

OH-12

Box #1

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Hixon Hamon

OH-12

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-HAWAII
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Behavioral and Social Sciences Division
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Hixon Hamon

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INT: Brother Hamon, when did you go to MAC?

HH: I went to College in 1913.

INT: At the very beginning then?

HH: Yes, the College was actually opened in 1912 in October as I remember it- I'm only recalling but it was opened in 1912 in October and I went there in 1913, in February, March of 1913.

INT: In other words, you were there at the beginning. If I remember rightly, President Hoagland- I could remember when there was a conference there and he spoke in the junction of the MAC building. The front portion and the back portion in there. I can remember President Hoagland speaking there.

HH: Now, what was he? Was he the mission president?

HH: Yes, he was the mission president at the time as I can remember.

INT: Now, this could be, very possibly checking, was this the very beginning?

HH: Yes.

INT: Now, because President Romney, I believe went there to dedicate it.

HH: That's right.

INT: Were you there at that time he dedicated it?

HH: Yes, yes, that's what I say. I remember President Hoagland was moving. He just finished his turn. I remember right but I can remember that distinctly now as well as then as he spoke to the people at the college. And President Romney, he was the next President. Just what year, President Romney came in, I don't...

INT: I was just looking at a Te Karere today, the 1959 issue. That had a lot of the history and it seemed like he was here either from 1911-13 or 1912-14, I can't recall just which.

HH: I think he was there till 1914 if I remember rightly. He was there until 1914 that's just before the outbreak of World War. That's why I remember President Romney being there. He was there in the 1914 year.

INT: I should have brought that paper with me. I just had today and I was looking at it. Now I was talking to Uncle Jim today, Uncle Jim Elkington, and he was talking about the dedicatory prayer offered from the top of the buggy or something like that

HH: That's right.

INT: By President Romney on that occasion. Now, where were you living at that time?

HH: In Gisborne. That was our home then. And I had just completed my going into the third standard. And of course, the elders then were briefed to contact the parents around in the district telling them of the college and just what the benefit of going to the college- the education that they would receive there .so, the elders at that time, they went around the various parks and homes and gathered quite a few of the boys from there. Now, like Jeff Clark and Tipi Kopua, Mahanga Pere and Mafeking Pere. We were all from the same district. I think Mahanga and Mafe came a year later, I think they were there in 1914 period.

INT: So it was kind of in response to this that your parents sent you down there. I was talking with one man and he said for awhile some of the parents kind of regarded it as oh, almost a reformatory type of thing- if their boys were acting up at home, they'd send them off to MAC to kind of shape them up and make men out of them. Do you remember that feeling being expressed.

HH: Well, that was the concept of a few but that was soon scotched. If I remember right, President Johnson- he was the first president here at the college and he made that quite clear to the boys that were coming in, you know that were a little bit on the delinquent side, and know they were a little bit off beat and President Johnson gave them quite clear to understand that college was not a college to reform Big man but he was firm, but he still understood the boys. You know, he gave the boys a fair...

INT: Do you know, if he came out from the States to be the principal or had he been here on a mission or had he...?

HH: No, he came down as the first principal. He and his wife. His wife, she was an accomplished musician, she was a pianist and she was really accomplished, she put up some concerts on piano playing , that's the classic music, and the musicians from Napier and Hastings used to come to the college, to the chapel when she was playing. She was wonderful. She was a wonderful musician; she was only a little lady. And President Johnson, he was big man but she was a real accomplished musician.

INT: So, when you went to the college, how old were you by the way?

HH: I was turning...thirteen, I was thirteen years old.

INT: Now you finished standard three, is that right?

HH: Right.

INT: Did you go on into standard four when you went to the college?

HH: Well no, I went from the third standard and started at the third standard at the college.

INT: So, you started in standard three, then you go to standard four, five and six and then you started the secondary program?

HH: Yes, and then, you know the freshman and the senior and the course from there up?

INT: Now, did you graduate there?

