

L. D. S. Missionaries Visit World's Greatest Active Volcano

Mormon Elders Protect Their Faces With Boards While They Gaze Into The Boiling Crater and Take Snap Shots With a Camera at the Seething Inferno Below—Gordon Taylor Hyde Of Salt Lake Tells of Experiences.

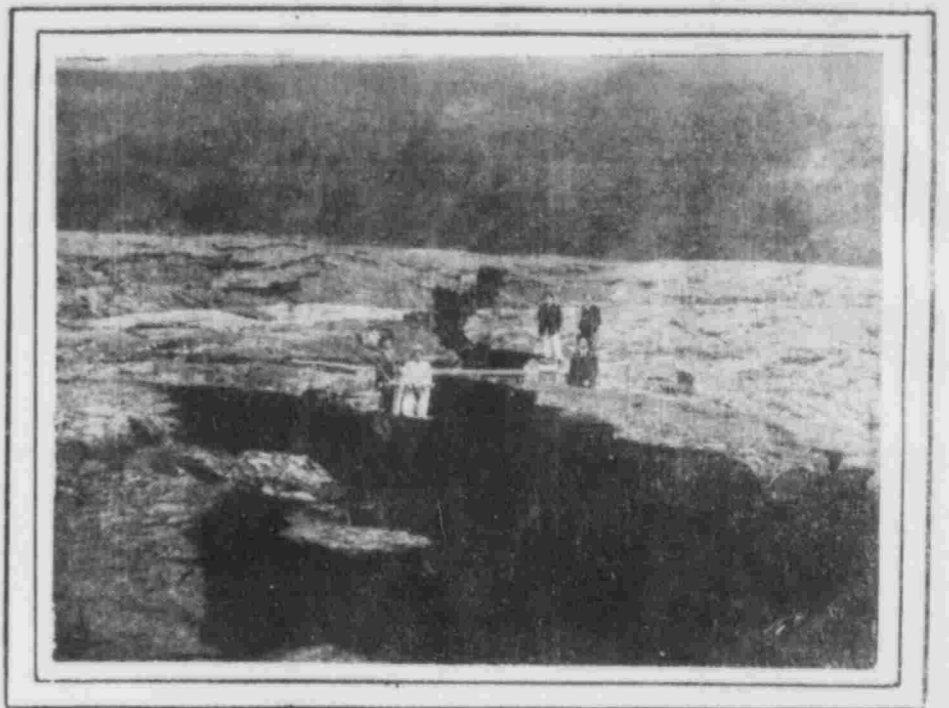


Elders of The Hilo, South Hawaii and West Maui Conferences.



The Volcano Road S.W. Clark, J.C. Knehl, G.T. Hyde, A.R. Elvason, M.E. Pack

With a Mighty Roar at Intervals the Cooled Lava Surface in the Crater Cracks in all Directions and White-Hot Molten Waves Dash With Fury Against the Sides of the Huge Depression on the Side of Mauna Loa.



The 1868 Crack in Kilauea Crater.

Special Correspondence.

LAHAINA, Maui, Hawaiian Territory, Jan. 15.—Having secured permission from our association president, Elder Samuel E. Wesley, Elder A. A. Elvason of the West Maui conference, and myself, undertook to spend the Christmas holidays in the city of Hilo, our objective point being the world's greatest active volcano. As volcanoes seem at this time to be the focus of public attention, perhaps the story of the trip of several Utahns may not be devoid of interest.

I had previously had the pleasure of viewing the crater of Haleakala, the largest extinct volcano on earth, and was therefore more than anxious to visit Kilauea, the largest active one, especially so at the present time as it was more active than it has been for 15 years. The crater nestles down on the slope of Mauna Loa, 20 miles to the rear of the city of Hilo and is a sight which draws tourists from all points of the compass. Few indeed, if any, are they who return disappointed.

The evening of December 22, after bidding good bye to a number of saints, who were at the wharf to see us off, we boarded the boat at Lahaina. Subsequently spending a long but very active night, reaching Hilo at noon next day. The sea was very rough and notwithstanding the fact that the boat was the largest one plying between the islands and had accommodations superior to many of the ocean liners, the stewards were constantly "rushing the cans," and nearly every one on board had business of more or less pressing nature, which kept them occupied in their staterooms. I might relate some amusing incidents relative to the voyage, but for fear that it might awaken unpleasant remembrances of some of the readers I will content myself with saying that we were all "delighted" when the boat docked at Hilo.

DESOLATE COAST.

The shore, along which the boat steamed for miles when first reaching the island of Hawaii, presents a most desolate and forbidding sight. As far as the eye can see inland the land is one continuous pile of lava rock called aa, and one is led to wonder how the few Hawaiians living there manage to exist. Dotted the landscape in every direction like huge ant hills are numerous extinct volcanic cones.

