INTERVIEWEE: Ernest P. Elia

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INTERVIEWER: Ishmael Stagner

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INTRODUCTION

Ernest Paul Elia was born about 1889 at Keanae, Maui into an L.D.S. family. His grandparents had joined the Church when the first missionaries arrived. Brother Paul Elia was baptized at age eight. He tells of the early branches of the Church in Maui and unusual happenings when the missionaries first came to the island.

Brother Elia went to Kamehameha School for three years, coming in 1904, then was called to help build the first branch chapel in Pulehu. He was about fourteen years old at that time. He spent much of his life in building, chapels, during the wars, WWI and II, gun bases in Honolulu and in the mountains and also the construction of Church College of Hawaii in Laie. He worked on the construction of many chapels in the islands, Wailuku, Hana, Kalihi, Ho'olehua and others, as well as the state library in Honolulu.

He served a mission in the Hawaii Temple when it first opened. Brother Elia tells of his various church positions through the years. He went to three conferences in Salt Lake City, visited Independence, Missouri, after having a vision of how the temple would be built there. He tells of the various church presidents he met, as well as his friendship with Prince Kuhio.

Brother Paul Elia had three wives; one son by the first, seven by the second and two by his third wife. Their names are not given in the narration, however the first was of the Keanini family. The family lived in Honolulu for some time near the Honolulu Tabernacle, where he had built four homes.

Paul tells of many traditions of the Hawaiians, unusual spiritual manifestations and his association with several missionaries and Church leaders in the islands.

This interview was transcribed by Myra Kitashima and edited by Grace Pratt, Barbara Dalby and Rebecca Smith. B.J. Fuller of the BYU-H alumni affairs office also helped with names and places. "Edward Clissold [OH-103]" tells the reader that an interview of that number has been completed with that individual and is on file in the Oral History collection of BYU-Hawaii.

Kenneth W. Baldrige, Director
Oral History Program

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This is Thursday, December 27, 1979. I am Dr. Ishmael Stagner and we are interviewing, today, Brother Paul Elia from Ho’olehua, Molokai, who is with us at the Pau Hana Inn in Kaunakakai, Molokai. Brother Elia, would you give us your full name please?

PE Ernest Paul Elia.

IS When did you join the Church?

PE Oh, me, a child, eight years old, when I join the Church.

INT Were your parents members of the Church?

PE Both parents, members of the church.

IS And your grandparents?

PE And grandparents.

IS How did your family first join the Church?

PE Well, when the first missionaries arrived, George Q. Cannon and others, Elder Keeler [OH-317]; they were assigned to the island of Maui and the second branch was down in my home town where I was born.

IS And what was that?

PE Keanae, Maui.

IS And it was at that time that your grandfather and grandmother joined the Church?

PE Yes, grandfather and grandmother join the Church from that time down.

IS Were you raised in Keanae?
PE Yes, I was raised in Keanae, born in Keanae.

IS What do you remember about your early boyhood in Keanae?

PE Well, in the early [days], we have a church there, and the president of the Church didn't realize that the Word of Wisdom was not well practiced at that time. You know, certain time of the year we have a lot of mangoes over there, and they peel the skin off and put in the barrel and that thing gets fermented and those people (laughter) bottom out (laughter). And one day they were doing that, even branch president and his other cousins were drinking together and somehow he used the word "haaola."

IS Haaola?

PE Yes, when he take his sip an then he use the word "haaola."

IS And what does that mean?

PE Well, that means good luck; alright; to punish the evil spirit rest on him that pass the course of trouble. So the other cousins brought him over to my home, to my house and I was only merely around ten-years-old. I denounced that the evil spirit on this man and I told them the angels of heaven will come and lock you up in jail. And he said, "Hey, don't do me that, don't do me that, that evil spirit." I was thinking why as a little boy has a right to demand that evil spirit to get out with only you around here and I'm going to call angels of heaven to come and lock you up. "Don't do that, don't do that," and then he disappear. "Get out from here," and I was a little boy, I was thinking, "I don't even have the Priesthood." Well, I was told that my great-grandparents was high chief of the island of Maui, Kahoolawe, Molokai and Lanai, and that's all the islands. These three brothers, one of the brother by the name of--nickname he was called "Kukeawe," and his full name was Keawepuahakinakumalamalamaonalani, and his brother, Kua. One of his brother, and the two sisters married these two boys--two chiefs, I think--and came down to my mother.Alright, when I was born, there was two of us, two brothers
only, and he was fourteen and he passed away and I was the only one still alive up to this time. And one of my uncle, Elialili. Well, that Elia, they call that Elia, that’s biblical, you find that in the biblical, they call that name Eli [pronouncing ee-ligh] from the biblical standard. Their real name is not Eli, Elianui, Elialili, just because they go to church. Their real name is Kaipo, that's his real name, Eli Kaipo.

IS Now, historians tell us that the Hana district during this time was a very active district, religiously that is, the Congregational churches were very strong, the Catholic churches were very strong in the area. What do you remember, was it difficult being a Mormon in that area with the activity of all the other churches?

PE Well, you see, they were established in 1820 and our Church came in 1850. So that's the difference, they were there first. When our Church came and our people stood side by side to the creek and brought rock and build this rock platform, they generally do that on all the islands; just like a heiau-like, a sacred place. So the people came and brought their mat and sat on the ground and they dress up this rock platform and when George Q. Cannon and Elder Keeler arrived, they put them on top of this rock platform, all dressed up with mat and all that. And not that only—in two weeks time when they arrive in Maui and their assignment in Kula. Well, the funniest thing, when they stood up to preach the Gospel, he used our own mother tongue, not the other, not the Catholic or the Protestant Church.

IS He spoke in Hawaiian?

PE He spoke in Hawaiian. Alright, another thing, he was not standing on this rock platform, he was standing up in the air. How did that happen? He was standing up in the air, and people say, "This is the man of God, not the other." So they got the word to the people from Keanae to Nahiku, up in Hana way. The people hear, you know, they pass the word over. Within the two months over two hundred people were converted to our church.
IS  Do you remember the jubilee celebration in 1900?

