

Almeda Eliza Hitchcock—Wahine Loio, or Lady Lawyer

June Hitchcock Humme

In the last half of the 19th Century, Almeda Eliza Hitchcock, second generation born in the Hawaiian Islands, in the small town of Hilo on the Island of Hawai'i, grew up to become Hawai'i's first *Wahine Loio*, or lady lawyer. To learn how she accomplished this and for Alme to tell us in her own words how she viewed Hawaiian law in 1887, we must travel back in time.

ALME'S FAMILY HISTORY

The Hitchcocks, who were descended from Matthias Hitchcock, were an adventuresome and traveling family. Matthias came to the United States from England on the bark *Susan and Ellen* in the spring of 1635.¹ Six generations after Matthias, David Hitchcock Jr. was born in Bethlehem, Connecticut. He became a shoemaker and writer of books and produced 11 children.² Two of his heirs journeyed to Hawai'i, and the rest settled in the Midwest. All were involved with the Congregational Church, and three became either home or foreign missionaries.

Foreign missionary Harvey Rexford Hitchcock married Rebecca Howard. They sailed for the Hawaiian Islands on the whaleship *Averick*, arriving in Honolulu 17 May 1832, after a voyage of 173 days.³ His sister Elizabeth later came to Hawai'i to join them.⁴

MOLOKA'I

Harvey and Rebecca (fig. 1) were stationed at Kalua'aha, Moloka'i. They had four children, David Howard, Harvey Rexford Jr., Edward Griffin, and Sarah Diana, who died very young.⁵

June Hitchcock Humme, grandniece of Almeda Eliza Hitchcock, resides in Hilo, Hawai'i.
The Hawaiian Journal of History, vol. 20 (1986)

The boys were educated at home until it was time for them to attend O'ahu College (now Punahou). After his Island schooling, David went to Massachusetts, where he entered Williams College as a sophomore in 1853. He returned to Moloka'i in 1855 where he read law with one of the best lawyers in the Islands.⁶ David remembered a young lady school teacher whom he had met in his days back East and sent Almeda Eliza Widger (fig. 2), of Otselic, New York, a proposal of marriage, adding that if he did not hear from her, he would consider it a refusal.

The letter did not reach her at once on its arrival and she saw it listed in the list of advertised letters. She wrote him that she would come and sailed from Boston on board the *Raduga* which after a long voyage around Cape Horn arrived finally at Honolulu considerably overdue.⁷

Rev. Mr. Armstrong accompanied David on board the *Raduga*, and he married Almeda on 13 March 1857; thus, she arrived in Honolulu as Mrs. Hitchcock.⁸

David had been appointed Police Justice for Hilo on 16 March 1857,⁹ so they hurried on to Hilo after a visit to Moloka'i to meet David's mother.¹⁰

HILO, HAWAI'I

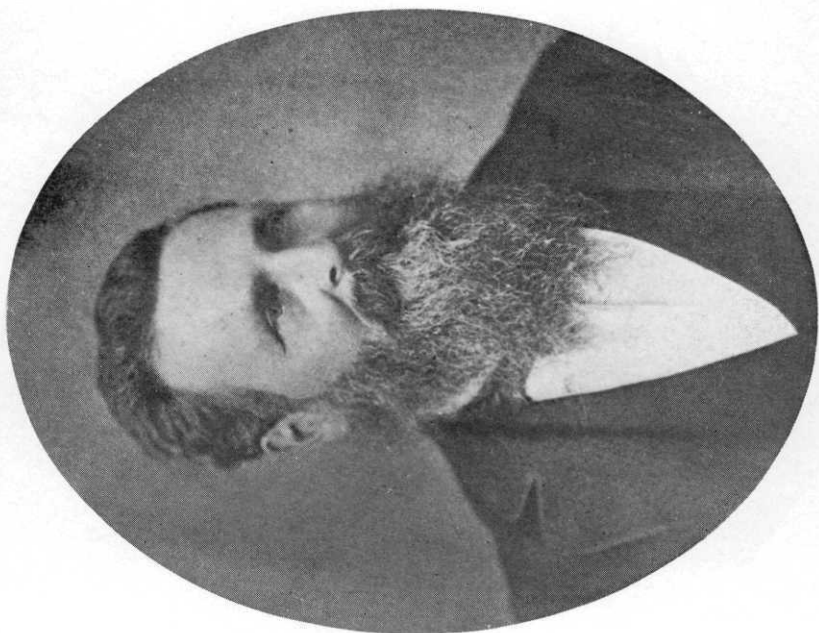
Judge and Mrs. Stafford L. Austin took the young couple in until they rented a grass house. David soon bought land from Chiefess Kapi'olani¹¹ and built a frame home for his wife and expected family. In an 1858 letter to his brother Edward he says:

