

Oral History Program

**OH-16A**

**Box #1**

Brigham Young University – Hawaii

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**Cyril Going**

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-HAWAII  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
Behavioral and Social Sciences Division  
Laie, Hawaii 96762

Cyril Going

INTERVIEW NO: OH-16A  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 1, 1973  
INTERVIEWER: Ken Baldrige  
SUBJECT(S): Maori Agricultural College

SIDE A

INT It's April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973. This is Ken Baldrige in Laie, Hawaii. I'm talking to Mr. Cyril Going of Maramaku, New Zealand about his experiences at the Maori Agricultural College.

The college was dedicated in April of 1913, and opened in that year. There were some—students who started before that. Were you there in the first class or the second class? [1913-1914]

CG I was there in the second year, and I was in the first class—top class.

INT And how long were you there?

CG I was there for two years, nearly two years. I went home before the end of the second year. When my brother went to the War, I went back home. I didn't quite complete the second year.

INT Now, being way up north; were you at Maromaku then?

CG Yes.

INT What was behind the decision to go clear down to Korongata to go to school?

CG Well, my dad made the suggestion that I go. It was a Church school, and I suppose he thought I'd be better off at the Church school. We had no opportunity where we were to attend a secondary school. No opportunity at all. And I wasn't a very big boy, and so he thought I'd be better going to school a bit longer, than knocking off and going on the farm. He talked me into going down there.

INT Had you had any secondary schooling at all before you went down there?

CG No. Yes and no, I suppose. Because I had—I'd got my school competency, not my proficiency, the year before, and I'd just kept on going to school for the next year, but I never say any exams.

INT So did you go into grade one or two?

CG I went into grade one when I got down there.

INT Now, how long have your family been in the Church?

CG Oh, well they'd been in the Church before I was born, actually.

INT They would have been one of the first *pakeha* families in the Church?

- CG Yes. Yes, there was one or two others up that way—but they were one of the early ones. [In] 1893 they joined—I think it was they became members. And I wasn't born until 1898.
- INT What type of courses did you take? Any special courses or just the regular ones that seemed to be offered to everybody?
- CG Ah, well, it was practically the same one that was offered to everybody, but it was suppose to be an agricultural course—not an academic. In the first place, we were required to put in a certain amount of time on the farm.
- INT Now, was this part of your work assignment that you used to pay off your fees?
- CG No, I didn't; but it helped to keep the college going by the boys doing so much work on it—but that was also to give them experience. We had to have experience. See, they had horse teams. There was no mechanical machinery. It was horse teams that we plowed with—harrowed the ground. They had contractors would come in and harvest wheat and barley and oats [that] they grew on there for a start. And contractors would come in and harvest it and thrash it, but we had to prepare the ground and work the teams. They had two-horse teams. The boys would have to put in a day a month—I think it was—or a day a fortnight. I think it was a day a month you had to put in on the farm.
- INT Was the type of farming that they carried on there similar to what you'd been doing up north?
- CG No, no, not really. Because we'd been milking cows up there mostly. Not much agricultural work.
- INT After you left, were you able to put into practice much of the agricultural practices that you'd learned there, or was it back to the dairy again?
- CG Oh it all helped. In fact, I was supposed to be one of the best students on the Agricultural part of it, because I'd had practical—experience at home with horses before I went down there—and teams—even when I was a boy. Another thing they had a couple of house cows and [I] was given the job of milking these cows. And when I went there I had to tend the cows and see that they got the milk. And provided the families—the teachers' families—because they didn't get milk from town or anything. Those cows had to provide the families with milk, and enough for the school. So I had these two cows to milk night and morning; that was my job. Quite an assignment.
- INT Did you go home during the summer that you were there or did you stay?
- CG Well, we had a band that went out [at] the end of that year and toured round to quite a few of the different centers. Mostly where the boys had come from. And

that band did quite a trip and I was in the band—I was about the worst in it—but I was in it anyway, and we spent the first part of the term holidays—about first three weeks, I think—tripping around with this band and we went into quite a lot of centers. It was quite an experience.

INT What did you play?

CG I played a cornet. I was just a junior actually, [and] I played the 'B' part.

INT Did you learn how there at MAC?

CG Oh yes, I hadn't taken music at all before I went there.

INT Did you ever have any more secondary training after you left MAC?

CG No, no.

INT That was it? What would you regard as the greatest benefit to you, personally, from MAC? Was it in the agricultural experience or the schooling?

CG No, the greatest benefit I got was in the--what do you call it now? Every morning we had this class--Church teaching—what did we call that?

INT Devotional or Assembly?

CG Theology. In our theology class we had a Professor Johnson there as head of the school. And he was really a good teacher. The first year we studied the Old Testament. And the second year we took the New Testaments. And I learned more—I think—in that two years than in any other two years at my life; well, I know I did and I really got a testimony of the there at that college.

INT Now, why do you go this testimony. You'd been a member before, of course; your family had been members what was there about it that created that—was it the learning from these classes?

