So They Will Know

By Don L. Searle

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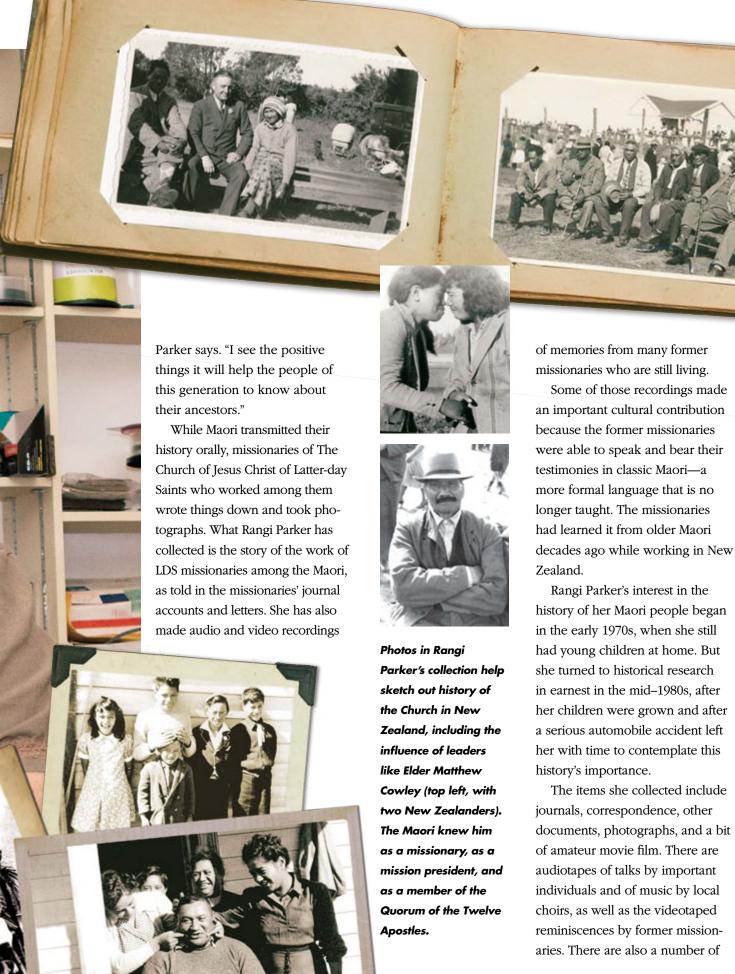
angi Parker didn't start out to be a historian. She was a well-known entertainer in her native New Zealand. But an unrelenting feeling that she needed to help preserve the history of her Maori people led her to develop a historical archive of great value to her country—a work for which the Queen of England has honored her.

Sister Parker has spent the past 20-plus years gathering the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among the Maori because, she says, "our generation of young people need to know who they are."

She was concerned that younger members of the Church younger members of the Church with the depth of faith shown by Maori great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents in accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The history she has been permitted to collected "is very sacred, and very special for the whole of the country," Sister











GATHERING CHURCH HISTORY IN YOUR AREA

teve Olsen, senior historic sites curator in the Church History Department, says it would be helpful to have Church members all over the world helping locate Church history documents, photographs, or artifacts for the department. Such local and regional efforts could become a major part of the gathering of Church history in the future.

Chad Orton, an archivist in the Church History Department, says, "We really can't do what we have been asked to do in the scriptures—document the history of the Church—without the members letting us know what they have."

If you have or know of items that help establish the history of the Church in your area, contact the Church History Department at lds.org/churchhistory/donations to make them aware of the items. Church history staff will be glad to visit with you about the best way to document and preserve, or to donate historical items, Brother Orton says. The participation of local members is vital because they know the people, events, and items that are significant to the history of the Church in their area.

Sister Parker's work is "extraordinary. It is one of the finest collections in the world on local Church history, and she's done it largely by herself," says Steve Olsen, senior historic sites curator in the Church History Department. "What I'd love to do is stimulate similar initiatives by Latter-day Saints all over the world." (See accompanying article above.)

Others outside the Church also recognize the value of her work. A national television network in New Zealand has aired three documentaries drawing on the history Sister Parker has collected. In 2008, she was awarded the Queen's Service Medal; she was among those included on the annual Queen's Birthday Honours List. She was nominated for the award by the member of the New Zealand parliament

representing her area, and the nomination was supported by an executive of the television production company with which she worked.

"The history that the missionaries have kept is amazing with these photographs and journal entries," she says. "It's something that has excited me since I started 20 years ago, and still excites me because of the historical value of it all." ■