HH: No, I didn't. But I received a complete...I took up couple of subjects that I wanted to...you know...to become proficient, that's agronomy and wool-classing and I took that up really ...as far as I was concerned. I was proficient. And to the fact that I received a certificate from Elder Cook of Wool- classing that I passed my examinations in wool- classing and also, he was working in conjunction with the government wool- classer. He came out to college and examined the boys when they went through the course. Well, that course was actually a two-year course, of course with the other courses that we took up. I majored in that and got my certificate on that. And when I left the college, I went into wool-classing on the big stations in the Poverty Bay District.

INT: That was the result of your experience.

HH: Yes

INT: Now, how many years were you at college?

HH: How many years? Well, I left there in 1918.

INT: Oh yes, so you had four, five years anyway.

HH: No, 1919 when I left.

INT: You finished up in 1919.

HH: Now, I went then, straight on from there, my certificate actually helped me in getting jobs in the big stations in the Poverty Bay district, the Matawhers Stations, the Barker, their stations. And then I became the Wool-classer in -what you call - a community shearing shed; that is all the farmers in Poverty Bay flats. They joined together and brought their flocks to this central shearing shed and I was the wool classer for them.

INT: Would that...was that your occupation for...

HH: Quite a number of years.

INT: Quite a part of your adult life then?

HH: For quite a long time there. I took that up and we moved- I moved from there out into the country and I took up a little farm of my own. But then whenever I was required for wool-classing, well then, I went out to class in the shearing sheds.

INT: Very good. Now you had two years of secondary, would it have been?

HH: Yes.

INT: Just two years on the secondary level, first and second year. Did you have any more secondary schooling after that or was that it?

HH: No, that was it.

INT: Now, Brother Hamon, how do you feel about the preparation that you received. You received the two years of secondary schooling and of course you're out in the wide wide world. Now, did that prepare you now, I know it had vocationally by what you said already, how about just academically in general.

HH: Well, it was a big help, there's no question about that. I went from different places, moved from one place to another went to Auckland for five years and I received my ability to carry on that work, that I took up. Later through, also through education at the college, that is bookkeeping...they had a very wonderful course on bookkeeping, accountancy, really good. It was just like dealing with the real actual business that you're carrying on. It helped me, I became at various times the secretary of various organizations. And eventually I came up to become the secretary of unions and it was just through the education I received at the college that helped me in that...

INT: What was the spiritual training you received?

HH: No question about that. No question about that. The education that we received, I'm saying this of the boys in my time, in passing years, I don't think...if there were, there'd be very low of the percentage of boys that have not attained to Church activities in the Church positions.. through the education, through the teachings they received at the college. No question about the part of it.

INT: Yes, I know, as I've collected the names, there's just not very many that are not still active. There's a few but most of them are real stalwarts and always have been...

HH: But of course the thing is quite a lot of the old boys, they've passed on. And they've been active as far as I'm concerned, as far as my knowledge of them, they been active right up until they're passing. Of course, the later boys, now mind you, after that, up to the 1920's on to the time when the college broke up, the earthquake, 1931, that was different strata of boys altogether.

INT: Let's see, later, what Church positions have you held? You were district President, weren't you?

HH: Yes, in the district Presidency, and I been branch President for thirty -two years, acting as branch President for thirty-two years, various branches, Poverty Bay District. I was in the district Presidency and the branch President in the Te Hapera, Gisborne Branch and then right through from the time of President Taylor. And President Angus T. Wright, that's when I, you know, started to get into that, when I left college, you know. I think President Taylor was there, at the time and then from there on President Magleby and right onto to President Cowley. President Halverson and so on, all of those presidents. I was on a mission, two six month missions. There was a shortage of elders at the time and...

INT: Was this during President Cowley's time?

HH: No, just prior to President Cowley, Angus T. Wright. And he asked you know, if I would go on a six month mission because to be companion for the elders.

INT: Oh, I see.

