

Oral History Program

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Oral History Program

Tausafafou Moeai

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Tausagafou Moea'i

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAII

AN ORAL HISTORY OF TAUSAGAFU MOEA'I

(Revised edition)

AN INTERVIEW SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR WILLIAM
KAUAIWIULAOKALANI WALLACE III
HISTORY 492

BY

JOSHUA MOEA'I

LAIE, HAWAII
April 16, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

Tausagafou Moeai was one of the most faithful spirits in the Spirit World. She gave all she had in the Plan of Salvation and helped the Lord in many ways. She was true and faithful. She studied the Plan of Salvation and she was blessed. In the Great Council of Heaven she raised her voice and the Lord blessed her with the opportunity to come to this earth to partake of a body of flesh and bones. By doing so, she became able to work for her own salvation. In due time she will be able to return back to the Father's Kingdom for time and all eternity. (This information was provided by the Laie Hawaii North Stake Patriarch Robert K. LinKee on February 16, 1992 by divine inspiration of the Lord.)

Tausagafou Moeai was born Tausagafou Tevaga on January 1, 1918 in the village of Vaitoomuli, Savaii Western Samoa. Grandma Tau was the Fourth girl in a row to be born to her Father Tauanu'u Mulitalo Tevaga and Mother Ulufale Suliasi Pese. She was given the name Tausagafou (New Year) because she was born on New Year's Day. When Grandma Tau was two years old she had a very special spiritual experience. She was very sick and was blessed by a visiting Apostle of the Lord.

"True Stories from Samoa," Friend, May 1972, 38

It had been an exciting visit, the first one ever made to Samoa by an apostle. Long rowboats decorated with colorful garlands of vines and flowers had met the boat when David O. McKay and Hugh J. Cannon arrived. A Mormon band greeted the rowboats at the wharf and proudly escorted the visitors to a circle where all the chiefs of the island waited to welcome them with speeches and the kava drink ceremony. Then a great feast was enjoyed under a coconut leaf canopy, and many people brought their children and their sick ones to be blessed. (The following events occurred on May 31, 1921. Grandma Tau was three years old at the time. Although she says that she was two the records show that she was three).

In 1921 when Church officials in Samoa were wondering about continuing the village, Elder David O. McKay and Hugh Cannon visited Samoa on their around-the-world tour of the Church. It was on this visit that Elder McKay pronounced an apostolic blessing on Sauniatu and its inhabitants. Among other things he blessed them that they would have an abundance of food and clothing, that their plantations would be fruitful, and that peace would abide in their hearts and homes. (See *Improvement Era*, May 1966, p. 366.)

My Paternal Grandfather Tuitui Solatoa Moeai met my Grandmother Tausagafou Tevaga at the L.D.S Sauniatu School in 1939. Tuitui in Samoan means to pound and Tausagafou translated means New Year. Grandma received that name because she was born on New Year's Day. I don't know why Grandfather received his name but I know that he indeed lived up to it because he was often referred to as the "hammer" of the family. He disciplined everyone, even his sister's kids.

Grandpa was a teacher and Grandma was his student at school in Sauniatu. Grandma's boyfriend had left and married someone else so she married Grandpa that same year in 1939. Grandpa Tui then traveled with Grandma Tau to Tutuila where he became a member of the first Samoan Naval unit called the "Fitafita" Guard. Grandpa Tui was a military man and was very popular because he had the only Jeep in the village. In 1952 they immigrated to Hawaii.

Life in Hawaii was one of sacrifice and hard work. Grandpa Tui was stationed at Pearl Harbor and Grandma Tau would catch a ride with Grandpa into town to work in a Laundry business. Grandma also worked in the pineapple fields and the family often collected puka shells and passion fruit to sell to the tourists. Grandpa Tui and Grandma Tau also worked in the Maintenance department at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Laie was their home.

Grandma Tau raised four children in the Gospel. After Grandpa died in 1990 Grandma decided to serve a mission. She was called to serve in the Apia Temple. Six months from completing her Mission she returned home because of health reasons. In the Laie Temple she served the remaining time of her Mission and was honorably released in June of 1994.