CG Yes, the fact that we had this class every morning—an hour theology every morning and that's where I got my knowledge of the Old Testament and the New Testament. That's where I really learned what the Bible contained. It was really good. I think that all the boys benefited from the theology class that was held every morning. Perhaps more than they realize anyway.

INT So perhaps more than the scholastic benefits and the vocational benefits, you think the spiritual benefits were probably the right?

- CG Yes, yes that's what I always think. Of course, the general knowledge I got was good—English and geography and those were the subjects; although they don't call it geography now, but that's what it was.
- INT So the academic training that you did receive you feel was worthwhile?
- CG Oh, it was worthwhile, yes. Now President Johnson, he was a professor in English; English professor and he had his degrees in English and he was a real good teacher; that was the first year. The second year we had a professor Hintze there and he likewise was a good teacher.
- INT I've been trying to find out just how to spell his name.
- CG H-I-N-T-Z-E.
- INT Ok, good. When I ask some of the other bold boys who was there that was not Maori, your name was always the first one mentioned. Were there any other *pakehas* there at the time you were?
- CG Not the first year, except Professor Johnson's son, [Earl]. He was in the same class—no others.
- INT Were there some that came the second year?
- CG Yes, there were two Pearce boys came the second year.
- INT Pearce?
- CG Pearce from Auckland; they were cousins—these two boys—just little fellows; they were there in the second year.
- INT Of course—with the Maori population up north—being around Maoris was nothing new to you I'm sure. Did you ever feel like you were kind of an odd one being the only *pakeha* in the group?
- CG Oh well—I did for a start of course. I noticed it, although we went to school with Maori boys—had school mates—but just to find myself there was really—going away from a big home and family—there were ten of us in the family... Well, I noticed most of all and we'd always been well fed and good meals, and the food down at the college wasn't ... They certainly didn't over feed us—it was pretty plain tucker pretty plain food when you got rice or haricot beans everyday.
- INT What was that kind of beans?
- CG Harricot beans they've a little dried bean that they dried...

INT Harricot, H-A-R-A-K-U-T?

CG H-A-R-R-I-C-O-T. I think haricot.

INT H-A-R-R-I-C-O-T.

CG I think that's how they spell it.

[Mrs. Going: One R, dear]

INT One R.

CG Well, it might have been one R. But of course, the Maori boys—a lot of them had come from pretty poor homes, and they hadn't been too well fed. But I had been spoiled on the tucker line—the feeding line—and I noticed that that's what really—but I soon got good mates, and you know what Maori "*aroha*" is—when you get a mate well, he'll treat you just as well as he'll treat himself.

INT Did you know anyone from up north when you came to the college? Did you have any mates there? Or were they complete strangers?

CG No I didn't know anyone there.

[Mrs. Going: What about Jay Hiraka?]

CG No, I didn't know him till he got there. No, first day I was down there, some of us had a wrestle to see who was the best boy as far as strength went, but we soon found our place--you know--it was no time until I got over my homesickness. And I was just one of them. They called me "Keha" they reckoned the interpretation of that was "flea". I don't know if it was because I was fairly small—but that's the name – or whether for short for "Pakeha" but that's the name I got—"Keha"—The nickname I got.

INT Besides the band, what other activities did you get involved in? Were you in sports, dramatics or anything like that?

CG No, no. Not besides music, that's about the only thing—I played football in the second team. I wasn't big enough for the first team. I liked playing football. They taught me how to play marbles; I couldn't play marbles till I went down there.

INT How did you get down there from Maromaku?

CG Rail, rail. There was a Gibbs—and Elder Gibbs—he had come up to conference—up in the north, and he was going back down to Hastings. And so, my dad got him to take me along.

INT Now, you had a brother that went there too, didn't you?

CG Yes. About ten years after—or more than that—he went in 1928—'27-28.

INT What was his name?

CG Melvin.

INT Melvin?

CG Yes.

INT Was he there then at the time of the earthquake?

CG I think so—I'm not sure—he may have been out of it. That's when the college finished wasn't it? Yes, I think he finished before that —[it was] about 1927 when he was down there. My folks went over to the states to go through the Temple over there. And do their sealing work. And he was just a small boy when they sent him down there.

INT Do you remember any experiences that stand out after sixty years that you can bring to mind?

CG Well, the great experience was an earthquake we had—just a small quake while I was there—we were in the chapel. The band was practicing there and then this quake came. And of course everybody tore off for the door. I got half way to the door and I remembered I'd left my mandolin—mandolin I was playing that night—behind and I tore back to get this and by the time I got out, the earthquake was all over [laughter]. I'll never forget that earthquake and that was really an experience; also, the faculty home got burned down one year; I think it was the second year I was there.

INT What caused that; do they know?