PE  The jubilee celebration in 1900, why the president of the mission--president at that time was Samuel E. Woolley. Well, this was happen down in Laie at that time.

IS  Were you in Laie for the jubilee celebration?

PE  No, no. Later on, when I was sent to school, then I came down there in 1904.

IS  Where did you go to school?

PE  Kamehameha.

IS  And how long were you at Kamehameha?

PE  About three years. When I was promoted, I skipped one class on to the next one. And the funniest thing, from that time we get a call to go and build the church up in Pulehu, the first branch.

IS  The Pulehu chapel?

PE  The Pulehu chapel.

IS  You helped to build that chapel?

PE  Yes, that's the first one. While in school, our professor said, "How many from the country? Raise your hand. How many from the city?" Then he said, "Well, those boys from the country like construction work, you can build your own fence, your barn and all that and you can do the work." Alright, then we took up drafting and study of blue printing and all that stuff. That's the first job that I help to build the chapel way up Kula, Pulehu, and we walked two days to that destination.

IS  Now is this the chapel that is still in Pulehu now?
PE Well, they change and built a new one. Not very long ago they built, maybe about four or five years ago, new chapel all over the place.

IS Well, there is a chapel that is still at Pulehu, an old chapel that is still there, and I was wondering if you had built that one.

PE That must be. They got the steeple on there?

IS Steeple.

PE Ah, that's the same one.

IS How many other chapels did you build, do you remember?

PE All the others, all the others.

IS How old were you when you built your first chapel?

PE That was in Pulehu.

IS And how old were you?

PE I was about fourteen years old. (laughter)

IS Now after you left Kamehameha, what did you do?

PE Well, that's how I couldn't go back to school. Didn't have enough money. We don't get any pay for building many churches; we just go and help.

IS How did you support yourself besides building churches? Did you build other things?

PE Well, while we were doing that, I took examinations for construction of fortifications. We built gun bases in Honolulu, all over around Honolulu, Diamond Head and up the mountains and all around that place. Anti-aircraft gun base and mortar gun bases—twelve-inch mortar gun base and sixteen-inch long-range gun base. Their guns,
they go off, boom, come down. Well, today we have planes to drop their bombs down and they're no good. I put in five years with them. Then I take up construction work here and there and that's how I made a living.

IS Did you ever serve any missions for the church?

PE Yes.

IS When did you serve your first mission and what did you do?

PE Oh my first mission, I was sent down Laie to work in the temple, when the temple was completed. President Waddoups was the first president there. And I thought, "Well, what can I do?" I didn't know anything about temple work. And so when I went over there, there you are, we had to go and study these ordinances, performing of representing the different parts in there.

IS Now, was that just you or was that you and your wife?

PE Just me.

IS You were a single young man asked to go to the temple?

PE No, I was married.

IS But just you were called to work in the temple? When did you get married?

PE Oh, I was married up in Kula. I was married in 1907. My uncle said, "Say, kill your pig today." Well I thought its alright, you know, for family use. That afternoon the mother and the daughter came. "This is your wife. Marry." I've never seen them before. Can you beat that? And later on I learned that my great-grandfather, a high chief that, what they call, certain time of the year they round up all the bachelors, all the ladies, all the girls and not even marry maybe around that certain age, and the men, line them up, the ladies, line them up, the men folks, and the old kahuna come inside there and voo-
voo-voo-voo with a torch to the wife and to the man whether you like it or not, let's go. That is [set so] in them days. And I didn't know my grandfolks did that, maybe that's why they go, "Eh, here's your wife, marry." Never seen her before. The pig is there already cook. And that's how when that thing happen during that time of the year, say, your daughter, parents you know, your daughter and my son better get married before that time come, otherwise you don't know who you gonna marry maybe the old lady or what.

IS  You must have been what, around sixteen when you got married?

PE  No, seventeen.

IS  You were seventeen. How old was your wife?

PE  She was seventeen, I was nineteen.

IS  You were nineteen.

PE  Yes, at that time.

IS  And you never saw her before?

PE  Never saw her before. They came from a different city, I should say up in the mountain, eight thousand feet above sea level. And she, down at Waikapu and no more than fifty feet above sea level. And the different country in Maui, way down, Nawaieha, [the four waters of Maui] Waikapu, Wailuku, Waiehu and Waihee. And she came from Waikapu, Waikapu girl. Well, maybe my uncle knew and they requested (laughter).

IS  How long were you married to her?

PE  Oh, a couple of years, then we separated. I was going to construction work building schools here and there, and she went with the sister's husband. When I learned that: [I thought] "You're out, I'm going." And then I went back to Honolulu to get away from there, from the island of Maui, so I don't see them anymore. Alright,
when I was assigned to come back to Maui and build a chapel in Wailuku, one day there were two of us assigned from Laie, Haili, Haili family from Laie, he was my--

IS You remember his first name?

PE Yes, David Haili [Kawiki Stant's grand-father], from Laie. He's a Kona boy but stayed down Laie and he--his family down there. So he was called to help me go up there to Maui and build a chapel in Wailuku. One day we were called to go down to the hospital to administer, somebody was sick down there. When I went down there, I saw my wife. She look at me and I look at her, and I told her, "Do you really need my blessing to you?" She only cried. And I said, "We were married, I never seen you before and we were married and your mother brought you to my place, and my uncle said, 'this is your wife, you marry!' That was alright. You were just young and I was just young too, that's alright, Hawaiian girl." Oh, that's all she did was cry. So we have a different job we came here to do. There were two of them in the hospital, two members of the Church.

IS She was a member of the Church?

PE Yes, she was a member of the Church. Her father was the branch president of Waikapu at that time.

IS What was her family's name?

PE Keanini. All these Keanini's exist from that same Keanini.

IS Did you ever go back with her again?

PE No, never. She went and pick up the husband of the oldest sister and there you are, and bust up that family. And the oldest sister went with the husband's brother and she stay with the husband.

IS Do you remember President McKay's visit in 1921?

PE Yes.
IS What were you doing then?

PE [In] 1921, I think I was with the Navy--the first World War.

IS Did you see President McKay or any of his party when they came in 1921?