The frame is all ready for the clapboards and the thatch is all on the roof. It is going to be comfortable which I cannot say of the house we now live in.¹²

When the David Hitchcocks first came to Hilo in April 1857, they found the courthouse and jail to be the only public buildings in town. The courthouse was a low frame building where the circuit court held its June term each year. The office of the attorney general for the Island was in a small attached room, and this building was the police court as well. Later, a two-story structure was built to house the post office, custom house, sheriff's office, and offices for the judge. The Circuit Court in Waimea was held in a large thatched house on the

FIG. 1 (*left*). David Howard Hitchcock, about 1885. (HMCS photo.)

FIG. 2 (*right*). Almeda E. Widger Hitchcock, about 1885. (HMCS photo.)





old Lindsey premises. Every district justice was supposed to find his own courthouse.

Hilo was made up of houses made of dried grass or sugar cane leaves scattered irregularly in the area. The only houses built of lumber were those occupied by the few white families living there. Roads were narrow trails almost overgrown with *oi* and guava bushes. Scarcely any trees grew in the town, just a solitary mango or pride of India.¹³

When the David Hitchcock home at 63 Waiānuenuē in Hilo was finished, the Hitchcocks could stand on their porch and see the whole of Hilo Bay from Lelewi to Makahanaloa points. Their first child, Ella Marian, arrived before the new home was completed.¹⁴ Born in this home were Cora Etta, David Howard Jr., Almeda Eliza, and Charles Henry Wetmore Hitchcock.¹⁵

ALMEDA ELIZA HITCHCOCK

The last daughter, Almeda Eliza (fig. 3), was born Saturday, 5 December 1863. Her father, writing to his brother Edward on 15 January 1864, had this to say about her: “. . . baby grows like a weed. We call her ‘Alme’ or ‘Kitty’, mostly the latter, as she is so good to lie still.”¹⁶

Alme later wrote that her life was an uneventful but an exceedingly happy one. Most of her time was spent outdoors where she and her brothers were constant companions. She wrote: “Playing with dolls did not afford me any amusement, save so far as to have them die and be buried.”¹⁷ After a doll’s funeral, she would climb trees or chase calves around the pasture with the boys.

EDUCATION

Alme found that she learned her lessons easily, and consequently time hung heavily on her hands. From the beginning of her schooling to the end her teachers had a hard time keeping her busy and quiet.

Alme was taught at home until age 15, when she and her sister Cora went to O’ahu College as boarders in Honolulu. In 1880 there were 112 students in the school, many of them boarders.

Two sets of the girl boarders, the ‘Fergusons’, two tall girls, Almeda Hitchcock (Mrs. W. L. Moore) and Ivy Willfong (Mrs. W. H. Holmes) and the ‘Nubbins’, two shorter

FIG. 3. Almeda Eliza and Cora Etta Hitchcock, at Punahou, about 1880. (Hester Hitchcock Mattox photo.)

girls, Cora Hitchcock (Mrs. Henry Townsend) and Emma Whitney, had a special spread one night when the Hitchcock girls opened a box of good things which had been sent from home. They waited until after hours, darkened their windows, and then 'Fergusons' and 'Nubbins' feasted on the cake and home luxuries. To 'top off' they decided that they needed a coconut. Down the stairs they tiptoed. Active Almy [sic] tucked her skirts into her bathing bloomers, and 'shinned' slowly up a tall coconut tree back of Dole Hall. The other three convulsed with laughter at the funny sight, put their handkerchiefs into their mouths to smother any sound. At last Almy got one and slid down. Up in the bedroom they managed to cut the husk and break the shell. It was empty!¹⁸