HH: I was there and then I went to Auckland and I served there for a short mission. Of course, our mission was actually in a street corner, you know, those street meetings, right? I was there with the elders, quite a few of the elders and that was the same on Gisborne. I remember there in one of the street meetings that we had, you know, it was quite stormy. And there was a man there who was really against the Church and I was in with Elders. I was, I think it was only three months, there with elders and we had these regular meetings every Saturday. And Elder young, he was the district President and he was, oh, he was a great speaker. He'd block the street, you know when he stood up there, he blocked the street and they'd be speaking. Of course, there would be police there. At first they wouldn't give protection, wouldn't guarantee protection. When the elders went along to the police to ask if they would help out and that. Of course, they had to ask the police to get the permission to speak at a certain corner. And the police said "yes, we'll give you that but we can't guarantee you protection." So anyway, we started. Elder Young, I can't remember him quite distinctively and he, he could speak, that boy. He came straight from the university and if I remember rightly, he was a debater. You know, he took quite honors in debating at the university and he certainly can do it.

INT: Did you ever find that protection was needed?

- HH: Oh well, then men that were sort of hostile- one there, he came right out and stood right there and pretty near walked to the center of the, you know, were in a circle. And he told the elders there, he said, "you dirty dogs, go on, go on home. Sit down!" And, was it? Who was it there? Elder Chadwick, he just quietly said to this man, he said, "my friends, we're here on a peaceful mission to preach the Gospel. And if you don't desist from you foul mouth," you know, he was swearing against us, the day will come that you will feel the heavy hands of the Almighty. About a month afterwards, I'm giving you this as a testimony, two corners from us in the Ts Hapera- about a month, or a little over, this man was stricken. Now he was a blacksmith- big, strong man, we've known him, oh for years. and that was his trade, a blacksmith. Strong, never knew a day of ill health. After that, just a month after the encounter with elders he was stricken and the doctors came to see him, to visit him and they couldn't find what wrong with him, he died. Now, that was known to us, all of the members of the branch at the time, and I was present when that elder quietly spoke to him that if he did not desist, that he'll feel the hand of the Almighty. And that was fulfilled to the letter. Now I'm giving you this of the foundation of the teaching that we received at the college.
- INT: Well, that was quite a significant I find, in the lives of many people. Now what were some of the activities that you engaged in at the college? Were you involved in the sports program?
- HH: Well, I was in the Sunday School, superintendent of the Sunday School for, I think for, I think they change around with different boys, the Sunday School.
- INT: There was a branch right there on the college campus?
- HH: Yes, in the college. Then I was in the choir, you know, Walt Smith! He was the kingpin and Elder Scott; he was the professor of music.
- INT: Was he the one that became headmaster?
- HH: Yes, later. And then of course, that was after Elder Hintze- Hintze was the second after Johnson and then Elder Stott and then Welch.
- INT: How would u spell his name?
- HH: Heinze? H-e-i-n-z-e. He was a tall man ,fine fine man. He was really good.
- INT: Seems to have some outstanding men.
- HH: He was a mathematician that was his subject professor.

- INT: Now, in the very first days, the time that you were there, was the student body composed solely of Maoris or were there some non Maoris there such as islanders?
- HH: There were some Pakehas there, the Goings. You know Cyril Going? He was there. You'd remember Cyril going. Who was another Pakeha? I can't recall. There were two other, if I remember correctly, there was two other Pakeha boys there besides Cyril Going.
- INT: Yes, I heard his name already before. There weren't any islanders at this time?
- HH: Oh, yes Filiaga and Francis- yes there were Samoan, I think they were, yes there were the Schwenize boys. And of course, Bert Brunt, he was a Samoan, he was there. Those are the ones that I can remember: Schwenize brothers, Burt Brunt, Filiaga, and Francis, oh what's this other name, he was a fine boy, a fine man. He wasn't a boy; he was round about in his thirties when he came. Filiaga was in mid-twenties. And of course, the Schwenize brothers, they were young boys, they were Samoan. Now those are the only ones that I remember in my time. But I think later there were quite a few, quite a few.
- INT: Yes, that's what I understand.
- HH: What?
- INT: Did you return home during the summer?
- HH: Yes.
- INT: Some of the boys stayed, I understand.
- HH: Oh yes. Yes, I think some of them did, the parents made a request that they stayed. And of course, another matter too, that they stayed back to work off their tuition mainly. But several of the boys, I know that their parents asked if they could stay on at the college and work there. If they want to pay them for their labors, that's why. But they started there for that.
- INT: What were some of the work assignments that you had?
- HH: I was in charge of the farm, the horses; you know the general keeping of the farm animals and the farm equipment. When the poultry came in, I was in charge of the poultry farm.
- INT: Would these be chickens, primarily?
- HH: Oh yes, quite a lot, about 2000 fowls.