Grandma is eighty-five years old now and lives at home with her youngest son Harvey and family. She has spent most of her retirement years working at the farm. She loves to go places with friends and family and continues to go to the Temple every morning. She loves Kahuku Football games and BYUH Basketball games as well. She also loves to watch her Grand daughter play Volleyball for BYUH. She truly loves her Children, Grandchildren, Great-grandchildren, and also her Great-great-grandchild.

My Grandmother has always been a part of my life ever since I was a child. This Oral History project has helped me to appreciate her even more and I hope that I can do my best to help her enjoy the rest of her time here on this precious earth.

Oral History of Tausagafou Moeai

The first Interview took place on February 10, 2003.

INT: What happened?

TM: The sickness I have. Then McKay came over there, the Prophet and bless me in Savaii.

INT: What year?

TM: I was two years old. I never know. I was small.

INT: You were two years old?

TM: And then we went around with my Parents. Because look like the Bishop over here, go around the island. Plenty place we went. [Gatai Tevaga, Grandma Tau's younger sister has also mentioned in an interview that their Father Tauanu'u served as a Bishop for the L.D.S Church and that he traveled from village to village throughout Western Samoa.]

INT: You went with them?

TM: Yeah.

INT: What was your Mom's name?

TM: My Mother. I don't know what year. She was die in nineteen something. Maybe 95.

INT: What was her name?

TM: Ulufale Tevaga, Pese.

INT: And your Dad?

TM: My Dad from Leauva'a.

INT: Western Samoa?

TM: Yeah, Western Samoa.

INT: What happened after they bless you?

TM: From now on I no can have a sickness.

INT: You the oldest? How many in your family, the brothers and sisters?

TM: Fifteen.

INT: Who's the oldest?

TM: Only five more of us. The ten all die.

INT: Who was the oldest?

TM: My sister's name Emeline. They live in New Zealand. She die. And the other four girls.

INT: Grandma were you the oldest?

TM: My Sister. And the other four girls. [In Church records, Grandma is listed as the fourth child born to Tauanu'u Tevaga and Ulufale Pesel].
And hard for us for...my parents take care us for the clothes. We use the other clothes and next time the other one. No more money for buy something. My Father go fishing everyday for feed us. Maybe you going finish in June yeah? [Grandma is making reference to me graduating from B.Y.U.H in June, 2003] We go to the reunion in Samoa.

INT: Our family?

TM: Our family, Moeai family. So you can see over there.

INT: So your Dad go fishing everyday?

TM: Yeah, go fishing. Even my Mom. When we was in Leauva'a we all go pick up some kind of stuff. Me and my Mom go fishing and we went to the market and sell em. Hard for us. We walk early in the morning and we walk to Apia. No more money for go to the bus. And Daddy (Tuitui Moeai-Husband) went to Guam for one year and half in the Navy. And I fix all the paper for my Mother and four boys for come over here. I when make my loan bring them over here.

INT: How your Dad pass away?

TM: They pass away I was here. I was in Tutuila.

[According to Church records, Grandma Tau's father Tauanu'u passed away on December 4, 1956 in Leauva'a, Upolu, Samoa.]

INT: He was sick?

TM: He was sick and I never go. I think plenty year I stay in Tutuila. When the Navy was, they call Fitafita guard. And they join the Navy when the Navy came to Samoa. That's why they came. And they brought some big family from Tutuila over here.

INT: Your Dad work in the Church?

TM: You know in Samoa they call Bishop. In Samoa plenty island my Father was village by village. Maybe three year on the other village then go the other village.

INT: For the Church?

TM: For the Mormon Church. Plenty in Samoa. You know the Name Ross. He was Bishop over here by Laie. That's a good friend Daddy, and he call him first counselor Bishopric to him.

INT: You don't remember your Grandpa or your Grandma?

TM: My Grandmother? I never see my Grandmother. You know my Mother. You know the one Kosena's mother, Fonoimoana. And Alofaaga's Grandmother, same village as my Mom.

INT: How old were you when you got married.

TM: Thirty-nine. [Grandma Tau is making reference to the year she got married which was 1939.]

The second interview took place on March 8, 2003.

INT: Tell me about your Mom and your Dad. Your father is Tauanu'u.

TM: Tauanu'u Mulitalo Tevaga.

INT: Tauanu'u Mulitalo Tevaga.