PE Yes. Well, I was down there at the dedication of the--I was down there. And then they march up, they came up and we were standing on the side, they were marching to come up to the dedication of the college, BYU-Hawaii [Revelation that this would come to be].

IS What was life like in Hawaii during the World War I? Can you remember back to World War I?

PE World War I, I was working for the U.S. Engineers Department of Fortification. Just because I was a member of the National Guard, they got hold of me. So, I served eight months before it was completed, the war was over.

IS You spent most of World War I then right here in Hawaii?

PE In Hawaii. Yes, down Schofield and walk around all over the country. yes, right here in Hawaii.

IS What was life like here in Hawaii? Was there a lot of suffering?

PE Yes. During that time, the influenza--flu--happened. Oh, bad, it just knock you down--pow--that influenza flu. Plenty. Some of my schoolmates, the family, the father and the two brothers returned home from school, the older brother, gonner. And then the mother, gonner, of that family. Then the younger boy because he was a rascal one, you know, bottom up and all that stuff, well, he survived, I don't know why. But all the others they didn't go through that kind of life.

IS Now, shortly around this time Queen Liliuokalani died. Did you ever see the Queen when she was alive?
Oh, yes.

Did you have anything to do with her?

No, no. When she died, my wife went together with the Relief Society joined to take them up to the cemetery for a burial place. While she went there, she lost her child, she was pregnant.

This was your second wife.

Yes, my second wife.

And what year was this?

Around--either 1938 or 1939.

Let's see, this was the Queen's funeral, that would be about 1917 then, huh?

Somewhere around there, way back there. Oh, yes, during that World War I time.

Right.

Right.

Do you remember meeting Prince Kuhio?

Oh, yes.

Tell us about Prince Kuhio.

Now Prince Kuhio, he was a delegate to Congress at that time. We used to play politics. We have a group of musicians, play the music when he stand up and talk politics to the people. He had a new home built down Waikiki alongside the beach and he call me up, "Hey, come down." "What's going on down there?" "Well, house warming."
"Alright," so I came down. When I came down, there were people in line ready to sit down for dinner, and shake hands and all that. And when I came I just stick my hand out that way. And he look and he said, "Are you one of the kind? Well, mum's the word, otherwise if you display yourself, you one of those kind, maybe you have a short life." He laughed and he put his hand like that and he turned around and put his hand down mines--on top. And I told him who were my great-grandparents. Oh, he laughed.

IS Now, you're showing me an open extended hand. What does that mean?

PE Well, you see, during that time before the missionary arrived, they didn't generally shake hands. Before that, no shake hands. They have that gift of lua, before you grab your hand they knock you down. That's why they just stick your hand up that way. After that the missionary came, say "Hello," and they shake hand and nothing happen. From that time on everything was mild and they don't do that anymore. My grandparents taught me, when you shake hand with the chief, you don't grab his hand.

IS What do you do when you shake hands with the chief?

PE You just shake your hand this way, that's all.

IS What does he do?

PE Oh, he put his hand, this chief.

IS Just like that?

PE Just like that. That's all. Then he put his hand on top and your underneath, or your hand underneath and turn around his hand underneath and yours on top, and that's okay.

IS And that was a sign of greeting.

PE Yes.
IS But you didn't grab the hand and shake it?

PE No, no grab.

IS Now the Hawaiians had a wrestling form, it was called *lua*, where so if you stuck your hand out over there, it meant that somebody could throw you, or wrestle with you.

PE Yes, they think maybe you're one of those enemies. I told my grandmother, say, the gift that I wanted--the fast runner. Fast runner from island to island and the fish just wiggling and they all get home. So when I was attending Kamehameha School, we used to have relays, 100-yard dash and all that, a mile runner. So I thought, "Say, why don't you fix me up so I can be a fast runner from our family." She said, well, you had to go up to the mountain to get certain herbs and all that stuff. "Oh, I'm too old, I cannot walk," she just walk like that and stoop down. She mentioned something up in the mountain there's a kind of ti leaf that grow by itself, the leaf from the ground up to the top. Have you seen that kind of ti leaf?

IS No.

PE You know, there's a long stem of leaf. Those kind and then they get another kind stuff, well that's that.

IS Were you an entertainer? Is that why Prince Kuhio asked you to come?

PE Well, we have a regular group of entertainers. The two of us, we played guitar, two guitars and the other two, two ukulele. And then the other one is violinist. Oh, he was a perfect player, violinist, he played just like you were crying.

IS Do you remember his name?

PE Yes, Joel loela.
IS George loela.

PE loela. Just because Joe sounds like Joel. They called the name of the plantation manager over there, Joel. We had a lot of fun. During the politic time another Honolulu group comes, all the different island group come and play and we represent the Waihee group from Maui, when that boy play his violin and our boys sing the songs, say, they can't beat them. The best entertainer from over here.

IS How long did you live in Laie?

PE Well, all the construction of the college, during that time, from the very beginning. And I was in charge of the missionaries down there.

IS You were the personnel supervisor during the building of the college. How long did you live in Laie, when you went to work in the temple in 1919, how long did you stay in Laie then?

PE I think about three years.

IS Working in the temple?

PE Working in the temple.

IS Did you have a job outside of the temple?

PE No, no outside job. Then they sent me to Hana, Maui to complete the chapel. One of the returned-missionaries from New Zealand, he was up there building and not completed, but he was called back. So they sent me over there to complete the chapel. I went over there, complete the chapel and have it dedicated.

IS This was when, 1921?

PE Yes.

IS That was the Hana chapel.