INT: Now that wasn't there originally.

HH: No, no that was just before the end of my time when that was brought in.

INT: 1916, 17 somewhere around there?

HH: Yes. And that was....

INT: Now, the fowls, were they kept there for the eggs or were they kept for the meat primarily?

HH: Both the eggs and the meat?

INT: Now, this wasn't for your own use, it was used for commercial purposes, was it?

HH: I think the meat was part of the poultry, fattening of the poultry, I think they used that commercially. But the eggs, of course, that was brought into the boys. You know, to the college. And it was really a big step- up in the menu of the boys. You know, when it comes to the eggs, the sisters would come over to the college, and they would bake cakes and that for the boys.

INT: How was the menu, did you feel the cooking was quite good?

HH: Good, there's no question about that. you see, the way that I remember how it worked. The sisters took a roster, made up a roster each of the sisters would plan out the meals for the college and they were good.

INT: Now, were the meals cooked by the sisters?

HH: No, that was given over to the boys each, you know, a group of boys took over the cooking part. But you know, they had Sister Kenneth, she was the matron, like you know, for the cooking she was the matron.

INT: What was her name again?

HH: Sister Kenneth. K-E-N-N-E-T-H. Didn't any of the other boys mention her?

INT: No, no. I don't remember her name coming up.

HH: She was quite a lady.

INT: She was hired, apparently.

HH: Oh yes. But she conducted all of the cooking and that, but the sisters like Sister Cook and Sister Welch, and so on, they devised the plan the menus for the college.

INT: Did the faculty wives do any teaching? I know some special subjects like music occasionally but dramatics or something, but did they teach any of the other classes?

HH: Well, only one that I remember, I took up a class or classes with Sister Welch , you see, he was principal there and after, lets see, President Johnson, then President Hintze, then President Welch, then President Stott. I think that's the sequence, I wouldn't say for sure but I think that's the sequence. President Welch he was the Principal there and Sister Welch occasionally came over and took up a class. Now, just what she taught, I'm not quite sure. I think it was in the classics. English Classic. There was an elder there who was out teacher in Dramatics- Elder Johnson, and he was good.

INT: Did you get involved with dramatic activities?

HH: Yes, we had a traveling dramatic play and we went around principal as far down as Waipawa and right up into Hastings and into Napier and as far as Gisborne. The play was of a court scene Wilson Paewai was the judge, Mafeking Pere was one of the lawyers, I just don't remember who the other lawyer was and I was the policeman. I took the title of a policeman. And it was really good. Well, to show you that we went into Hastings there and to the theatre. Yes, we performed there.

INT: Was it a three-act, do you remember, or a one-act?

HH: No, it was a two-act play if I remember. And then of course, we had the musical side, you see, to fill up the time. We did a lot of traveling with the choir, and the orchestra.

INT: Well, this was during the war as I understand; a lot of this was done for patriotic societies.

HH: Yes, it started before but it came on then. During the War period, in 1914, when the war broke out, they asked if we could help in raising funds for the war in 1914. 1915 up to 1919 that was in October that was the bad tear in 1919. That's when the flu broke out, plague that hit the college.

INT: Yes, that was the big epidemic.

HH: Yes.

INT: I guess the major part of it, I understand was in 1918 and there were probably still have some repercussions from it.

HH: In the plague?

INT: Yes.

HH: Oh, yes. It started then but it wasn't in its full, not until the beginning of 1919. Oh, I was well aware of that. I slept in the same room when my roommate when I woke up he was dead but he was blue.

INT: Who was that?

HH: He was an islander. I don't remember his name. But he was an islander. Went to bed, you know, quite alive and lively. I wake up in the morning and looked over, well; I jumped out of my bed in a hurry. But it was the plague; it was just the symptoms of the flu.