TM: And my Mother Pese.

INT: Ulufale

TM: The first name Kiki. K, I, K, I

INT: Who?

TM: K, I, K, I

INT: Who?

TM: My Mother's Father.

INT: The first name is what?

TM: K, I, K, I. When my father die or my Mother's Father he put the name for the son. I don't know the first name for the son. You know my family they call kekea. My Mother's side they all white.

INT: How about your Father?

TM: My Father's sister is Vasati.

INT: Oh that was your Father's sister. Vasati.

TM: That's the one that Dixie's wife is named after.

INT: So your Father's sister is Vasati and what about the other brother? Pisona's father?

TM: Pisona's father Taoso.

INT: Taoso, Mulitalo, Vasati. Who else?

TM: And Vaitai's father?

INT: What was his name?

TM: Tautua.

INT: Tautua

TM: That's why Alice son married to Tautua. The name Tautua.

INT: Oh! Anymore?

TM: What?

INT: Anymore brothers and sisters?

TM: You know all my brothers and sisters. Emeline the girl. Was fifteen of us.

TM: McKay blessed me in Vaito'omuli.

INT: Grandma, Tell me about when you met Daddy at the school in Saunitatu. You guys went on a date or anything or what? When you met Tuitui.

TM: I met Tuitui in Western Samoa.

INT: In the Sauniatu school?

TM: He was teach school.

INT: And then what? Tell me everything. And then what?

TM: And we have Pati in 1940.

INT: Yeah but tell me when you met Tuitui in the school.

TM: Tuitui suppose to marry the other girl. And something I don't know what. Turn around come to me and the girl go with the other

INT: The other boy. You guys went out to have fun? Alu siva? Alu Ka'a? Go dance or what?

TM: Sometimes we meet go pick up the taro and cause everybody make umu in the morning the whole week. And they call us we go to the taro patch and bring the laufai and taro. Sometimes we meet the boys over there.

INT: And then what?

TM: And then early in the morning when we make umu.

That's the one the girls and the boys making the umu.

INT: So you met Daddy in the school. Daddy was teaching and then what? And then what he take you and you guys go out? Alu kaa? You guys go eat?

INT: So when you met Grandpa over there in the school.

TM: 1939 we married.

INT: In the church?

TM: We married in the church.

INT: And then you guys come over here with the Fitafita yeah?

TM: 1952. 1952 we came over here with all the family. The family and then they have a boat for come and pick us up. Then Daddy went to Guam for one and half years and we stay over here with the kids.

INT: You stayed over here with the kids. So what you know your kids you have Tui, Pati, Fia, Harvey.

TM: Harvey and

INT: Joe

INT: What happened to Joe?

TM: Pati and Tui

TM: Pati, Tui, Joe, Fia, the one I miscarry, six of us, six of my children. Miscarry the other baby. Was young.

INT: Only one?

TM: Only one then after that Joe. Six of us.

INT: So when you was in Laie where you work at?

TM: I work in the Pineapple.

INT: Dole?

TM: Only dollar quarter an hour. Me, Alice, Tino. Only dollar fifty an hour.

INT: So you know when... Harvey was the youngest yeah?

TM: He was young. We went and move to the mainland, buy our house over there in the mainland only six months and then come back over here. Daddy move to Samoa. Suppose to go to Samoa and then he sick come over here because no more medicine. He get Asthma, came back over here.

INT: How about Harvey in school?

TM: Harvey work in the P.C.C. He play. Him and Tino and the other lady in Hauula.

INT: What Harvey was hard head?

TM: He was hard. We came over here no more job in the P.C.C. only me pick up the pineapple when finish the show. All of us we go pick up the pineapple when the show finish. After that then Daddy came and he work with the other lady. You know Leiataua's wife. Malia and the other Hawaiian lady in Hauula. Newman's wife. She still working.

INT: So you guys used to go watch Harvey play football?

TM: Every time we go. Me and Daddy. We went to Kaneohe. He told me drive the car he no can see. From Kaneohe to over here.

INT: Harvey play good.

TM: Harvey was in the mainland. You know the school he go school in the mainland. They have a fight inside Harvey and the other boy. Then Tui when jump inside and lick the boy.

INT: How about Grandpa?

