Aloha. While I was standing here watching, as Dale pointed out the tree over there, that’s just about where we used to live. That’s Konokaiki. On our side there’s a Honokanenui, Big Valley. And I’d like to point out one outstanding peak about that Valley. Way back in 1851, when the first Mormon missionaries came here in Kohala, they were destined to go to Hilo, but as they passed this Alealenuihaha (channel), the ocean was so rough that they couldn’t go there. Because they didn’t have those motorboats anymore. It was a big schooner. So they came back and they pulled into Kawaihae.

Then couple days later they tried it again. Finally, they went as far as they could see - Hilo in the distance, but the Skipper said, we better turn back. If we do go, we’ll all be in Davey Jones locker. So they came back and landed, I don’t know where, but somewhere in Kohala and when they arrived here, this Elder Karen, Thomas Karen from the states and John Kahumoku, who was a native missionary here. They got off in Kohala. They were seasick and they were tired. But there were a whole bunch of native people there waiting for them to preach. And they preached for quite a little while, but by next month they baptize about 24, 25 of them. Ever since that they’ve worked over here, Kohala has been a strong hold for the Protestant church from New England.

And so you have the Bond people over here. A lot of difficulty.

When I first came to Kohala in 1947, I’m from Honoka’a, I remember going to the library and they had Dr. Bond’s diary on display and I glanced and I went through it and I read parts of it where he really didn’t like the Mormon missionaries because they gave him a bad time. Anyway, John Kahumoku was arrested several times because Mr. Bond was the law and order over here because in 1820, when they did away with the kapu system, he came over here with the law of the Ten Commandments. And they were arrested several times for various reasons.

But one of the reasons they were arrested is they charged him with interfering with the operation of the boys school in Iole and so the missionaries went up to him and said, why do you use all members as mules? (because he required all the boys to carry sand and lumber up from this valley up to Iole, which is that side). And further more they’re not even members of your church. They’re our members.

So, they were arrested for interfering with the operation of the school. They were fined. And then about a month later the judge that sentenced them was converted and about 19 of the 25 students and teachers were converted to Mormonism and eventually even the elders were teaching the school. Anyway, this man John Kahumoku was a very brilliant man and after serving for just several weeks in Kohala and he died. And he died and he’s buried on that west bank of the Honokanenui Valley. And he said - 16 Phantoms or something. I don’t know what, but. They put him in a cave and put a big rock over it.

Just about that time the missionaries converted a well-known Alii, High Chief, in the district here. And after the burying, the next day, this Alii and several of his Chiefs came and said, Elder Karen, he said, that man, John Kahumoku is not dead because he came to visit us last night. It’s not only me, but it’s the rest of the chiefs. So lets go there.
and open him up. And Elder Karen said, no, this is just the spirit telling you. But John Kahumoku is buried there today.

And many years ago when Brother Sproat’s Dad was trying to consolidate all the Wards or Branches over here to Honomakau. Brother Sproat’s Father requested to the brothers in Salt Lake to change the name of Honomakau because he said that name is not appropriate as a church because it is a fearful place or scary place. And just imagine Church of Jesus Christ a scary place or fearful place. So, finally we got it approved.

So at one of the Regional Conferences in Hilo President Hinckley was conducting. He asked us priesthood if there were any questions. So, since nobody was asking questions I stood up and asked, President, how do you go about changing the name of our Ward over here because the name is not too good. And as he looked at my Stake President from Kona, he said, is that right? And he said, he don’t know. But eventually it was changed. In fact, this year it was changed to Kohala Ward now.

Anyway, John Kohumoku is buried there and the thought came to my mind as they asked us, what do you want to change it to. And according to the old Sproat, he said they asked for Kohala Ward, but the Brothers and the Sisters in Salt Lake City said it sounds so much like Kahala Ward. I said, ey, to the local guys. Kohala and Kahala is entirely different, but to the Brothers up there they sound the same. Like they say Hanalulu instead of Honolulu, you know! So, I was thinking, maybe if nothing else, we call it the Kahumoku Ward, but eventually it became known as the Kohala Ward. That’s about all I got to say about this little thing, but there were many branches out here before these churches were built down in Awiniloa, there around the seacoast.

There were thousands of native Hawaiians living there. And there were chapels made out of the grass shacks. There was in Upolu. There was one there. There was one in Honoipu. There was one in Puakea. And there’s a lot of things here. But been living over here. All that I read in the documents that were written down. I’d like to know if there’s anybody here that has diaries of the early missionaries. Complete diaries. So that, to us, words will mean a lot to us. But to some of you don’t even know where’s Honoipu and things like that. But to us it means so much. Thank you.