INT: Were there many deaths at the college at that time or...

HH: Luckily, no. There weren't many. I don't think there were more than three or four. Before they were able to cope with the getting attention, medical attention that helped out.

INT: How many were at the college at that time, do you remember?

HH: Between seventy to eighty, about seventy-five or eighty, round about seventy or eighty, for a time there, it was getting up to about eighty-five. That's the highest I remember. It might have been higher later?

INT: I think that might have been the top from what I understand. What paid help were there? The cook, were there others that were...

HH: The baker. The baker, yes. Well, the boys went baking there for a while without the help and of course, the baking was a little indifferent, you know. The sisters would come over and instruct them but it was just not the, sometimes it'd turn out doughy bread and our course, the boys would only get their read out in the dining room and before the meal was over there was a little round, little shooting hitting one another, shooting another with these half- cooked breads but eventually got an old man and old baker and he was really good.

INT: So, there were the only two hire employees, everything else was done by the boys?

HH: Right. By the boys, yes.

INT: Let's see, you were there for that 1916 ruby team that I understand took the Hawke's Bay Championship.

HH: Oh yes. I was there. That's the time when Nickie Paewai, Phil Tawhata and Heperi, Fred Heperi and Murphy Gemmell- Sam Gemmell, all of those, they were all real.

INT: What was the last one Gemble, was it?

HH: Sam Gemmell. From Wairoa from the Nuhaka area.

INT: Oh, I see. So you were involved in the band, did you say?

HH: Yes.

INT: What did you play?

HH: Band- Clarinet. In the Orchestra, I had the violin.

INT: Did Walter Smith take all the music- the singing, the orchestra, the band and all?

HH: Yes, right. At the first he took all that and of course, when he left then, professor Stott, he was know as professor Stott- professor of music. And when he took over, then he carried on from there from Walter Smith.

INT: Okay. Did things run quite smoothly there without the serious difficulties?

HH: Gosh, I can remember that they weren't any. Oh, there must have been an upset here and there but not of any consequence. You understand me; there was a happy relationship between the teachers and the boys. If we had any problems, or any difficulties at all, we spoke mainly to the Principal. We'd set out complaint whatever it is, we'd tell them just how we felt about it. Any complaints that might come up, well he'd discuss it with us. And of course, we had the student body too. And all of the students had their organization- the president and his counselors and so on. We formed sort of a committee that if anything developed, we'd get together and discuss the problems.

INT: Who was the top student at that time in the student government?

HH: Jim Elkington. He was one of our main leaders. Jim Elkington and who was the other that was outstanding in our Student body?

INT: I talked to him today and he was too modest; he didn't even mention that.

HH: Oh no. he was the- when I say leader, he was. He led the boys in their consultations and any problems that might come up.

INT: Oh yes.

HH: Jim was really, he was good.

- INT: Now, was this in addition to the monitors that they had, or were these boys the monitors?
- HH: Well, the monitors were chosen by the teachers with approval of the student body organization. And usually as I can remember each class was a chosen boy, you know, to represent that class. Freshman, juniors and seniors were on the student body and where the standard boys were concerned they were picked by the teachers, recommended to the student body and then they were included in the committee.
- INT: Now, after you left MAC, did u maintain any sort of relationship with the college? Did you do down and visit huitas or did you have an Old Boys Association at that time?
- HH: Yes, well there wasn't an Old Boys association, not until after the earthquake. Then we formed the Association. It was at the time when President Cowley, he was the one who encouraged the formation of the student body, old boys association. And we had that every huitau that was held at Korongata, I went down and we met there. It wasn't, it was just sort of a get-together, and there was really no planning, there was no real direction. We weren't going in any direction at all, the association not until the huitau in Korongata, if I remember right. I've got a picture of President Cowley with several of the other boys and Sam Hira was standing at the Chapel in the middle of the chapel which was still rubble after the earthquake. Let's see if I can find it.
- INT: Now, this meeting is President Cowley, with some of the old boys at Korongata there by the Chapel?
- HH: That's right that was the first time when President Cowley put it to us to form an old boys association. And again, Jim Elkington was our first president. I took over from there and I was the secretary to the...I shouldn't be blowing my own trumpet- oh, what a pity?
- INT: Yes, I was talking with one man, said that the last reunion he thought was in 1957. he was hoping that there would be another one some day. He sure enjoyed it.
- HH: Well, I have been asking the boys, you know the old boys whenever they arrived. Well, when are we going to have another meeting with the old boys? Though only a few, but still remnant.
- INT: Yes, I wish there would have been one this year, this would have been good. The first Labor Missionary Reunion is being helped this year too in about four years, I think. It's starting day after tomorrow, I guess. So you took over as president of MAC old boys then, after Uncle Jim?