PE The Hana chapel.
IS Were you married by this time in 1921?
PE Oh yes, yes. I was married.
IS To your second wife.
PE Second wife.
IS Did you have any babies then?
PE No.
IS What did your wife do?
PE Well, like the rest of the missionaries, do a little helping hand in the kitchen, things like that at home. We live in the mission headquarters.
IS Now, that was at Lanihuli?
PE No, in Honolulu.
IS Oh, in Kalihi?
PE In Kalihi. The mission headquarters was bought by President Grant and the new place. Then we built the chapel there, and the social hall there, and the mission home.
IS Did you meet with President Grant?
PE Yes.
IS Did you talk with him?
PE Yes, talk with him.
KB Can you tell us about that?
In Hawaii, I went up to the conference in Salt Lake in 1932, and was sitting there. I went to visit one of George Q. Cannon's son, he was a Presiding Bishopric, and I was told by the floor manager, "You only can see him five minutes." Oh, all I want to say, yes or no, that's all I want to know. So, when I got in, he look at me and, "what can I do for you?" He stand up. He thought I was an Indian. Then I told him, "I came from the island of Hawaii, Hawaiian islands. Your father baptized my people and probably you have the record of the names of the people—their names that you baptized there, so that I have a chance to work them in the temple." He look at me and he said, "My father had seven wives, and I am one of the son of his wife and I knew my father very little. He sent me to college in the East, and I don't know him very much." "So have you seen any of his record?" So, he sent me to the record office of the Church. Then he gave me credentials to get in there.

People were coming to visit him and had to wait, and I was number two that morning till the time was over, the time was ready for the meeting. Nobody was permitted to come and see him again. Then he introduced me to his first counselor, Bishop Wells and Bishop Smith, George Albert Smith. Then his son came in to visit his father and then he saw me in there and then he yelled his head off, "Hey Brother Elia, what are you doing over here?" "Well, I came to see the son of your first missionary in Hawaii." Then they asked him, "What did he do to you, down there?" He said, "Well, I was the second counselor to the mission president, Wesley Smith at that time, when he was in the mission here in Hawaii." He tell us what to do. That's what he told them.

This was when Hugh Cannon came, when you were second counselor to Wesley Smith and Hugh J. Cannon came at that time?

Right, and Hugh J. Cannon came. And this other extra missionary, Keola Kailima'i, he was on a mission and we were up there together. Well, while they were praying and this Hawaiian missionary, he saw the two hands shake, up in Pulehu. And who are those two hands shake? The father of Hugh Cannon, not here, then, George Q. Cannon. E. Wesley Smith with his father.
Joseph?

Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Church. Well, the two fathers shaking hands and they didn't know, but these Hawaiian missionaries saw the two hands shake. That's all he see, the two hands shake and that's all.

And you weren't there at Pulehu at that time though, were you?

Oh yes, I was on a mission at that time, and they were up in Kula.

They were up in Kula?

Yes, yes, up in Kula. Right on the first branch of the Church. They were offering prayers, you know.

Was that the Pulehu chapel, up in Kula?

Yes, the Pulehu chapel.

But you talked with Keola Kailima'i?

Yes, that's what he told us.

And that's what he told you happened?

Yes. He saw these two hands shake while they were praying.

Now during the 1920's throughout the United States, we were celebrating the depression. What were the effects of the depression here in Hawaii?

We were told to store up food at that time. To plant food here and there. And Laie, Laie was planting taro, banana and things like that down there, on the church ground.

Where were you living during that time, during say, the early 1930s?
PE I been living in Honolulu. I bought a place up Kaimuki, then I sold that place and so I moved to Kalihi on account near to the mission headquarter. I bought another place down there. So we were alright, we were instructed to save your food and do something, whatever. You have a ground, well, plant something for you. And old Hawaiian said that if you turn your palm down, you live; if you turn down, you can not live on the empty pocket.

KB Were you working for the Church at this time?

PE Yes, working for the Church.

KB In church construction still?

PE Yes, church construction.

IS When did you come to the homestead?

PE 1929.

IS And why did you come?

PE On account of Prince Kuhio. "Say, you better go to Molokai." "Why I want to go to Molokai for?" I got my place in Honolulu, my own place, I bought a place down there. And built me a home down Kalihi near to the mission headquarter. I build four houses and I live in one and lease two, the other and making some extra money.

KB So you moved over here in 1929?

PE 1929, on account of Prince Kuhio.

KB And you've lived here ever since then?

PE Oh yes. Of course, I traveled here and there.

KB So during the Depression years you were here then, in Molokai?
PE Then the second World War came, and I was called back to the Navy. I used to be the construction foreman down there, when they start the Navy, Pearl Harbor.

IS What was Ho'olehua like when you first moved to the homestead?

PE Dry country, dry, dry. So the elders group said, "Let's fast for rain that this land will bring out something worthwhile for us to live here in this land." So they did. I was doing the building of the different homes of the homesteaders here at that time, but I joined with them; at a certain time I joined with them in their prayer. We fasted for three days. Just stay in one house, no go home. I was the only one out because freight were coming in, I had to go down to meet the barge and bring all the different homes lumber and all the stuff. So, after three days, one of the Protestant ministers make fun of us. He pointed his hand, he shake his hand, no rain, no rain. But when the rain came, one whole week day and night, one whole week. When they plant corn, everything, pumpkin, everything grows big, watermelon, whatever they plant.

And another thing, the caterpillar, that rock behind the church, that's the home of the caterpillar. He was a human being, can you beat that, and then he change himself into a caterpillar. When he go to meet old girlfriend, ah human being, just a young man. To find out who he was those top advisors, you know the Kahuna told them, "You see behind there is a little--just like the Filipino, they have that kind too--bone, that grows in the back just like a short tail and tie this thread over there and you watch where he goes. And lock up all your shack so there be no light, then he overslept. When he got up daylight already just like day so he run back home. You can follow him, where he stay with the thread that you tie behind." That's how they discover that was the cave over there where he hide himself.

IS Now, that cave is where the chapel is now? The Ho'olehua chapel?

PE Yes, the Hoolehua chapel, that big rock right there.

IS That big rock.

KB When was that chapel built?
PE We built that chapel when we came here to Molokai.

IS Did you build that chapel?

PE Yes. I just took that blueprint over to Maui, to Honolulu lumberyard and said, "Give me an estimation and fill this supply."

KB Were there quite a few men involved in the construction on that building?

PE Yes.

IS Did you build the gym also?

PE Yes, they sent a person from Salt Lake; I forgot his name now. Well, it was about half done and [there was] another building in Hilo, and he was sent up to Hilo then I finish up the gym til completed [gym is old military building-disassembled and brought to Molokai].

KB So you were the construction supervisor on the rest of the gymnasium.

PE Right.

KB Were you the supervisor on the chapel itself, or this man from Salt Lake?