Another school adventure of Alme's shows her sense of humor at age seventeen:

One night Almy, who had helped her father put shingles on his roof, encouraged some of the Punahou girls to go out on the roof with her and miaow like cats to draw Mr. Jones forth, but when he appeared with a gun, they were glad to seek their rooms.¹⁹

In a family letter of 15, June 1881, Alme's aunt Mary Castle Hitchcock states:

Cora will be through with her course and David and Almeda have decided that Alme is not to go back to school next year, on account of her health, which has never been as good since she had a fall in Hilo, four or five years ago, which hurt her back.²⁰

No further mention is found of an injured back, although Alme had other health problems later.

Thus ended Alme's formal education in Hawai'i, but it continued in a different way in the following years.

BROADER HORIZONS

Years later Alme wrote:

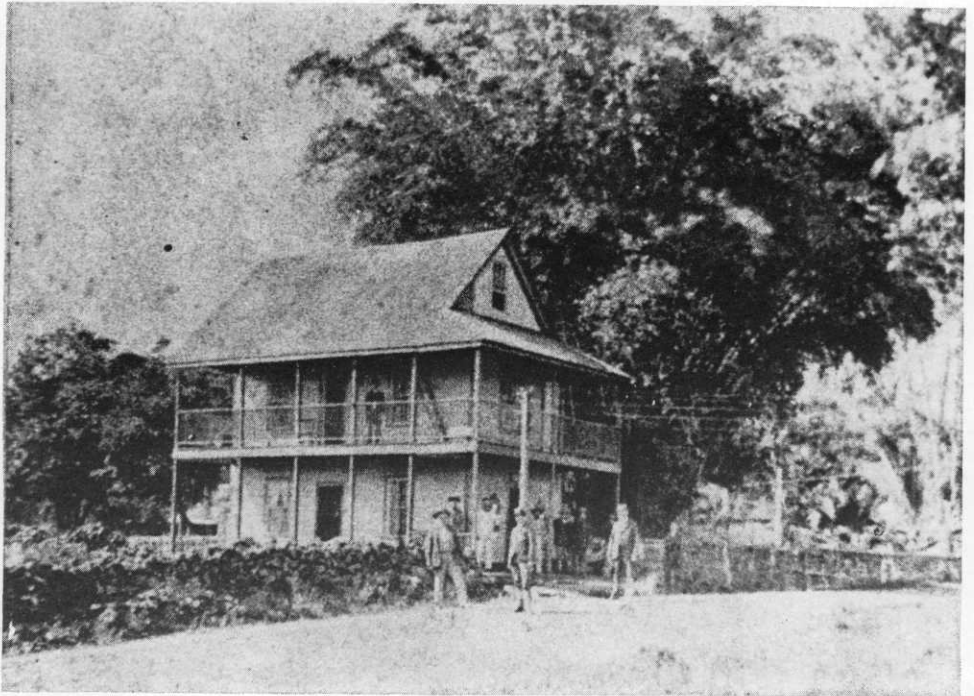
After the summer vacation of 1881, I took a country school and tried teaching for a year. That occupation proved very trying, and so it was given up for more congenial work, in father's law office.²¹

On 13 March 1882 the children of Almeda and David Hitchcock gave their parents an anniversary party at their home. Printed, formal invitations²² were sent to local friends to come and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hitchcocks. The home was filled with flowers, and invited guests played games and enjoyed ample refreshments.²³

Besides their home at 63 Waiānueue in Hilo (fig 4), the David

FIG. 4 (*top*). Hitchcock homestead, 63 Waiānueue Ave., Hilo, about 1890 (unidentified man). (Hester Hitchcock Mattox photo.)

FIG. 5 (*bottom*). David H. Hitchcock's law office on Waiānueue Ave., Hilo, about 1885. Later, Alme's husband, Dr. Moore, had his office on the second floor (unidentified people). (Private collection photo.)





