

Alice Namakelua

I was trained by men who had survived the wars of Kamehameha. These survivors documented what they had gone through by putting their experiences into chants. These men folks were the early dancers in the community and some of them were relatives within my family. It was from these men that I received my training. They included my uncle, Ilalaole, and Kahoaleawai who was Prince Kuhio's chanter. It was Kahoaleawai who advised me at age sixteen to only teach the old and modern auana if I should venture out to teach. I think he realized a new world was coming. The hand motions and footwork of that time were so different from today's.

I was born in Honokaa in 1892 and my family lived in a house built in a forest at the base of the mountains. We lived faraway from any big town or city so my companions were the birds that lived in the forest. My parents were not entertainers but they sang for themselves and family gatherings. Our family had prayer services in the mornings and evenings and that's where I learned to sing.

In 1901 I came to Honolulu and at the age of nine I was trained in modern and ancient hula by my uncles. Back then there was no such thing as studios and hula teachers were predominantly men. It wasn't until after the arrival of the missionaries that women were allowed to dance hula so it was very hard for me to be trained in the hula outside my family. Through church socials down in Kakaako I met Keahi Luahine and I went on to train under her.

In 1908 I was married and for twenty-one years until my husband's death in 1929 I was not permitted to dance hula or play Hawaiian music. In 1935 I was offered a job with the Department of Parks and Recreation to teach hula ipu and I ended up retiring twenty-four years later. I basically taught auana and I asked all my students what my uncles had asked me when I began. Did they want to become an instructor, an entertainer, or did they just want to do it for fun? I taught them the mele, then the translation of the mele, and then I trained them on the paniolo handkerchiefs. If you can dance on a paniolo handkerchief you can call yourself a dancer. You must be able to perform everything on that space. I was taught by my uncles that the uwehe step that is danced outward today should always be danced upward, and that turning your back on the audience is rude and impolite. Some of my students have seen variations of these traditional rules but if you want to learn from me you have to forget what you already have seen in your mind and eyes. If you cannot, then I cannot teach you.

In 1906 I sang for Queen Liliuokalani and today I am ninety-one-years-old so it's difficult for myself and other elderly people to understand this new hula of today. The majority of the hula that the present generation looks upon as ancient was created during the reign of King David Kalakaua. As we lost Hawaii, we lost a great amount of our songs and dances and chants and we are continuing to lose it. Today it seems we are losing almost everything Hawaiian about our culture: our language, our dress, our religion, and now our arts. I don't consider what is being done today as Hawaiian hula. There is not much remaining that people my age enjoy and recognize. It is only exercising. Very commercial. It exists today only to keep modern audiences happy. I don't see the hula being Hawaiian in the years to come. The people of Hawaii don't know the Hawaiian language so there is no stability. I don't want to offend any hula instructor because they have a right to create but there is no one around to keep them in line today. They are on their own. There are no boundaries or definitions anymore. You make the cake the way you want, I make the cake the way I want.

conclude

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..... custom
of the Haw'n
people

Alice Namakelua

~~I always ask my students when they begin, do they want to become an instructor, or an entertainer, or do they just want to learn it for fun. I teach them the mele and the translation.~~ I was trained by men who had survived the wars of Kamehameha. These survivors documented what they had gone through by putting their experiences into chants. These men folks were the early dancers in the community and some of them were relatives within my family. It was from these men that I received my training. They included my uncle, Ilalaole and Kahoaleawai, who was Kukio's chanter. It was Kahoaleawai who advised me at age sixteen to only teach the old and modern auana if I should venture out to teach. I think ~~he~~ ^{she} realized a new world was coming. The hand motions and footwork of that time were so different from today's.

I was born in Honokaa in 1892 and my family lived in a house built in a forest at the ~~base~~ ^{base} of the mountains. We lived faraway from any big town or city so my companions were the birds that lived in the forest. My parents were not entertainers but they sang for themselves and family gatherings. Our family had prayer services in the mornings and evenings and that's where I learned to sing. In 1901 I came to Honolulu and at the age of nine I was trained in modern and ancient hula by my uncles. Back then there was no such thing as studios and hula teachers were predominantly men. It wasn't until after the arrival of the missionaries that women were allowed to dance hula so it was very hard for me to be trained in the hula outside my family. Through church socials down in Kakaako I met Keahi Luahine and I went on to train under her, ~~for a short while.~~

In 1908 I was married and my husband prevented me from dancing, ~~and~~ ^{hula} playing music, or going to church. ~~So~~ ^{for} 21 years until my husband's death in 1929 I was not permitted to dance. ~~In 1935 I was offered a job with the Department of Parks and Recreation to teach hula ipu and I ended up retiring 24 years later. I basically taught auwana and I asked all my students what my uncles had asked me when I began. Did they want to become an instructor, an entertainer, or did they just want to do it for fun. I taught them the mele, then the translation of the mele, and then I trained them on the paniolo handkerchiefs. If you can dance on a paniolo handkerchief you can call yourself a dancer. You must be able to perform everything on that space. I was taught by my uncles that the uwehe step that is danced outward today should always be danced upward, and that turning your back on the audience is rude and impolite. Some of my students have seen variations of these traditional rules but if you want to learn from me you have to forget what you already have seen in your mind and eyes. If you cannot, then I cannot teach you.~~