PE No, he only in the gym when he arrived from Salt Lake.

KB So that was about 1930? [reassembled in the 1950’s]

PE Right around 1932.

KB Around 1932.

PE And 1939, the Navy call me up a letter, November, December, and January. I told my wife, "I better show up," because I was a federal
employee prior to that time, so I better show up. When I got down to the office, down Pearl Harbor, he look at me, he said, "Oh, you not too old." (laughter) That's what he told me, you not too old, so he gave me general inspector for the yard.

IS And you were already around fifty then, huh?

PE Well, thirty nine up to forty.

KB You would have been fifty in 1939.

PE Yes.

IS And they called you back to serve at the shipyard?

PE Yes, shipyard.

IS How long did you stay at the shipyard?

PE I stayed there till 1945, five years.

IS Till 1945.

PE I had, what you call, some kind of bloodshed on my leg, and the doctor attended me and he said, "That thing not gonna be cured so fast." So they let me out.

KB What was it on your leg--blood what?

PE Blood, blood, just like blood. No, no blood but the color of my leg red, just like blood. So they treated me for two weeks, and they said, "Well, we better let you go." So the Navy take care of me, the Army take care of me till today.

IS Now, your family stayed at Ho'olehua while you were working for the shipyard?

PE Yes, Ho'olehua.
IS Where did you stay while you were in Honolulu?

PE Oh, they have an old place down there; stayed down there. They called it Republican Street, on account I'm a Republican, they call that place, the road, Republican Street down Kalihi.

IS Do you remember the December 7 attack? Were you in Honolulu at that time?

PE The attack, I was over here. I was called here. Oh, the second World War, I was over there. I was over there at that time, at Pearl Harbor.

IS Do you remember the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

PE Yes, yes. One day a wagon came with three Japanese boys on. They were dressed in dirty clothes, just like some of the laborers that work there. I noticed them though I never see them before, so I called the guard, in case after that. They were not employees of Pearl Harbor. So, they commit suicide, those three boys run their car right down to the pier and in the water. They died, all of them died. In 1945, I was out of the Navy on account I had the...leg.

SIDE B

IS Can you tell us about some of the Church positions that you've held during your lifetime?

PE Well, when the mission president was Samuel E. Wooley—that's the time we were sent to build that chapel up in Kula, Pulehu. And then he was released. On one condition he was released, bigamist (polygamist).

IS Bigamy?

PE The bigamy was cancelled to support the law of the land. So he had two wives.
KB  Samuel E. Wooley had two wives?

PE  Yes, two wives, and the child was born. That's why he was released and Wesley Smith was president in his place. Then the new headquarters was built, this Elder Bowles, he was the mission president in New Zealand on his way back. They had to bring him back because he was a construction man too, and they were building the mission headquarters in Kalihi, chapel and all that.

KB  Who is this New Zealand man?

PE  Elder Bowles.

IS  Bowles?  B-O-W-L-E-S?

PE  Yes.

IS  He was on his way from New Zealand?

PE  Yes, released from there. And then they had to bring him back to Hawaii, here to help.

IS  He was from the mainland?

PE  Yes, from Utah. He work construction work.

IS  And what kind of jobs did you hold as far as the church was concerned? You were a counselor in the mission presidency?

PE  yes, second counselor.

IS  Were you ever in a branch presidency, or in a bishopric?

PE  In the branch, yes. I was a branch president way down Waialae during that time before the Stake was organized. I was the branch president there in Waialae.

KB  Waialae where, in Oahu?
PE  In Honolulu, Oahu.

IS  Where Waialae Kahala is now?

PE  Yes, yes, Waialae Kahala. Well, there's other places further down.

IS  That used to be real rural country then, with the big dairies and all like that there.

PE  Yes, I live right in Kaimuki at that time. We had thirty members down there.

KB  When was that about?

PE  Oh, way back to 1913.

KB  That was back before World War I, back before the flu epidemic around 1913?

IS  That's when you were branch president?

PE  Yes.

IS  You would have been only about sixteen years old then, huh?

PE  Well, I was only a young man.

KB  He'd be twenty-four.

PE  Twenty-four.

IS  So you were a young man then.

PE  And those boys were going down to the chapel with me, same pay, all big ones. Now today, some of them passed away already.
Last year—was it last year? There was a commemoration over at Kalae, at South Point for the arrival of the Maori canoes. What can you tell us about that?

Well, you see, down South Point, that's the migration point to the south. The migration to the south. Just lately we went to Kahoolawe and they have the same point too in Kaho'olawe, migration down to the south.

In Kealakahiki?

Kealakahiki, on Kaho'olawe, we were over there. And down the South Point, I was there in 1929, 1928, down the South Point. They put a sort of a monument down there, down South Point, but that's not the exact spot the migration point to the south. Little bit more to Kona, I think, maybe another half mile or one mile towards Kona side—the exact place. Now, gee—I wish we were all over there and see the place. At that time we don't have any steel and what have you to bore holes. The legend down to the sea bottom, sort of a platform there, and the hole about that big, all dug out, right through the rock, solid rock about that thick, the holes already dug out right through. And, they claim, they get a hold the rock from Maunakea, the hard rock, and they go over there and grind them up and grind them up. When the chief canoe come and tie his canoe—whatever hole there, maybe the number one hole, number two, number three; there were five holes there, then the people over there will offer their daughter to the high chief. So when the child was born, it will be a chief, not a commoner, buck private, they don't like a buck private and that's what they do. And there was a rock on top the surface about maybe sixteen or eighteen inch square, with a little hole about that big, right through. And when we were there to celebrate, I took the people down there in my car and got down to the right spot. I was over there in 1928, when the old folks were still...

This was when the group from New Zealand came?

Yes.
KB  Do you remember any of those people?

PE  Oh, yes. The name is--what you call--Maia, Kumaiha?

KB  Meha?

PE  Ku--Kumai--oh, the other people that never go there, like, oh, Duncan. They said they are well-off people in New Zealand, Duncan.

KB  Wirema Duncan [OH-376]?

PE  Yes, the Duncan and. . .

KB  Stewart Meha [OH-376]?

PE  Stewart Meha, and others. Kind of a few of them, eight of them.

