

HARRIET KUULEI ^{NANI SHELD} STIBBARD ^{Sheldon}

When I was young, my parents did not want me to dance ^{the hula,} but I was determined to learn. ~~me~~ Because of my family, I did not learn to dance until I was about twenty-one years old, and married.

I was teaching school on Maui where I met Alice Garner, my first hula teacher. Alice was a soft-spoken and beautiful person ^{from} whom I learned kahiko and auwana. After five weeks of lessons, she told me "Harriet, I don't know why you are coming to me. Your talent is God-given, I just can't teach you anymore." I continued with her for two months.

Once while dancing on stage, a Hawaiian woman said, "what is that haole lady doing up on stage?" To me, I have Hawaiian blood in me and I ^{am} ~~was~~ proud of it, and her remark encouraged me to do better. After I went on my own, I asked ^{Aunt} Daisy Boyd to translate the Hawaiian songs for me. The hula came very easily to me.

In 1934, I started my classes teaching auwana first, then kahiko much later. I had my own style and ^{it} was very different from other halau. My costumes, my pa'u, my holoku, my ideas came naturally after I visualized my songs and dances. My best memories are of the children. I always said to them, "do not waste your parents' money if you don't want to learn." I taught boys and girls, some as young as three years old. Men and women also took lessons, but the men learned ~~ed~~ just for fun, not to perform. After taking hula for about six months, the children were given a certificate with a picture of myself for learning good manners, good feelings, attire, and discipline. My advice was to put your heart and soul into what you do, work diligently, strive and have a goal.

I also taught at Punahou School, but after three years they wanted me to give up my studio to teach full time for them. ^{I refused for I wanted to keep} ~~my~~ studio ~~was~~ in Honolulu, and, ^{in 1938} ~~after~~ one of my recitals, Mrs. ^{HELEN DESHA} Beamer, who was a guest, said that she would send her granddaughter to me for private lessons. That was a great honor to have Mama Beamer trust me. ^{so much.}

The hula has changed a lot. When I look at the uwehe of today, we never opened our legs like that. Old Hawaiians were rascal and naughty, but in a clean way. My definition of hula kahiko is something in the old tradition. I love kahiko, ~~kahiko~~ but I never composed because I felt I was not an expert to do so. I prefer auwana songs, ^{or} my favorite is "Mi Nei."

Language to me is very important in hula. ^{It} ~~It~~ ^{Hunt Boyd} ~~Daisy~~ did not translate for me, I would not have been able to do anything.

I am very honored to be recognized today. For me it is a compliment when somebody reminds me that I was his or her teacher and that I was teaching their granddaughter. ~~now~~ ^{reward} ~~award~~ What a beautiful ^{reward} it is for me. My greatest joy is what I gave to the children because it lives on today.

I also take pride in the fact that the students of Kulei's Hula Studio were on the cover of "Paradise of the Pacific", "Times" & "News Week" & inside of "Collier's Magazine."

I also am proud of the fact that Oren E. Long, "Superintendent of Schools" felt it was important enough for me to be excused from teaching school for a whole week (on Maui) to take my keikis (4 girls & a boy) to Honolulu to entertain with Roy Kinney's Troupe.

The Newspaper Articles
about my ^{1^a} "peibis" were
tremendously rewarding.

All of these articles &
dates, are in a book, that
my granddaughter "Maunalei
Love" is using in her
Halau, "Kulei Aloha."

I am deeply honored to be
in your wonderful book.

Never in my wildest
dreams did I expect such
"An Honor."

Aloha nui loa,
Harriet Kulei Stibbard