others about what I was doing. It was the consensus of opinion that what I had was a wonderful history of Laie - something that should be in printed form. I had no idea of the value of what I was doing. All I wanted was to get to know my grandfather.

My husband and I were about to leave on an eighteen-month mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and so everything was put on "hold" until we returned. Last September, when we were settled in our home again, I met with Dr. Chase and he introduced me to Sister Blackham who is a service missionary called to work in the Archives of the library at BYU-Hawaii*. She had been given the responsibility of getting the journals finished and ready to be bound. Eleven are yet to be placed onto a disc. We are hoping this will be done by fall of this year. Copies of these journals will be placed with the library at BYU-Hawaii when printed. I can hear you groan at the size of the task. But remember, this covers a lifetime. Grandpa was a young man when he began his mission. He was sixty-six when he completed it. Anything of value takes time.

Why am I spending so much time on this project? Aside from the personal satisfaction and my desire to know this man, it has been pointed out to me that the things he wrote about could be of great value to others. Things about missionaries who came and went in the Hawaiian Mission, how much cane was harvested at any one time on the plantation at Laie, the water wells dug, the weather, what they ate, how they traveled from point to point over the years, illnesses among the people living at Laie, conferences held, talks given, celebrations, miracles that took place, what life was like in Hawaii during the late 1800's and early 1900's. All this woven into the pattern that was his life. All written in his own hand and in his own words. Nothing is glossed over. You can read between the lines and feel his deep sorrow over the illnesses of his wife and children, his exhaustion at the end of the day as he relates what took place, and his firm testimony that what he was doing was what the Lord wanted him to do and that he would do it willingly with no complaint.

*I am indebted to Bro. Rex Frandsen for his willingness to have her work on this project.
Not all of us have access to journals of our parents or grandparents, but we have family histories. Anything that will help our children appreciate their rich heritage is important. We must find and keep records that can enrich their lives and reach them where sometimes our voice does not.

There is power in the printed word. Our posterity has the right to know their roots without having to scrounge for them and perhaps only uncovering part of the story. Everyone contributed something in his lifetime. What it needs is to be recorded.

The wonderful thing about journals is, as I said, that they are first-hand recordings of events. When we wait to put events down on paper, the stories tend to get polished, embellished. One's version changes as it become someone else's. And when we tell these events, it's not just that the events are different but they all mean something different, too. Something we want them to mean. Or need them to. And, of course, there's also the factor of time. Our perspective, our way of telling the story - or seeing it - changes as time passes. How much better to learn of the event first-hand. Keeping journals and writing histories are important for a number of reasons.

First, because the Lord has said we should. He has always told us to keep records. Throughout history men have done this - prophets in the Old Testament, the Apostles in the New Testament, Nephi, Moroni, Mormon and others in the Book of Mormon.

Secondly, because everyone's life is history in the making. What if the early pioneer settlers in America and here in Hawaii hadn't recorded events as they happened and put on paper their personal feelings?

It has been said that a life recorded is twice precious - first the experience itself and then the memory when we read about it later.

Third, because we all have an inner desire to be remembered. Some years ago, when my mother died, my sister and I had the responsibility of removing her things from her apartment. Among the papers found in her desk was this poem, lying on top of everything as though placed there for us to find first thing. It is titled, A Realist's Lament.

I think about the future
And the years that lie ahead.
And I wonder what will happen
To my things when I am dead.
The things I have collected
That mean so much to me.
The things I love to someone else
A pile of junk will be.
I've always been a realist,
I do not kid myself.
I know the time is coming
When I'll be on the shelf.
Upon another fateful day,
This I truly know.
"Poor dear Grandma," they will say,
"What a blessing she could go."

This one poem gave me great insight into the thoughts and feelings of this dear woman, and I am so thankful that she took the time to place it where she knew I'd find it.

And lastly, it's important to keep journals and histories because if we don't, who will? These become links between generations. I would quote from an article on genealogy which appeared in the Improvement Era in 1966. It reads as follows:

That family books of remembrance in Latter-day Saints homes today should rate in importance second only to the standard works. These family records are supplements to the scriptures, aiding in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the posterity of faithful members of the Church. A knowledge of the written testimonies and spiritual experiences of family members and of the proved genealogies of the fathers serves to bind the hearts of the children to their fathers and helps them to understand the doctrines that pertain to the exaltation of the family." (Improvement Era, April 1966, pps. 294-95)

We must realize that what we read in journals may not be what we want to read. There are often things that we think should not be known. For example, my grandmother suffered from asthma the entire course of her mission in Hawaii. Along with that, she had several miscarriages, all of which put her life in jeopardy. At the advice of her doctor, and with the approval of the First Presidency of the Church, she was released from her mission and Grandpa given permission to take her back to Utah. At the
time of her release, President Joseph F. Smith told Grandpa that his mission was not yet complete and that he was to return to Hawaii to finish the work assigned to him.

Grandpa was forty-two years old at the time. Each October he was permitted to return to Utah to attend Annual Conference and spend time with his family. But the rest of the year he was out here in Hawaii alone. Some time later, he took a second wife, a lovely Hawaiian lady whom he had known for a number of years. Not much is known of this relationship because the journals covering this period of his life are missing and pages are torn out of subsequent journals. Why? Because someone felt that this information should not be kept for people to read. And so what are we left with? Questions unanswered. Questions that may never be answered. It's a fact that this marriage took place and that in the eyes of many and in the eyes of the Church it was wrong, but nevertheless it did take place. But how much more we would know had we had a recorded personal account of this event. Grandpa loved both of his wives dearly. Of this I have no doubt.

What do we learn from this? Again, don't gloss over! State facts as they are. It is all part of our history and shouldn't be ignored or changed. Very often things will come to light that don't particularly look good on paper, but as time passes they begin to appear in a better light.

Samuel E. Woolley lives in my heart because of the records he kept. I want him to live in the hearts of my children and their children. As I have read of his accounts of different events, I have laughed; I have cried; I have thrilled to his accomplishments, and gained a deeper pride in my heritage. I look forward with great anticipation to the day when I meet him face-to-face, feel his loving arms around me and hear him say, "Thank you for keeping my memory alive."