KB  Was Heperi with that group? Hohepa Heperi, remember that name?

PE  Hapela, something like that. Most of those group people that came from New Zealand, they stayed with me in Honolulu, in my home. Alright, I told them, the beginning of the New Zealand migration was from East Maui, Hana. There's a little hill of Ka'uiiki, the older brother, and Pu'ukapele, the next hill, the younger brother. Just because they were having dinner, while they were having their dinner and the younger brother pick some of the same food to eat and the older brother slapped his hands. And that's violating the code of the Hawaiian way of life. Then he went over to the sister who married the high chief in the Big Island, and the sister sent warriors to punish the older brother. The funniest thing, he died of something, nobody knew he died. But the way they were living on Ka'uiiki, they had a big statue over there with a club in the hand. The first God went out there to see, he see this big man swing his club. Well, he just stand and look at him, wanted him to come near but nobody came near him. But the last of the gods that went up there, he went and swing to his club and the statue never swing his club. He move up, move up, move up. Now when he touch the leg, why, this is no human being, this is a log. (laughter) A statue that's all. so he
knocked the statue and yelled down to them, "Eh, this is not a real man." So when they came up there all the chiefs were fast asleep, they club them all up. That's what they did.

So I took this New Zealand group over to Hana, to where their ancestors lived. And when we passed, they came to my hometown. There were four ladies and one man on the car. This man, I took him up to the high spot, and this man looked down, he yelled his head and cried like a baby, "This is where my grandfolks came, in my home town where I was born," that's what he said. The land is so low, it's just like the tongue sticking out. And the sign, one rock on one side and one rock on this side of that land, Mokumana and Mokuolua, had that two rocks in the sea, about half mile out in the sea that two rocks, big rocks. When he saw that, "This is where my grandfolks came," to New Zealand. He cried like a baby when he saw that. Then I took them up to Hana, I told them this is where the younger brother lived and this is where the older brother lived and during their having dinner, discrepancy between the two brothers happened. What had happened, the older brother died, automatic.

KB Were you living in Maui at that time or were you living in Honolulu?
PE We were living in Honolulu.

KB Did you have a position in the Church during that period?
PE Oh yes, during that period, member of the high council with Wesley. I was the second assistant to the mission presidency in Honolulu.

IS When you were on the high council, who was the Stake President?
PE Samuel E. Wooley, I mean Ralph Wooley, the son.

IS And who were his two counselors?
PE Clissold, he was one of the missionary and he was over here engaged in financial group over here in Hawaii and his second counselor I think, Arthur Parker. That's the first stake organized in Honolulu. I was ordained high priest at that time, 1940.
Were you involved in the building of the Honolulu Tabernacle?

Honolulu Tabernacle, no. I was on other construction work during that time. I was already busy.

You were working for the Navy during that time, were you?

Well, I have spare time, I worked at the building of that new library down there, the opposite building.

The state library?

The state library.

You helped to build that?

Yes, I helped to build that.

The one across from the Federal building?

Right, right.

By Kawaiahao?

Kawaiahao. We were working over there and I was construction foreman and they were putting up a slab, so eight men, four men on one side, four on the other side, so I went over there and help the other four. That side of four, I was the five on one side, they drop the end, too heavy. Then I hurt my back, just like I bust up my back taking the load. Then one old man said, "You go down the beach and get this certain herb and pound and sit down by the sun, dry and rub again."

Instead of sitting by the sun, I got hold of a 250-watt lamp, put them over there, quick dry, rub again five times. The next morning, just like I didn't have any trouble with my back. So that was one of the good—anybody that gets hurt, I go get that kind of weed, pound it and rub it on. Instead of sitting by the sun, it takes a long time, I get the electric globe, 100-watt or 120, put it on top,
dry them up, rub again, five times. Well, that's what I did night time. I got to be on the job, not doing nothing, just look around.

IS Now, tell us about President McKay's visit in 1950. How did you get called to be a labor missionary at the college?

PE Well, that's a funny thing. I don't know how they called me to go down there. When they asked me to go down, alright, go down. there is one thing they did, I don't know who's the fault, either Clissold or the building finance committee on the construction work. They told us, all labor missionaries have a ten dollar a month allowance for laundry or whatever they need. But I never smell nothing of the ten dollars. I was over there for seven months doing mostly of the construction work. I didn't like that idea, so I was over there seven months. Some come and go, two or three months they're gone, but I was over there seven months.

IS What did you do after you left the college? Did you come back here to Molokai?

PE Yes, I was over here, I came back to Molokai. While I was down with the Navy, I asked, "Say, I like to get me a tractor." "What you're going to do with you tractor?" "Well, I got a farm on the island of Molokai, so I can utilize the tractor, plow, plant something." They didn't believe. They sent some kind of FBI over here to look whether I own the place over here or not, when they found out that I own the place, the tractor and the whole equipment at government price. At that time it cost about $3,600, the tractor. They gave me governement price, only $1,400. In three weeks I paid the $1,400, sent the equipment over here. Then when I got this trouble, they release me, they said, "Back home." Then I started to plant watermelon, easy crop. After that planting of my first crop, I made $4,000. $1,400 was already paid, then I had enough money to go to Conference in Salt Lake. I was up there in 1932, 1936, 1951. Most of the time I go up there and meet old missionaries over there, we have a lot of good times. And the old missionaries in Hawaii, certain time they have dinner--Saturday.
IS  Reunion.

PE  Yes, reunion. They invite me to go over there and look around, some old timers. And I seen one old man, he was crying. Who could he be? After dinner I asked him, "Were you one of the missionaries in Hawaii?" He said, "Yes, I was over there in 1904 and 1905 and so on." "Then you must be in Kula, Maui at that time. I was there, don't you remember me when I was over there building that chapel?" He remembered. Oh, we had a swell time. Some of the high priest got married again. Certain day, certain evening, all the bachelors, men folks and lady folks no more husband, they come to this certain place and the men folks come and they never seen them before, how about you a wife for me. That's not funny, that's good. When you need a husband you go to that place, you wait there till the gang come and they have dinner and you select your own. And one of the men folks over there, he lost his wife, he didn't have any wife, so he went over there wait. I went over there too. I see some missionary girls were down here, were over there, maybe waiting for a husband but nobody ask her for a husband, then I tapped her, "how about you be my wife?" Well, the only thing I cannot take you to Hawaii, you got to stay in Salt Lake. I just joke with them.