HH: Yes.

INT: As the president of the association. Are there any officers now? Is there any organization now or is it kind of defunct?

HH: No, it's defunct. The last meeting I held with the boys was with President Cowley when he returned as an apostle at Te Kuiti. No, that wasn't the last but that was one of the major meetings that we had. And President Cowley instructed us to gather all the material and recommendation for the building of the college and the Temple. Now, I was assigned that job. And I gathered, I went down to Wellington where the principal Maori gathering you know, where most of the Maori's were gathered. Like in the East Coast and the Waikato and so on. And I had gone from the secondary schools onto universities; it was a very low percentage, very low. I got this information from Wellington, and they were very cooperative when I told them the purpose of my asking for this information. And I had the map of New Zealand with the tribes, original tribes right throughout the North Islands. I didn't have it in the South. And when I completed everything, now this was at the request of President Cowley, he said, "I want that information so that I can present it to the authorities for the recommendation to have a college built here in New Zealand. "and I passed that information on to Wi Pere Amaru. I think he took over the presidency of the association. I gave him all the information, and details and all the data that I gathered and the recommendations of course. He said that he'd make the recommendations to President Cowley of where he would like to see the college built .and what happened after that, I don't know.

INT: But the information gathering was all part of your activity.

HH: Yes, right.

INT: When would this be, about?

HH: When was it? The time that we had the hui tai in Te Kuiti, when President Cowley came back as an apostle- if you can get that date, well it was that. it was about that early 1950's, I think. I'm not quite, you know quite sure about that but if you can get the time when President Cowley, right after he was appointed as an apostle, he came over and held the hui tau at Te Kuiti, and we had the meeting of the old boys association in the theatre there and that was his request. He said, "I want that information."

INT: You think Wi Pere Amaru took over after you as the president.

HH: Yes, right.

INT: Well, I heard that you were involved in some of the planning the college but I wasn't sure to what extent it was.

- HH: Well, that's it; I got all of the information for President Cowley. At the meeting, President Cowley said "brother Hamon, I'm putting this on to you to get that information and pass it up to me and I will send it Salt Lake." So that he can sit with the authorities on the educational.
- INT: Very good. Now, leaving CCNZ [Church College Of New Zealand] behind also, I guess just kind of getting to your own Church experience, now, I know when I came, you were over at Thames, had you been called over there to be branch president or something?
- HH: Yes, we were in, I was in the branch presidency in Rotoruaun with Brother Don's. and president Halverson, he was the mission president at the time. My wife and I, you know, we were discussing different matters about out staying there. My wife, she suffered from asthma, really times it got really bad. Of course, we were wondering what we could do, you know to go to a place where it could help her-hay fever, more hay fever than asthma. But we like Rotorua very much. We didn't like to move away from it. We had a nice home on the lake front and we had the family around us and we didn't like to move away. And then one night we were listening to the radio, it was raining and then "knock!" It was about 9:00, I think. I said to my wife, "who would come this time of the night?" I went to the door and president Halverson was there. Well, now, I got surprised but as soon as I saw him, I knew there was something coming up. And I called him in, sat down and we talked. There's one thing that you can see where the spirit of the Lord has been promoted in a way. We were talking about taking ourselves that we may move away, nobody knows, just between my wide and I. we weren't decided. In fact we were not caring about moving. President Halverson sat there for a little while and I was wondering what he was going to ask or what he wanted. I thought it was just a position, you know, in the branch or something like that. then he said, "oh Brother Hamon, have you ever though about moving away?" and I said. "Well, no and yes. We had thought but had made no particular, definite decision about it." And then he said, well, if you think you will move, I would like you to move tour family to Thames." I said, "Ehoa- of all places, of all places to ask me to Thames. Now, I was on a mission previously under President Cowley. And President Cowley said to me, "there are two spots in New Zealand that is really a problem to the mission. One was Huntley and the other was Thames." The chapel at the time of President Cowley was rented out a clothing factory.
- INT: In Thames?
- HH: Thames chapel was a clothing factory. It was rented out to the clothing people for a certain length of time. And at the time that President Halverson came along, the lease was up. And he said to me. "If you think about moving, I want you to move your family to Thames." I looked at my wide, and you know, you just stop and think, nobody knew what our thoughts were or that we ever discussed it. Here President Halverson turn up in the middle of the night and then popped that question to us. Now, you tell me what that is.