Hitchcocks had other homes. One was at Pāpa'ikou, five miles from Hilo, where Alme's father was a partner in a sugar plantation from 1862 to 1884.²⁴ Another home, shared with brother Edward, was on the slopes of Mauna Kea and named Puakala. This was a planter's retreat as well as a stopping place on the road to Waimea.²⁵ A home named "Booganville" was located above Hilo near Kaūmana caves on David's property.²⁶ Another home was 23 miles up the volcano road and called Pōhakuloa.²⁷ Alme spent time at all of these homes during her lifetime. Guest books indicate that she was frequently the cook and apparently good at the job.

A letter from Isabella C. Lyman of Hilo to her children, dated 25 October 1882, tells how Alme's father acquired a proper office building on Waiānue a few blocks toward the sea from his home (fig. 5). David's brother, Harvey Rexford Jr., had lived across the street.

Mr. Bohm has got a big job on his hands moving down that big house of Mr. Rexford Hitchcock for Mr. D. H. Hitchcock for an office to stand in the corner of the Catholic Church yard next to the Court House.²⁸

Alme had this to say about accompanying her father on his duties: "He would take me on the court circuits with him, until I began to wish for more knowledge of the law. . . ."²⁹

In the Puakala guest book on 15 November 1883, Alme wrote: ". . . arrived from Waimea yesterday at 11½ a.m. Camped at Hanaipoe Gulch. Shot three wild turkeys that P.M." They left on 19 November for Hale Aloha, a camp on the path to Hilo from Waimea.³⁰

LAW STUDENT

McKenney's Directory of 1884–1885 lists Alme as a law student at her father's home in Hilo. He is listed as attorney-at-law, notary public, and sugar planter.³¹

Sometime in 1884 Alme decided to study law in earnest. She met Cora A. Benneson, a graduate of the class of 1880 of the Law Department of The University of Michigan, who was then journeying around the world. Alme wrote of Miss Benneson:

She knew that I was in a law office, and of my liking for the law. While out riding one day, we commenced talking of the profession, when all of a sudden it flashed across my mind, the idea of going to a law school, and taking a full legal course. The matter was

FIG. 6. Almeda Eliza Hitchcock, Hilo, about 1886, before leaving for law school. (Hester Hitchcock Mattox photo.)

broached to father, and his consent was immediately gained. Catalogues of different schools were sent for, and much discussed. There was some hesitation between the University of California and that of Michigan. The latter was finally decided upon, and preparations were commenced for the two years' life away from home.³²

Her father was undoubtedly very pleased, as he had tried unsuccessfully to interest his oldest son in becoming a lawyer. At last he would have another lawyer in his family!

Before Alme left for law school she continued to help her father in his practice. The *Hawaiian Gazette* of 26 November 1884 had this to say about the cases they must have seen:

There was a very large list of criminal cases at the Waimea, Hawai'i term of court, and of the whole number there was but one conviction, and that when the culprit pleaded guilty. Horse stealers, liquor sellers, etc., all got free by the rulings, not of the Court—but of the Waimea Native Jury.

In almost every case in the Waimea Circuit Court before native juries, the verdict stood 10 to 2. So uniform was this verdict that curiosity was excited and questions asked and it proved that when the jury was unanimous, for or against, they returned their verdict 10 to 2 thinking it would look better.

Alme's last signature in the "Booganville" guest book is on Friday, 16 July 1886, when she and her brother David visited with guests from O'ahu.³³ Soon after this, Alme left Hilo for her journey to Michigan and further law studies (fig. 6).

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

How Alme reached Ann Arbor is still a mystery—she could have sailed around the horn to the East Coast as her parents and grandparents had done, she could have sailed on one of Mr. Matson's ships directly to San Francisco from Hilo, or she could have taken the inter-island vessel to Honolulu and then caught a ship for the West Coast. From there she could have traveled overland to Ann Arbor, visiting relatives in Iowa on the way.