IS  Does the name Jonathan Napela mean anything to you?

PE  Jonathan Napela, he was the one that sent the missionaries up. You see his grave down here, down Kalaupapa. You never see that? The grave opposite of the chapel. That's his grave over there, Napela. He was the one that sent the missionaries up to his home town in Kula, Maui. When the missionaries first arrived, they have discrepency with the other minister in Wailuku. When they went right in there, he asked them if he have time to preach the gospel, to say something to the people. When he stood up, they said, "yes, yes, yes, you can do it." When he stood up and stay almost two days that he get the language already, and he told those people in our mother tongue. And while the other ministers they only preach in English, 1920 to 1950 that thirty years, they ought to learn it by that time to talk in Hawaiian.
IS  1820 to 1950.

PE  Yes, 1850 when our missionaries arrive down here. 1820 when the other missionaries, protestant missionaries, arrived.

IS  Are there any stories that you remember of the growth of the Church or the early Saints in Hawaii?

PE  Yes, on account of these miracles that happen in my home town where I was born. When my people built this rock platform and dress them up and the missionaries arrive and when they stood up and preach the gospel in our mother tongue--and another thing he was standing up in the air. When the people saw that, well, this is the man of God. People were joining the Church, thirteen today, twenty tomorrow and keep on like that for two and a half months; over two-hundred people were converted in the Church. From that time, the famous Mormon Church, number one.

IS  How many children do you have now?

PE  With this wife only two. [Paul Jr. and Wesley]

IS  How many children, total?

PE  This wife of former marriage had eight, she had eight. One girl and seven boys plus these two boys, nine boys and one girl. Well, between my two sons there was a daughter, on account she went outside there, we had sweet potatoes, she went over there with the pick, heavy, and hill them up and out she go.

IS  How many wives have you had?

PE  Well that be the third one.

IS  This is your third wife. [Carrie Kalilimoku]

PE  Third.
And you have two children from her.

Yes, two children.

And seven children from the other one?

Yes, the second I have adopted, and the first wife I had another son he's on the Big Island. He generally come down and see me once in a while, from my first marriage.

Now, you're regarded as being a Kupuna, for Molokai here. How does one become a kupuna?

Well, the oldest people on the island. When we went to Kaho'olawe, they respected their kupuna. They serve us first, me and my wife, whatever they have before the rest of them.

Does the kupuna become a kupuna just because he's old?

Not only that, maybe they have an idea that my kupuna own all that land, my great grandfolks, they were members of the high chief. Then I went to Kauai in 1924. When they assigned me to Kauai, I went to look from East end to West end the oldest person I could find. And I find one lady by the river, then I asked them, "Do you know this person by the name of Ho'e?" Then she yelled out, "That's my grandfather." She cried like a baby. And one of her son was my friend in Honolulu here; he was working down the Post Office, assistant postmaster. So that's the way how things go.

When you were on the High Council here in this district, you used to travel around from Molokai to Maui and Lanai, were those the three islands that made up the district, when you were on the district high council?

Oh, yes.

I noticed your name down on the records at Kalaupapa. Can you tell us about some of your visits down there as a high councilman?
PE We suppose to send down there some of the members of the High Council and one time they didn't have a chance to go down there. So I went down there to fulfill some of that absentees, so there were two of us that went down. We walked down there and the services was just about to start when we arrived. When we arrived it was a good thing. And at that time, the membership down Kalaupaa was so many, old timers you know, and they have big stories, and we stand up and sing old songs, Deseret, but in Hawaiian, Hawaiian way of singing of the Deseret.

KB They were singing the songs of Deseret in Hawaiian.

PE In Hawaiian, and other famous songs too.

KB You came here to Ho'olehua in 1929.

PE 1929 in July.

KB About when, do you remember, you were called to a church position? I'm trying to kind of get the order of church positions that you have had.

PE Well the church positions were prior to that.

KB Well, let's just take the Molokai period.

PE Oh, they organized Molokai here, district council.

KB When were you called to the district high council?

PE Well, very early, very early.

KB The early 1930s?

PE Yes, very early.

KB And how long do you think you were on the district high council?
PE Oh, till they reorganized. When they reorganized again. Now we come under the Hawaii, Kahului, Hawaii Stake now.

KB Right. Were you on the district high council up until just a few years ago when they organized the Stake?

PE When the organized the Stake, yes.

KB So, would you say, you've been on the district high council from the early 1930's up until the 1970's.

PE Right.

KB That recent?

PE Yes. Say, what's the difference now, never happen before. Like the organization of the priesthood grade: high priest, seventies, and elders. The high priest today, we have pay membership dues of three dollars a month. Not before?

KB No, no that's right, that's kind of a change.

PE Maybe they need the financial help or some kind.

KB Well just to take care some of the quorum business, I guess.

PE Maybe.

KB Do you remember the Kainalu chapel?

PE Yes, we used to go up there every Sunday, divide up, a certain person go.

KB When did that close down, do you know?

PE They closed down when they have this Kaunakakai church building brought up.
So when they built the Kaunakakai chapel, they close down the Kainalu.

Because they only have few over there, that's why. And what they served, in Kainalu one, the tidal wave it came up, and water dash over right in there. (laughter)

Was that the 1946 tidal wave? The water came right up to the chapel.

All around that place. Flooded all over.

Was that chapel here when you arrived in 1929?

The chapel?

The Kainalu chapel.

Yes, we built that Kainalu chapel.

So you helped on building that.

Yes, I was the building committee that time for the mission.

Was that after you arrived here on Molokai?

Yes, before.

Before you came, the chapel was built.

We have other person was staying over here in homestead lot, one-acre lot. He understood those construction work so he went over there. We called him to go over there and build that chapel over there, and one in Lahaina and little back. So he went over there too. Then he get job down Kalaupapa, he went down Kalaupapa too.