INT: I don't know what it is.

HH: Well, about three months later, I went to Thames, I went there, just to have a look. And then went into the chapel, they hadn't moved all the machinery, the sewing machines out of the chapel at the time I went over and had a look and seen that they were moving everything out of the chapel. And looked around to see if we had any chance of a home and one of the brethren that were there, they were living down in Taumranui but they had a section there and I heard about this and went in and inquired, I rang him up and said, "oh, I'm looking up a section. And he said, you can have it for twenty pounds, a whole acre." I said, "that's a deal!"

INT: I guess.

HH: Well, as things unfolded, you can see the blessing and as the Lord directed that we go into a place of our own and so on and we built up our own place there, and helped in the bringing back of the Thames Branch. At first, I was made president of the branch by President Halverson. Now, I said at first, E hoa, I'm not very keen about being called to the presidency of the branch, because all the membership has been my family. And there was sorry of favoritism, you know, just having the father, and then all the members in them, I tried to find one of the brethren there and he said, "they're there but you can't get them to move." I said "well, for the first go- off pick on one of the others and I'll act as the counselor to one of the others." And that was done. Elder Holdaway, he was there at the time.

INT: Oh, yes.

HH: He and his wife, and there were several other elders too. They had just moved in, just new and the only member that we got out was one, Sister Oakley. The only one member besides my family. But we gradually worked up and when Elder Holdaway, he had only twelve months to go and when he left, I took over the presidency of the branch, the Thames Branch.

INT: When was this?

HH: When? 1948. and from there on, we worked together and gradually went around to all of the members that were there. And we built the Thames Branch and brought back the membership. And we got quite a branch there. And there right up until the time when we started building up the college and the Temple

INT: Now, you were still in Thames of course, when I came.

HH: Right.

INT: You shifted down here soon after that, did you?

HH: No, my wife and I moved on to Coromandel, to help the people there. There was a bunch of saints there but no organization. And we went along and had quite a little branch there. And of course when the wife died twelve months ago. Last August, when she padded away, and I moved up here, more as a request of work in the temple.

INT: Oh, that's good.

HH: And lets see, up to that time we worked on our own chapel. Of course, I don't know if you remember the Thames Chapel.

INT: Yes.

HH: The old chapel?

INT: Right.

HH: Well, it was a very- a very old chapel, you know and no ceiling, it was just straight up to the peak of the chapel, in the winter, e hoa it was cold.

INT: Oh, I remember that.

HH: So we applied, the membership got so that there was quite a few of the membership active. We applied to have a new chapel .well Elder Beisinger and Mendenhall.

INT: So you go the new chapel started?

HH: Right. We made an application to the mission president and the building committee and they said, "well now, Brother Hamon, if you can get seventy percents of the attendance at your branch, well then, we'll build a chapel for you." So, we worked hard to get the seventy percents and we got the seventy percents membership for twelve months. And they started on our new chapel. They built over the old chapel.

INT: I kind of remember that. That was underway when I came, I believe. The father and son, what were their names now? Can't remember their names, they were down here working on that chapel.

HH: Oh, yes.

INT: Between 1960 and 61, I think, they were working on it.