TM: He don't know. And Pati was the what you call. Fiji, he was dance.

INT: Grandpa always lick the kids?

TM: He was mad to Tui and Harvey. You know the day Harvey was mad to Pati. He open the can what you call Spam. They fight and go around the house and Tui when jump on top the stuff and Daddy was mad.

INT: Who when step on the can?

TM: Tui cause we have house on the other side of Laie by the Temple. He lick Tui. I iron all the clothes for the kids. You know the boy marry Sa'aga. Stay with us.

INT: You iron all the clothes

TM: Was family to . Over there by leiataua's house. And after that sew the lei for Pati and Tui. You know Tui when he go sell the lei he come over here never give me all the money. And Pati take care the kids. That's the one we get money sew the lei. That's why they go to the temple. Pati told Daddy no sell the house but Daddy like sell the

house. And me the one always go look because Daddy shame for go look the people. Me the one I go look the family for you want the house. The family ask for Five hundred. He write to me he going give back the five hundred. I'm tell em no. He already sign the paper for the house.

INT: This house?

TM: No, you know the one Ioane Leiataua the haole man, that's the one that buy the house. We come back and no more. We looking for house.

INT: How you guys got the house over here?

TM: Me and Grandpa. They give the paper for write the name and we go if approve the house or what. Plenty people went. Only Daddy pass that's why he get the house and the rest cause the credit no good. Cause we join the house the other side and the other side. Move over here. Daddy make the fence around the yard. We no more money and call Tui send some money for make the fence.

INT: Grandma, so what happened when Grandpa when past away?

TM: Huh?

INT: What happened the day Grandpa pass away?

TM: Daddy?

INT: Yeah. What happened?

TM: Pass away?

INT: Yeah, what happened?

TM: What happened.

INT: What happened over there the day Daddy pass away? You went for Mark's farewell yeah?

TM: We went for Mark's farewell. Daddy was upset because call Itila for make the prayer. That's why he mad.

INT: Who when call Itila for make the prayer? Who?

TM: I think Mark or the Father. That's why Daddy mad.

INT: Because he never say the prayer.

TM: Suppose to be something for him. And he came over here. We suppose to go on the other car but I told Daddy come over here go with Mark. That's why he came, pass away in the road.

INT: You was in the car yeah?

TM: Six of us.

INT: Who?

TM: Itila,

INT: Who was driving?

TM: You know the girl Penina. It was the first time the brother just came from Samoa and give the boy for drive.

The other Popolo lady hit our car. The car turn around and Daddy was underneath the car.

INT: You saw him?

TM: No I was fly on the other side. Four of us in the back of the pick up truck and I hear Daddy say take off this

thing from me. Itila supposed to plenty people supposed to take off the car from him. They came and take off and already die. And after that the hospital. I told Tui and Harvey How's Daddy? Then Tui come over here and say Mama Daddy pass away.

INT: Grandpa what? He took care of the family yeah?

TM: No, the farm?

INT: The family.

TM: Yeah, you make hundred, you make hundred. He go to the P.C.C tell Fia, Itila, you make hundred everybody get money. Not now.

TM: The haole man was mad.

INT: Who Coleman?

TM: No, when the haole boy work in the P.C.C. he came what kind word. Daddy was tell the bad word to him. The bad word.

INT: To who?

TM: Daddy. And go ask the other man. And the boy say, "Why you give me that." You know Daddy he's a funny guy. Faitala ia. You know Joshua Joe the father. Every time the man go to Tui talk story.

INT: How come you went on your mission?

TM: You know my good friend go on a mission.

INT: Who?

TM: The one, I forgot the last name. The one in Laie. Go on a mission in Samoa. I need to make my paper.

INT: How was your mission over there in Samoa? How was your mission in Samoa? What you guys do every day?

TM: Just go every day we go initiatory. Everybody go to the initiatory or go to the lunch time and finish go to the village in Samoa. You know over there I know I going come work in the temple. I memorize all the initiatory. I work in the initiatory from Hanneman. Four people I work from over here. Finish the two years and go the other one until now.

INT: So how about the Farm? Remember your old farm? Your farm when you first start the farm.

TM: The first time the farm over here. When you go up. When I leave the mission I give to Pati take care. We work way up in the mountain.

