

ALICIA SMITH

I go back to my na kupuna of the Kuni Ohana of Waialua, Oahu, who were well known at that time for their beautiful pageants and tableaux. Here I was born and as the saying goes -- "I learned to dance before I could walk." Here I grew up in the ohana style of observing -- but don't niele -- learning quietly so everything would sink deep in the na'au -- don't be a maha'oi -- to minamina -- in a sense of value -- to cherish -- for silence is golden.

I am the adopted daughter of Amos & Alice (Kuni) Keawekane (Alice K. Garner) whose father was Rev. Joseph Kuni. Grandpa Kuni taught the ohana to sing and dance and they traveled from island to island raising funds for the church. This was the start of mom's hula and entertaining career. Singing and dancing was a means of livelihood for our family. Mom gave me the basic introduction and interest in the hula.

### *Henry Pa*

My mom played music with Aunty Mae (Loebenstein) and Aunty Lena (Guerrero) and I became a dancer for Aunty Lena's hula troupe. This was during World War II. We danced for the U.S.O., entertained at private parties, and performed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

At the age of 15, I was hired as a hula instructor at the YWCA in Honolulu. Here I taught modern hula and resigned from the YWCA after 20 years of teaching to open my own Hula School.-- Alicia Smith's School of Polynesian Dancing. I taught almost every kind of polynesian <sup>dancing</sup> there is, tahitian, hula, and maori. This continued for about three years. At the end of this period I experienced a deep desire to improve my knowledge of my own culture, the hula. I searched for help in learning the old way of hula. It was then that I turned to Aunt Mae for help. I have learned a stronger discipline and spiritual guidance with her teachings -- this breath of life, this mana that makes us strong. Together we started grooming seven little girls the Na Maoli Pua -- the real true flowers -- and blossomed into Halau O Na Maoli Pua.

*More Henry Pa part up to the training.  
I learned briefly but the experience  
will always stay with me.*

*I was searching for something in the museum  
Hawaiian culture and that's when I  
turned to Aunty Mae.*



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My mother gave me the basic introduction and interest in the hula because it was all around me as a child. There was no strict discipline. I didn't know if my arms were falling or if my feet were crooked. Everybody had to go and participate in these church fund-raisers. The step was shown to us and we would just get up and dance. I thought I was doing wonderful.

My mother played music with Aunty Mae (Loebenstein) and Lena Guerrero, and I became a dancer for them. This was during the Second World War and we were doing work for the U.S.O.. We entertained at private parties and through Aunty Lena we performed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

I studied under Uncle Henry Pa after Aunty Lena. Just watching Henry Pa to me was fascinating. He was somebody you learned to walk very lightly around. His personality and character changed all the time and yet underneath he was a warm and kind person.

I began to teach at fifteen at the Y.W.C.A. and I stayed there for twenty years. The studio was called Alicia Smith's School of Polynesian Dance and I taught only little children. If I really think about it, hula was the best part of my life. It wasn't unlike going to church. Everytime I wanted to escape the everyday miseries of life, I went to the studio. In 1973 I began to work with Aunty Mae who I had known through my mother. Aunty Mae has given me a sense of discipline and spiritual guidance. She has taught me how to bring out what's inside of me and how to use this gift. This breath of life, this mana that we all have is what makes strong. She showed me the importance of putting myself in order first before going on to the dance. I didn't realize so much of what the hula demanded and here like I said I thought I was doing great.



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Pearl Keawe  
~~Maui~~

~~My mother in law Carol Ann Finck was a hula teacher.~~

Alicia Smith  
Haleiwa  
Feb. 10, 1936

I was learning the hula before I could walk. I was adopted to Mother Alice Keawekane Gardner. The hula was in the family stemming from ~~the~~ grandfather. He was a minister and so they would put on shows to raise money for the church. So that's how my mother and all her brothers and sisters got to learn about hula and music because they were all in the shows. My mother supported the family through teaching the hula and I would always be around watching her teach. I never really had sit-down, strict, disciplined training like our students today. I was just in the environment of the hula every day. Everything I learned was auwana. I never really sat down and learned olapa until I got to dance for Aunty Lena Guerrero. The olapa that we were taught were very basic numbers.

My mother gave me the basic introduction and interest in the hula because it was all around me as a child. She didn't tell me I must learn it. But before you know it I was up there dancing with my grandfather. Somehow I just picked it up. It's strange because my mother comes from a big family and my cousins never did pick up the hula.

There was no strict discipline. I didn't know if my arms were falling, I didn't know if my feet were crooked. We were just told to get up and dance. It was not a pressured situation. The step was shown to us and we would do it. I thought I was doing wonderful. As a result I would be included in these church fund-raisers. Everybody had to go and participate.

My mom joined up with Aunty Lena Guerrero and Aunty Mae Loebenstein to play music and I went to dance for them. Aunty Mae knew my mom in Maui and her parents welcomed my mother like one of their children. This was when the second world war broke out and we were doing work for the USO. Through Auntie Lena we danced at private parties, we travelled to the mainland to dance for the Building fund and I got to dance at the Royal Hawaiian.

I studied under Uncle Henry Pa after Auntie Lena. Uncle Henry was somebody you learned to walk very lightly around. Just watching Uncle Henry to me was fascinating. His personality and character changed all the time. And yet underneath he was a warm and kind person.

I am now with Auntie Mae Loebenstein. Aunty Mae has given me a sense of discipline, and spiritual guidance. She has taught me how to bring out what's inside of me, teaching me how to use this gift, this mana that we all have and we'd like to share with people. This mana is what makes us strong. This breath of life. Aunty Mae has given me a foundation that includes all the facets of the hula, not only the dance aspect but the spiritual, & historical dimensions of the hula as well. She has showed me the importance of putting myself in order first before going on to dance. I didn't realize so much and here like I said I thought I was doing so great.



alicia Smith  
Haleiwa  
Feb. 10, 1936

Aunty taught me the importance of the feet. She showed me that everything has its particular place. You can't just ~~xxx~~ throw everything together like chop suey. Many students ~~x~~ quit our halau because they cannot take the training of the legs. Every arm movement and leg movement is ;danced to us by Aunty who is 71. If you really want the knowledge you have to look and observe. But the modern people of today are not trained to observe as Aunty Mae's generation was.

I began to teach at 15 at the YWCA, and stayed there 20 years. Ida Gonzalez was moving to the mainland so my mother's boss told her about Ida's studio above Liliha Bakery. The studio was called Alicia Smith's School of Polynesian Cance and I taught only little children. Everytime I ~~wanted~~ wanted to escape the everyday miseries of life I had the hula. If I really think about it the hula was the best part of my life. the hula is like going to church. You get strength and a spiritual uplift from it. I think kahiko is the essence of hula. I think the precision of today's kahiko is wonderful but I just hope it doesn't become more gymnastic or more mixed in with other Polynesian dances than it is today. I think the oneline dancing and the oneness of the halau is what Aunty Mae has given us.

A dancer has to learn to be dedicated and learn the hula not for performance sake.

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