Alme writes of law school:

The first year here was very hard—hard in the sense that I was a 'stranger in a strange land'. My legal sisters, in their senior year, took me into their circle of friendship and their kindness will never be forgotten. The life here at college has been all that one could ask for. My classmates have treated me with respect and kindness. Not an unpleasant thing has occurred in my college life. Whenever help was needed on knotty matters it was freely given.³⁴

Seven women attended lectures in the fall of 1886 at the Law Department of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Alme plunged right in and was active within this group. Martha K. Pearce, a lady lawyer wrote:

One morning during the first week of that semester, Mrs. Wilcox came to my rooms with the announcement that there were four new 'Lady Laws', and proposed that we, graduates and seniors, should give them a banquet. . . .³⁵

The banquet took place on 6 October 1886. It served to introduce the new students and is of interest because the ladies decided to form a local society which would give its members an opportunity to discuss questions arising out of their legal studies. The ladies chose the name "Equity Club," and their motto was "All the Allies of Each." Alme served as chairman of the executive committee in 1887. Members were to write an annual letter to the club, and these would be published in an annual for the membership. Fortunately for us today, Alme wrote four letters to the Equity Club, in 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890. These help us to visualize her life and times.

HAWAIIAN LAW

Alme wrote the following about Hawaiian Law to the Equity Club on 1 May 1887:

Thinking that it might interest you to hear of the origin of the Sandwich or Hawaiian Island laws and how matters in reference thereto are conducted, I will in a brief way, undertake to tell you of them.

The early history of the Hawaiian Islands is involved in great obscurity. The people had no written language, no records, no ideas of literature, and so far as appears, no tradition that their ancestors possessed any. In the place of history they had traditions, national songs, rude narratives of the succession of kings, wars etc.

Each island was governed by a king and these kings were at war constantly with one another. Finally one, Kamehameha by name, prevailed and he assumed control of the group. Up to his reign and through a greater part of it a system of rules, called the Tabu system, were in vogue. This system forbade women the pleasure of eating with their husbands. Various times, places and things were placed under Tabu, or declared to be sacred. To enforce the Tabu, highest penalty was annexed, and to punish women for jealousy was according to tradition, one of the objects of the Tabu. Claiming the right of soil throughout his realm, and using the privilege of a conqueror, Kamehameha wielded a despotism as absolute probably as the islands ever knew. To check the violence which existed in a disturbed country he interdicted murder, theft, and robbery.

It was deemed lawful and respectable for a chieftain to have as many wives as he could get, and to turn any of them off at pleasure, and supply their place by obtaining the wives and daughters of others. Kamehameha had not less than twenty, and his favorite was Kaahumanu. She helped in the overthrow of the Tabu previously mentioned. She outlived the King and was Queen regent for nine years. She embraced Christianity and was much beloved by all. The Missionaries arrived in 1820. The reign of Kamehameha was just previous to their arrival. In 1825 the ten commandments were adopted as a basis for a criminal code.

In 1827 a council of chiefs adopted a number of laws which were printed and promulgated, and these were the first regularly enacted laws. Penalties were imposed on theft, murder, adultery and bigamy. These laws were for the natives simply. In 1829 laws were adopted for foreigners as well as for natives.

From 1829 to 1838 no new laws were passed. The new Constitution and Bill of Rights were adopted October 8th, 1840.

The Legislative Department of this kingdom is composed of the King, the House of Nobles and the House of Representatives. The King appoints the members of the House of Nobles, who hold their seats during life, unless in case of resignation, subject, however, to punishment for disorderly behavior. The number of members does not exceed thirty. The House of Representatives is composed of not less than twenty four, or more than forty, members, and they are elected biennially by the people.

The English Common Law forms the basis of our law. In 1856 a Resolution was passed by the Legislature to provide for the codification and revision of the then existing laws (except the Penal code of 1854) which were defective in many particulars, and inconvenient of reference on account of their being scattered through many separate volumes, and from the numerous alterations which had been made in them from time to time. In pursuance of this resolution, the work of preparing the Civil Code was commenced, soon after the adjournment of the Legislature in 1856. The Code as now published, was finally passed by both houses on the second, and received the Royal assent on the seventeenth day of May, 1859.

In accordance with the Resolution certain men were appointed by the Minister of the Interior to compare the new Hawaiian Code with the English, assimilating the same as far as practicable. A perfect agreement was not effected, but the Code has been found satisfactory in all respects.

The Judicial power of the kingdom is vested in one Supreme Court and in such inferior courts as the Legislature may from time to time establish. The kingdom is divided into four judicial circuits.