Upon nearing Hilo the landscape undergoes a great change and is in direct contrast to that first seen. There is a sheer drop of hundreds of feet from the land to the ocean. The summit of the cliffs is completely covered with ferns, wild bananas and other tropical plants, except where the silvery waterfalls have worn their courses and are dashed into spray long before reaching the ocean below.

Extending inland can be seen the light green of the cane fields which blend magnificently with the dark verdure of the forest belt at the foot of the mountains. Towering above everything, as though nature had not already made a picture which we mortals are unable to fully appreciate, are Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, the snow capped sentinels of the Pacific. They have respective elevations of 12,800 and 13,600 feet, and as they are snow capped most of the year, it does not take a very great stretch of imagination to fancy ones self

back in the fertile valleys of dear old Utah.

REUNION AT HILO.

We were met at the wharf by Elders E. Wesley Smith, Marvin E. Pack, J. J. Claud Knehl and Samuel W. Clark of the Hilo conference and Elders Leroy Farr and Kenneth Heryle of the South Hawaii conference and were immediately taken to the mission house. Here we had one continual round of good times, which can only be appreciated to their fullest extent by those laboring away from home in a common cause who have the privilege of meeting together but once a year.

Perhaps, before proceeding farther it would not be amiss to give a brief description of Hilo and her people. It is a beautiful little city of 13,000 inhabitants, situated on the extreme northeastern part of the island of Hawaii and is next in size and importance to Honolulu. It is noted for its magnificent bay, which, for its beauty and harbor facilities, is unsurpassed by any other on the island. The United States government is at present building a breakwater which when completed will be one mile long and will cost seven million dollars.

The city is well laid out with wide streets and a public park where free public band concerts are held twice a week and tourists may have the pleasure of listening to the county's brass band. The music is on a par with most bands of the United States and the catchy Hawaiian tunes seldom fail to bring forth a hearty response. The streets are a continual source of pleasure to the sightseer, who never tires of admiring the Royal palms, bamboo ferns and many other trees and plants found only in tropical countries. Although it rains nearly every day a muddy road is a rare thing there, as the whole country is of volcanic formation into which the rain soaks as into a sponge.

HINTS TO SHOPPERS.

The greater part of the population is composed of Chinese, Japanese, about 2,000 Hawaiians and a sprinkling of Portuguese and Armenians. A person walking down the street might easily imagine himself in Chinatown as, with the exception of a few larger stores the business is carried on by the Japs and Chinese. The Hawaiian people are generous to a fault, but unfortunately are very poor business men. If a person has scruples about "fleeing down" a day's shopping in the Japanese quar-

ter will be an expensive pastime; however, a good bargainer may buy things quite reasonably. They have the impression that a foreigner is a millionaire and consequently raise the prices accordingly.

I have strayed from my story, but I thought as I had gone through some of these experiences I might say something that would save the readers from similar ones.

SANTA CLAUS ARRIVES.

Christmas eve we gave a party for the children and all joined in showing the little tots a good time. Santa Claus doesn't come on any way very often but he did that night, and those who think the joys of Christmas are confined to the white children should have heard the little tots sing their songs and recite their pieces for old Santa, and have seen their large black eyes sparkle when they received their candies and presents.

The saints showed their kindness to us by presenting us with a large roast, a giant fish, a tongue, pork potatoes and cakes and these together with root beer, ice cream, nuts and other good things, too numerous to mention, constituted a Christmas meal in which we all did full justice, and a happier, jollier bunch could not be found. No one starved in Hawaii.

TROPICAL SCENERY.

At 7 o'clock on the morning of Dec. 29, we boarded the train which winds its way up the gradual slope of Mauna Loa, through scenery which has to be seen to be appreciated. For several miles it passes through sugar cane fields, extending on either hand as far as the eye can see and studded here and there with huge piles of fern covered timber. Farther along we rode through plantations of ripening bananas and again through forests of ferns. It may sound strange to say forests of ferns, but nevertheless it is true as the ferns here grow as high as 20 feet, and are two to three feet in diameter. Toward the end of our journey we passed through the Ohia forest, belonging to Uncle Sam and saw the Japanese timbermen felling some of the large hardwood trees.

Alighting at the little station of Glenwood, Elders Farr, Heryle and Smith boarded the stage and the remainder of us walked to the Volcano house, a distance of nine miles. The scenery from here on was even more

beautiful than that through which the train passed.

We walked through hedges of the most beautiful ferns I have ever seen. Beneath the ferns, on the edges of the road were multi-hued roses, peonies and wild raspberries, while high into the air behind, with their branches one mass of climbing vines, rose the far-famed koa forest. It is a sight which I will never forget and we all felt fully repaid for the trouble we had taken to get there. I am sending a picture that will give you some idea of the foliage along the Volcano road, but as the light was not good Elder Smith had to take the picture where he got the chance therefore not taking the most beautiful part.