CG Well, I don't know. But I really think probably one of the boys who was Professor Johnson's son—I think he went back home to get some music—he was in the band and well, there's just this idea that the may have been struck a match to find his music, and that match may have been trouble. But there was only one of the sisters—I think—in the home at the time. The rest were all at the chapel or at the dorm having the evening class. We had our classes in the evening—study classes. And I think they were all there except one—Sister Allred—I think she was at the house. Next they knew it was up in smoke.

INT Well, you regard [MAC] as quite a positive experience then, is that correct?



- CG Yes.
- INT Well, it seems to be very highly regarded by all the men that went there. It seemed to be quite a choice experience in there.
- CG Well, the discipline was pretty good. You know, they watched the boys pretty carefully. Had one or two problem boys, but overall the discipline was good. We had our outings; all get in the big old truck—whatever they called it—it was a big broad-top wagon, four wheeled wagon. They'd take us to football in that.
- INT Was this horse drawn?
- CG Yes, put four horses in that and away we'd all go—all sitting on the floor—away we'd all go into town. After the games, perhaps we wouldn't have to go home till seven o'clock. And we'd be able to go down and have a pie and have a few things like that you know—enjoy ourselves.
- INT Oh yes. Well, that type of thing I guess doesn't vary much from one year to the other or from one generation to the other.
- CG That's right. There was a *huitau*—the first year—that I was there—they had the *huitau* right at the *pa* alongside the college. You'd know about what a *huitau* is like. And my father came down to that well that was quite a thrill from them to come down to see me —and spend a few days there.
- INT Yes, I can imagine.
- CG Yeah, and in the second year, the *huitau* was just about six miles from the college, and it was to Te Hauke—they've got a chapel there now. They took the whole student body went down and they had a special house there where all were able to like sleep—it was our quarters. It was a rare experience, too. All us boys going to this *huitau*.
- INT How many boys were there as you recall?
- CG Well, the second year? I think the second year was the highest roll. I think it was the highest roll they ever had at the college—it was about a hundred and —just on a hundred and twenty, I think.
- INT Is that right?
- CG The dormitories were full and they filled the classroom outside; one of the classrooms—they turned that into a dormitory that year. Big year, but after that they dwindled down a little bit.

- INT I wonder why the enrollment dropped off? Would you have any thoughts on that? I know that it dropped down to around forty.
- CG It did get down towards fifty toward the finish. I don't know just why but for a start there, there were some boys—well, they went there and the tuition was low. In fact, a lot of them were allowed to go and their parents hardly paid anything. Because of the circumstances that they were in, but they took their boys in the hopes that they would be able to pay for their tuition. I know some of them couldn't go home for Christmas because they had no money to go home for Christmas holidays.
- INT Well, the earthquake came and I guess that put an abrupt end to it. It was all finished then. Well, I won't take anymore of your time. I've appreciated visiting with you. Thank you very much for your comments. Anything else that you can think of that you might toss in? That I haven't asked about?
- CG No. The football was quite well organized –you know—they had some the teachers there [who] acted as coach for the team. And they kept the boys and made them get out and do their run in the morning. And that's all the thinks. They had good teams right from that second year. Oh another thing, too, was the fact that Professor Walter Smith—he was called to come back and take charge of the music and he really boosted the musical side. That was marvelous really. He was a composer—he composed quite a number of songs and that's where we got our songs—“Dear old MAC” and “On MAC” that was the football song. We used to have to go there and barrack for the team.
- INT I interviewed Rupert Wihongi and Hetaruke Anaru and had them sing together.
- CG Yes, well they were really good. Rupert wasn't there when I was there. But they came from the same area. Even when they left school they kept on with their singing.
- INT Well, it's been a real joy to me to hear about the college. It's the type of research I've really enjoyed, and I appreciate your taking a little time out. I imagine you're having quite a full schedule here, so I'll let you rest up a little bit before the return to activities.
- CG Oh, don't worry about that. [It's] good to get thinking about these old days. But by the time I went home, well, I was pretty attached to that college. Brother Elkington, he was one of the best boys in the school the year I was there for the full year, he won the prize for the best behaved boy in the school.
- INT Now, you say you went home during the second year when your brother went off to War.
- CG Yes, he went to War.

INT So you didn't finish out?

CG No. I think I went home about October; I missed the last two months.

INT Went home to help on the farm, was that it?

CG Yes, yes.

INT Well, there were quite a few that came all the way down from up north.

CG Yes, we had quite a crowd there from north—Te Horo and Awarua were ones. And out at Whangaruru there was quite a few boys from out there. I don't know whether you know that area at all?

INT Yes, I went out there and ran into Ben Phillips; it was the first year we were in New Zealand in 1960.

CG I used to have quite a few boys out from Whangaruru. They had a good school teacher out there at that time. They were well educated boys, you know. They had a progressive community—out there at Whangaruru, and that was really the efforts of this school teacher.

INT That would help, wouldn't it? Someone to encourage the boys to go on and get more schooling.

CG That's right.

INT Well, this had been very good and I appreciated it.

END OF INTERVIEW