Now here on Molokai, there was a chapel at Kainalu, a chapel here in Kaunakakai, and then the chapel at Ho'olehua and the chapel down at
Kalaupapa. Those four, were there any other chapels here on Molokai during your life time?

PE They had another chapel in the olden days, way up, way up in the valley.

KB What valley was that?

PE Oh, down Kalaupapa.

KB In Kalaupapa.

PE In Kalaupapa.

KB But not up here top side, were there any other chapels that you know of?

PE No, up here mostly the Catholic and the others.

KB This other chapel up at that valley that you talked about, do you remember that building down there over at Kalawao?

PE Kalawao, that's right, a small little shack.

KB Did you ever visit there in official capacity?

PE Yes, we visit there, Sunday, assigned there, and then they moved down all the people up there--were moved down to the point.

KB Down to Kalaupapa where they are now.

PE Where they are now down there.

KB What has been the greatest thing that you remember in your experience having to do with the church?

PE Well I tell you, on account of the Priesthood, the performance of the Priesthood holders. Very top.
KB  Very top?

PE  Yes, very top.

KB  Now you've been here a long time and you've been called upon, I imagine, to use your Priesthood many times, haven't you?

PE  Right.

KB  Can you remember any experiences you have had that you might be able to tell us?

PE  Right on the island of Kauai, the captain of police was struck by a car; oh, he was busted up. Then one of the Branch President's friend of mine on the island of Kauai call me up by phone, "Say, our captain of police, the car hit them, bust up." "Alright, who is his name?" "Sheldon." "Where he live?" "Kapaa." "Okay." So you might say, maybe using the word "proxy," I used his name and I call our Father in Heaven, there is a person down there, member of the church, was struck by a car, get hurt, very serious. So alright, about four or five months after that I went to the island of Kauai with a group, and we went to my wife's sister's husband, his name is Hussey, he was a sargeant, something like that, and we went to the movie picture, while we were sitting down I see this man coming in, the captain of police. Well, he's not cripple, just like he never get hurt. He was well and sound. The next day they heard I was over there, they came and pick me up. I was one of their guests with all the food on the car and everything. The group went right Kauai and then take me around Kauai. Didn't look like he was hurt; he was all well and sound.

KB  This captain Sheldon was a member of the church?

PE  Yes, they were members of the church, the whole family. I used to go down there and preach the gospel to them. My station was in Hanapepe, the island of Kauai. Every Sunday I must go to different branches and help them.
So you traveled quite widely in church construction and then you also traveled as kind of a missionary also?

Right, sort of a missionary status.

So a great deal of your life has been spent working for the church in one way or another.

Right.

Well, this has been very good, you’ve been able to trace back over a long period of history for us.

Now, I had a vision of the building of the temple in New Jerusalem and when it came in the Church News, I think, or announcement, that President Kimball bought land in Missouri, four thousand acre. Alright, I went there before that when I got the vision of the building of the temple in Jackson County, Missouri. The whole building appeared to me. The pillars that represent the twelve apostle, and the Bureau of Information on the outer building, the ordinance building and the assembly room and the telestial, above it, the terrestrial, and celestial and the dome. The dome represented the Patriarch of the Church. And each tribe, each section are divided in twelve. And they have a dome for the Patriarch. The Patriarch of each tribe. Beside the patriarch, that's the dome of the temple. And those pillars represent the twelve apostles, and the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now this is the way you saw it in your vision?

Yes. They took me in and look around. Each section just like you might say, starting point to north represent the pillar. And northeast and southwest, divide up in degrees, why, thirty degrees, 360 degrees, thirty degrees each tribe and their entrance. Each tribe has their enterance, number one, number two, number three, number four, and so on down the line.
KB Well, I'm sure you would like to see the temple built to see how it matches your vision.

PE Yes, I went over there and see the ground myself. When I went in Sunday, I went up to the office and they were having the Relief Society meeting and the mission president just came back, he was driving all over some places and he was back. When I went to his office, he looked at me, "What can I do for you?" "Well, I came here to see your country." "Where you came from?" I told him I came from Hawaii. "Gee, well," he said. "Well, I came to see my two sons way over here down in San Diego, so I travel up here, so I told them, get back to Hawaii instead of staying over here. They're having a strike and nothing to eat, no money to pay their house rent and all that stuff." (chuckles) He laughed.

KB Another question I wanted to ask about your priesthood experiences here on Molokai. Among the membership that was in the church in those days here on Molokai, and because of your position in the district high council, were you ever called to sit in judgement in any of your fellow saints? Was there any problems of that nature in the church?

PE Yes. Some of them didn't keep the commandments and all that stuff and they were called to the carpet, for their attention. And some of them maybe didn't like the idea; of course, they were suspended.

KB So there were people that were excommunicated.

PE Yes.

KB Was it usually for sexual immorality?

PE Yes, that's right, yes. Get girlfriend and the wife, and they they part and marry another one, another one and so on down the line.

KB Were there other times when people would ask the High Council to sort of sit as a judge and jury between members handling disputes between them?
PE That's right. There were times that things happen.

KB What types of cases were those?

PE On account of running around with the different--leaving the wife and go with another one and some of them went back and bottom up and all that.

KB They went back and did what?

PE Bottom up.

KB Bottom up?

PE Bottom up, they call it bottom up. (laughter)

KB Oh, drinking?

PE Drinking.

KB Oh, I see. Was drinking kind of a problem among some of the Mormons?

PE Oh yes, with some of them. Now I have a picture home with all members of the high council here in Molokai. I think only about three or four more survive, all the rest passed away.

KB Were you on the high council when Arthur Haycock was Mission President?

PE Yes. He was sort of a private secretary to President George Albert Smith? Or maybe son-in-law or something like that. When I went up there he was there. In order to see the--you got to go see him, through him.

KB He remembered you when you were on the high council, I'm sure.

PE Oh yes, he remembered.
KB Well, I think we've about exhausted our tape and we appreciate this very much, Brother Elia. You've given us an insight to what life was like back a good many years ago, so thank you very, very much.

PE Hiki.

KB Mahalo nui loa.

IS Mahalo nui.

PE Mahalo nui. Talofa'alii.

IS Ah, talofa.

END OF INTERVIEW