In 1906 I sang for Queen Liliuokalani and today I am ⁹¹ years old so it's difficult for myself and other elderly people to understand this new hula of today. The majority of the hula that ~~was looked upon as ancient~~ ^{is seen} ~~was~~ ^{almost} the present generation looks upon as ancient was created during the reign of King David Kalakaua. As we lost Hawaii, we lost a great amount of our songs and dances and chants and we are continuing to lose it. Today we are losing everything Hawaiian about our culture: our language, our dress, our religion, and now our arts. I don't consider what is being done today as Hawaiian hula. There is not much remaining that people my age enjoy and recognize. It is only ~~exercising~~ ^{very} commercial. It exists today only to keep modern audiences happy. I don't see the hula being Hawaiian in the years to come. The people of Hawaii don't know the Hawaiian language so there is no stability. I don't want to offend any hula instructor because they have a right to create but there is no one around to keep them in line today. They are on their own. ~~There are no boundaries or definitions anymore. You make the cake the way you want, she makes the cake the way she wants.~~ ^{There} ~~she~~ ^I

Good!

Alice namakelua

I was not really interested in the hula. But a child does what his parents say. so I got started tight in the home. My parent were not entertainers. I was singing whaen I was three years old because our family had prayer services in the morning and evening. We would sing at these family prayer meetings and that's where I learned to sing. My first exposure was in the shurch. I was the kind of child who could grasp thins quickly, so I ~~asked~~ absorbed all thethings that were taught at home and in the church. My parents sang for themselves and family gathering.s. Hula was only for men until after the missionaries came. ,ost of the things we see today started with Kalakaua.

There were no such thins as studios. Only keahi Luahine. I met her through church socials down at ~~Kakax~~ Kakaako where her church was. I was botn in Honokaa.

omit I came to Oahu when I was nine in 1901. My uncles taught me how to danc. In 1908 my uncle advised me not to dance, if I were to dance, leave the old behind, stick to auwana. If you do you might forget or muddle the words or the and if and if you are doing hula kapu you will get in trouble. My nickname was "hiiwi'ilo," because of my voice. Our home was in the forest at the bottom of the mountains. The birds were my companions.

I started to teach for the Parks and ~~Ec~~ Recreation. I only taught the dances performed with ipu not pahu, 1935. I taught for 24 years. I am now 89. I still teach frienes and relatives off and on. I am basically a freestyle, auwana style dancer. My uncles traveled around the island entertaining people. I always ask my students when they begin do they want to become an instructor, an entertainer or do they just want to do it for fun (learn a few numbers for parties?) I teach them the mele and the translation and then I train them on the paniolo handkerchiefs. If you can dance on that you are a dancer. You must be able to perform everthing on that space. some of them when they do the kaholo (vamp) they jump, because they heve seen other things. If you want to learn from me you forget what you already have in your mind and eyes. If you cannot, then I cannot. Turning your back to the audience is im-polite. The uwehe should always go up for women not outwards.

omit In 1929 I lost my husband. I started to work at a stand down at the market on Maunakea. Someone gave a job because I had to take care of my family. Prinecess Kawanakoa stopped by my store and tried my palu. We were joined by the composer of Royal Hawaiian Hotel (Mary Robbins). It happened that this was the day we were having Hawaiian food for lunch. So we gave the remaining bottle of palu. The driver returned immediately told Alice everytime there is Palu, it is all sold to her. And I made for her until she passed away.

The hula of today is all different from the Hawaiian hula. There is not much remaining that people my age can enjoy. They are making their own steps up. Anybody can create.

omit In 1906 I became involed with Liliokalani, (sang for her).

The elderly people that are still around cannot understand this new hula. We feel so lost. We don't know how to understand this new hula. I don't consider what is being done today hula. It is only excersing. Only commercial. To keep modern audiences happy. I don't see the hula being Hawaiina in the years to come. The people (kumu & audience) of today don't know the Hawaiian language. I don't want to offent any hula instructor because they have a right to create, but there is no one around today to keep them in line. They are on their own. They make the cake the way they want, you make the cake the way tyou want.

As we lost Hawaii, we ~~xxx~~lost a great amount of our songs and dances and chants. and we are continuing to lose it. Today we are ~~xxx~~ losing everything Hawaiian about ourselves; our language, our dress, etc.

omit In 1908 when I got married, music, dance, everything ended because my husband didn't allow. I also could not see my parents, I could not go to church.

The advice I would give to the kumu and dancers of today is listen to the elders. If a kupuna comes up to you and corrects you on a word pronounciation, etc, don't assume they are putting ~~xx~~ you down. There are many kupuna that try to hilp, want to help but we are mistreated when we try to share the knowledge we have.