HH: They came from Poverty Bay, the Poverty Bay Branch. They built the chapel there and then came over to Thames. Well, we did quite a job there at the Thames

Branch and we saved the Church 1,400. We all got together and worked in and put our wages in for the building of the chapel.

INT: Oh that's excellent.

HH: That's a nice little chapel.

INT: Well, I think that you were tied in with a lot of history here in the Church in New Zealand, and it's very helpful to touch upon this. Is there anything else about the history of the Church you can think of that I neglected to ask or hasn't come up?

HH: Well, I don't know just now what would be- perhaps if you would give me a lead.

INT: Well, when did your family come into the church?

HH: When, the mission was in with Australia and they divided that mission. It came over here something like 1854, along about there the 1850's. and then later, the presidency of Auckland mission transferred elders here and it was 1884, two elders were traveling in the Poverty Bay District mission there, the Poverty Bay District was one of the first, aside from the Taranaki and Waikato- two elders were there traveling, getting in contact with the Maori people. It was in that year that the Maori's first received the gospel. Two elders were bushed, these two elders, and they prayed on the way to be led to a Maori pa, a Maori settlement. Just, three nights before, just before the elders arrived, my grandmother- she was a tohunga in the pa. if any one in the pa took ill, they would go to her and ask for a remedy. What they call her, yohunga wairakau, a herbalist. But what she would do, she would pray at night before going to bed and during the night, her mother would appear and tell her just what herb in the bush to get for that particular ailment or person to cure the sick person that approached her. This time it was her own, it was my father who was ill. And she prayed and her mother appeared to her, her mother never said a word but put her hands up. The old lady couldn't understand what her mother was trying to convey to her. The next night, she prayed again, her mother appeared again and put her hands in the same way. Well, still she couldn't understand and she did the same. The next day, round about just evening, these two elders were missionaries. Of course, she thought that the usual missionary Christian, you know, Church of England and so on. So she said to them, "welcome" and then she told them to change their clothes and you know, get warmed up by the fire and she spread the kai for them, the food. Afterwards, the elders said if she would like, they have prayers. And the elders spoke to her in Maori. And when the time for prayer, the elders put their hands up, that's what they did at the time. The old lady knew what her mother was trying to convey to her.

INT: So, this was your...your...grandmother?

- HH: Grandmother. I can show you her picture in here. And when they finished she said to them, "Ma naki. Bless my son, sick boy." And of course, when they anointed, they administered to him. He is well and that's why she joined the Church. Then from here, the next day the elders then had...
- INT: So, the elders then were invited to preach to the rest of the people in the pa?
- HH: And the majority of the people in that pa joined the church. And the names of those old people are there in the records and found in the Bureau of Information.
- INT: Now, who was this man that spoke to the elders.
- HH: That was my grandmother's father, Arapata Taniwha. And as the elders were going towards his shack, he heard them coming and he said to them in Maori, "Hae re nai, nga puna o te atua. Come, ye servants of the Lord." And when the elders came up to his shack, he invited them in. He knew, and then he was baptized and was given the Aaronic Priesthood. And he was never without his fighting implements. His Maori Patu, taiaha, tau always besides him when he joined the Church, took them and went buried them.
- INT: And this would have been your great-grandfather?
- HH: Yes.
- INT: That's tremendous. I guess there must have been an awful lot of Hanom's come from that situation.
- HH: From there on, the family has been in the Church since then.
- INT: This has been very interesting. You were in the Poverty Bay leadership then, during the War years?
- HH: Yes, President Cowley called me on a mission because of the elders not being allowed to come in at the time of the war.
- INT: Talking to Hixon Hamon again in Temple View Chapel, January 2, 1972.
- HH: I would like to relate a wonderful experience that I enjoyed when President and Sister Joseph Fielding Smith came here in 1959. They traveled to Thames with President Simpson. Three days, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, they spent with us and they gave wonderful talks. Sister Smith sang a song and spoke to us and the duet with President Smith and Sister Smith in our Sacrament meeting and also an interview with him in which he gave wonderful instruction and counsel on their duties as members of the Church.