AT THE VOLCANO HOUSE.

Arriving at the "Volcano House," a commodious hotel with a correspondingly commodious price, we secured rooms, and after refreshing ourselves and obtaining lanterns and canteens full of water, were ready to commence our three-and-a-half mile walk to the pit of Halema'uma'u, where Pele is confined at the present time. Elders Farr and Heryle left our party at this time to return to their fields of labor, they having seen the crater some weeks previous.

Most people have the impression that volcanoes occur only at the tops of mountains and among most of the extinct craters on Hawaii, such has been the rule. It nestles down on the side of Mauna Loa about one-third the way to the summit, having an elevation of approximately 4,000 feet. The first glimpse one has of the molten lava is when he stands on the brink of the crater.

THRESHOLD OF INFERNO.

Centuries ago the molten lava filled what is called the Kilauea crater, an area of about nine square miles, having perpendicular sides which rise hundreds of feet above the floor of the crater, but at the present time it is confined in a crater whose greatest area is 25 acres, called Halema'uma'u. While standing on the brink of the Kilauea crater, one has a grand view of the floor, which is seamed and cracked in thousands of places, out of which steam pours in clouds, to be caught up by the trade winds and whisked up the slope of Mauna Loa. The scene somewhat resembles that seen at the Warm Springs north of Salt Lake on a cold

winter day, except that there are but a few springs at the Warm springs from which steam arises, while in the crater are thousands of heat cracks where columns of steam are continually ascending.

ACROSS THE CRATER.

On descending, we were surprised to find that what appeared from the wall above to be a very level, but cracked surface of black lava, was a huge mass of substance, not unlike burned molasses candy that had been stirred rapidly with a spoon and suddenly cooled. This is rather a homely comparison, but it is the only one that comes to my mind at present. The surface is very uneven, some parts being on edge, others completely turned over; here a deep hole while a short distance away would be a small hill and scattered about over the whole surface are great blocks of lava from one foot and a half to two feet in thickness, and each weighing many tons. A well worn trail winds its way over the floor to the very brink of Halema'uma'u, showing where for years thousands of tourists have walked the three miles and a half to see the largest active volcano on earth and the only one where it is possible to stand on the brink without endangering one's life.

FORTY-FIVE MILES CRACK.

After walking a short distance over the broken lava we came to a gigantic gully which extends from one side of the crater, across the whole bed, through the Puna desert and ends in the ocean 45 miles away. This crack is the result of a series of earthquakes which took place when the volcano was very active in the year 1868. The average width is about 12 feet and depth 25, although in some places the bottom cannot be seen. The picture taken by Elder Smith shows the crack where it is crossed by the foot bridge.

THE LITTLE TERROR.

Farther along we came to what is called the "Little Terror." It is a small cone and from the looks of things nearly must have been a terror in its day. Near by is a freak, bearing the name of "The Devil's Picture Frame." It was formed by molten lava flowing over a six-foot embankment in such a manner that three frame-like structures were formed. There is an opening at the side of these through which one may pass to the rear of the frames and stand so that when the picture is

taken only the head is shown in the "Devil's Picture Frame."

Long before arriving at the edge of Halema'uma'u we could hear a noise like the roaring of the ocean as it beats against the rocks on a stormy day. One could easily imagine himself near the sea shore if it were not that the air was so much warmer and filled with sulphur fumes.

FOUR ACRES OF MOLTEN LAVA.

On reaching the brink we were spellbound by the grandeur of the sight below. Two hundred feet below us were four acres of boiling, hissing molten lava dashing against the sides of a frail cone and throwing a spray of red-hot liquid into the air. Every few moments, with a deafening roar, hundreds of tons would be thrown into the air 50 or 75 feet, affording a sight to baffle description.

We were able to enjoy the sight but a very few moments, however, as the wind carried the sulphur fumes in our direction and we were driven choking from the scene. The volcano exercises such a fascinating influence over all who have the good fortune to see it that it is almost impossible to drag one's self from the scene and everyone wants "just one more look."

HAWAIIAN GODDESS.

We were all very hungry by this time, having eaten very little during the day, so we made our way to "Madame Pele's Reception Room," where a light lunch was eaten. Madame Pele is a Hawaiian goddess, who is supposed to dwell in the fiery pit and in rooms underneath the lava of the large Kilauea crater. She was formerly worshipped by the Hawaiian people, who offered up sacrifices to her and many an interesting story is told about her by the old Hawaiians if one can get them in the humor of it.