INT: With Mate Jackson yeah.

TM: The wife. Only the lady work. Not too much people. And I have a big money. Buy the other truck. Buy the other truck.

INT: Who's your friends over there at the farm now. Who's your good friends?

TM: My good friend Unga. He come and help me for clean my place and plant the taro. Every time I no more the stuff he come. He going plant the tapioca. You know the good kind tapioca. The yellow one. You know the line in the dirt by the avocado. You no go in the back. Only the front. Some other people going take care the back. Maybe I go tomorrow if Unga going come and pick me up.

INT: You wanna say anything. You want to say anything to your family?

TM: What kind?

INT: If you want to say anything to your family I record em now.

TM: No, I have a good family.

INT: And what? Talk inside say what you want to say. Just talk what you want to say to your family and I'll write it down. I'm gonna write down.

TM: My family have one girl and three boys. And I have a good family. When they raise up I take care and go to school and Pati was the oldest one. And Tui second one. Fia third. Joe the other one die. Then Harvey take care us now. Harvey was married to Judy and have four kids. Three boys and one girl. Until now we okay. I like my family I like my children, grandchildren.

INT: What you want to say to Tui? What you want to say to Tui and Anne and the family.

TM: When they was here before. Tui want to stay and Anne move to the mainland. Until now Tui want to come back.

INT: And how about the kids what you want to say to the kids to Mark, Renee, and David. Renee, David, Ashley or Richard.

TM: Tui and. David and Richard and Ashley. The other one.

INT: Renee.

TM: What the other one?

INT: Mark.

TM: What about the little boy?

INT: Evan.

TM: Evan. I love you folks. I hope you guys come back and stay.

INT: How about Pati and Pati's family?

TM: Pati I love. Pati always a good boy. I love Terry and Kerry. You know the girl.

INT: Ivanelle

TM: The small girl. The two one. What's the other two girls.

INT: Cherae, Tiffany

TM: Tiffany and

INT: Meagan

TM: Meagan. I love you folks and Ivanelle and the kids.
Kerry going marry in May. Yeah when we go and see him.

INT: And em, what you want to say to Fia. Fia and the
kids. Ross, Chantel, Marvel. What you want to say to Fia.

TM: Fia I love you. I love to Ross and the family. Love
to Marvel.

INT: What you want to say to Ross?

TM: Ross I love you. I love all the children. Take care
of your family. I don't know what time I pass away. Take
care Momma and help you everything. Love your sister. I
talk to you about church take the kids they go church. Now
they went.

INT: What you want to say to Harvey?

TM: Harvey and Judy. Harvey. I love you Harvey I love you
Judy. Take care the kids. Love Joshua Love Jeremy. Love
Keisha. I know some of the boys going marry and I want to
see them when they going marry. I want to marry the boys
to the good girls.

INT: What you want to say to Micah?

TM: Micah I love you Micah. I stay in your room and take
care until you come back. You have a good. No mad about
something wrong. Some people worry. Take care your
clothes and everything you use in the temple. Write to us.

Joshua I love you. Wait until you come back. Tofa soifua
Joshua, Jeremy.

INT: You remember when you take care of us when we small
yeah? You watch us Marvel, and me. Marvel and me we
always fight yeah.

TM: Lucky's daughter going come today. Where she going
stay? She stay with Fia.

TM: Marvel I love you. You always take care me buy some
clothes. When we go to make my fingernails. Not supposed
to. The stuff and I took out and Marvel mad to me. "You
waste money."

INT: You not supposed to make the fingernails for the
temple.

TM: Take care Momma and your brother Ross. She always go
over there for give them some money because the wife no
work.

INT: How about Chantel.

TM: Chantel. I love you Chantel. Joshua, I want you to
finish your school. Go look for the good lady, good girl
to marry to you. Take care Momma and Daddy. Tofa soifua.
Fia, I love you Fia you help me. You love your children.
Pati and Tui. Tui and Anne and Harvey. Only Harvey stay
with you now. And Joshua Jeremy and Micah on a mission.

And Keisha. Take care your family and love you. This
Grandma.

INT: What you want to say to Judy?

Judy, I love you. You take care all of the family and me
too. I love you Judy. I love your kids.

END OF INTERVIEW