The entrance to the Reception Room is a small opening of probably 18 inches in diameter, through which the top of a ladder protrudes. After crawling through this small hole and descending to the floor below, one finds himself in a room in the solid lava with dimensions of about 30 feet by 20 feet. The walls are almost completely covered with the cards of visitors from all nations and one is forced to admit that the name is appropriately given. Leading off from this room is a long tunnel-shaped hallway, along which we walked until by the hollow sounds made by our footsteps, we were warned

to turn back or take the chance of dropping unceremoniously into Pele's basement.

PELE'S KITCHEN.

Pele's Kitchen is a round, deep hole from which steam is constantly rising. Near by we gathered a sackful of fine specimens of sulphur, and rocks having every color of the rainbow in them. The steam here rises in dense clouds and the place is known as the Sulphur Beds. A short distance from here are the heat cracks, over which we scorch our postal cards. The cracks are long and narrow, extending through the solid lava; the heat from them is intense. A meal could be cooked over them in a short time.

It is very dangerous for one to leave the paths, as the surface is very brittle and is undermined throughout by subterranean passages. Many times while walking from one point of interest to another one of our party would break through the frail surface and sink knee deep in a hidden hole.

HEAT INTENSE.

Upon returning to the active crater we found that the wind had changed, the sulphur fumes were carried in the opposite direction and we were able to sit on the edge of the crater and watch the molten lava below. The heat was intense and burned our faces, but by cutting holes in boards and looking through these, we were able to sit near the edge without being uncomfortably warm.

As the darkness increased, the scene below became even more grand than before. The lava took on a livid hue and seemed more active than during the afternoon. At times the whole surface would cool to a depth of about a foot and would take on a dark slate color. A small thread-like crack would start on one side and extend until it had reached the other. From this another would start until the whole surface was a network of blood-red veins. Suddenly with a mighty roar, the whole mass would be broken up by an eruption in which hundreds of tons of the cooled lava would be thrown into the air.

By continued splashing against the sides the lava had formed a small cone around itself. Around this cone were numerous hole holes and small spouting cones, usually engaged in throwing the molten lava into the air like gigantic flower pots at a Fourth of July celebration. Anyone desirous of seeing grand fireworks should visit a trip to Kilauea, where he could feast his eyes on fireworks of every description to his heart's content.

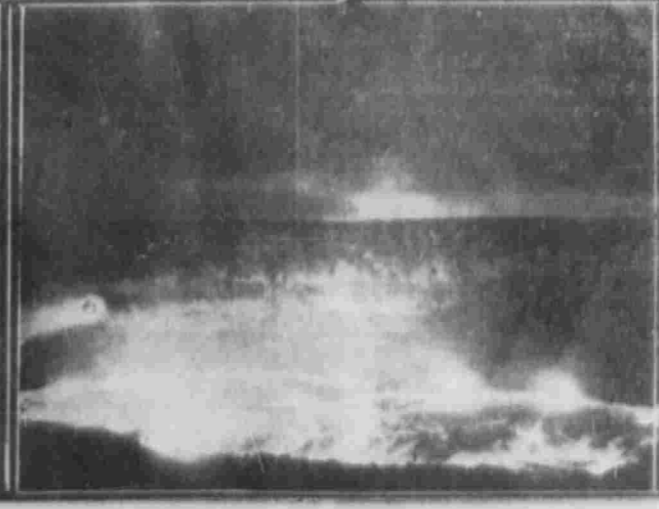
AWE-INSPIRING SIGHT.

About 10 o'clock the whole of the smaller pit became active and a few moments later overflowed the banks. The sky was lighted up for hundreds of feet and could be seen for miles around. It is a sight none of us will ever forget and is the most awe-inspiring sight I have ever witnessed.

Those who about half fire for all sinners could find it here if anywhere and might find it greatly to their advantage if they would hold a great revival meeting on the brink of Halema'uma'u. I think now how would be sufficient to turn the most hardened among them into the straight and narrow path. The man who would hold a great revival meeting on the brink of Halema'uma'u, I think now how would be sufficient to turn the most hardened among them into the straight and narrow path. The man who would hold a great revival meeting on the brink of Halema'uma'u, I think now how would be sufficient to turn the most hardened among them into the straight and narrow path.

At 11 o'clock we reluctantly left Halema'uma'u and made our way back to the hotel. Next morning we visited the sulphur beds near the hotel and gathered some fine specimens. There is a hill of sulphur which is a dazzling sight on a sunny day. After eating a light lunch we walked to the railway station and at 1 o'clock in the afternoon were back in Hilo, a tired, foot-sore but happy crowd.

GORDON TAYLOR HYDE.



REPRODUCTIONS OF KODAK PICTURES OF THE CRATER AND MOLTEN LAVA TAKEN AFTER DARK.