There are at present no women practising law, but there are quite a number of practising Physicians. The popular feeling is for rather than against women in the professions. . . .³⁶

Alme knew her Hawaiian law and had now studied in the United States of America. She was admitted to the Bar on 27 December 1887 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Alme wrote:

The finale is drawing near when we, as a class will say farewell to our Alma Mater. A feeling of sadness, as well as joy, comes over me whenever I think of the end that is near. Joy that the terrible quizzes are nearly over, and sadness that college life is so nearly at an end.³⁷

During her two years in Ann Arbor, Alme met William Levi Moore. He was in the School of Medicine and graduated in 1890 and then taught at the school. Later he assumed an important role in Alme's life.

RETURN TO HAWAII

Alme finished her schooling in June 1888, and her mother journeyed from Hilo to be in Michigan for her graduation. Katie Dickson wrote to her sister Hessie on 9 June 1888: "I received Alme's commencement invitation—her name is under honors—she is class prophet."³⁸

Of her return to Honolulu Alme wrote her sisters-in-law of the Equity Club on 8 May 1889:

We had to wait there [Honolulu] three days to make connections with the Inter Island Steamer, and so in that time, with father's help, I was admitted to the Hawaiian Bar. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court admitted me on presentation of my license from the Michigan court. This was the first time the Court had been asked to admit a woman, and there was some controversy about letting me in, but finally a telephone message came for me to go to the Justice's office and get my license. The same day the office of Notary Public was given me.³⁹

Alme was fortunate to have her father's help, as many states in America did not recognize women lawyers at this time. Her father also made her a full partner in his law firm. Alme added in her letter her law sisters of 1889:

The Third Judicial Circuit was about to sit in Waimea, Hawaii, so instead of going directly to Hilo, we landed at Kawaihae, and rode twelve miles to the above named place and attended court. My first motion was made there and gained. The natives were all astonished to see a Wahine loio (woman lawyer), and the remarks as I passed by were often amusing. They did not realize that I understood their language.

The work here in Hilo has been very satisfactory so far. In a good many instances the party arrested has plead guilty, causing a good deal of merriment among the young men here, who say that I scare the poor fellows into the plea.

The Circuit Judges generally govern their circuit three times a year. The last circuit made by one was in March, and as we, that is the firm of 'Hitchcock and Hitchcock', had a little work in the out districts, it was decided that I should be the one to do it.

The only way to get around the Island is on horseback, and a journey of two hundred miles more or less was before me. I had three cases to try and hoped to pick up more on the way, but ere the journey was a quarter ended, a telephone message came from home, telling me to return as soon as my three cases were disposed of.

The Sheriff had to leave the town on urgent business, and I was called to take his place during his absence. The Sheriff is to our Island what the Governor is in one of your states, and as you can realize in a measure the position I held for five weeks. During the five weeks a bold burglary was committed, but as luck would have it we found the man and nearly all the money within four days.

At present the Circuit Court is here and the Chief Justice is presiding. This Court sits three times a year on this Island—in May, September, and November. One of the four Justices of the Supreme Court presides at every Circuit. The calendar this term is heavy with criminal cases, some of which are murder, manslaughter and assault with a deadly weapon. A wave of crime seemed to pass over this Island some months ago, and murders to the number of five were committed.⁴⁰

In a lighter vein Alme then tells her Sisters in Equity about Hawai'i's volcanoes. She would take little vacations and visit Kilauea volcano and the various homes of her father, alone or with friends or family. Among other diversions that helped Alme to enjoy life was the Hilo Literary & Musical Club. On 8 August 1889 she gave a reading for them.⁴¹ On occasion she would play the piano, sing, or act in skits. She continued to attend services in the First Foreign Church that her parents helped to establish.⁴²

On 13 January 1890, in the Puakala log book, a group that called themselves the “Hum Ha Party” signed in. Alme was the “tra’la’la” of the “H’m H’as.” Her brother Howard drew a picture in the log book of Alme in trousers and shooting a gun.⁴³

In March Alme acted in a pantomime along with other Hiloites for the Hilo Literary & Musical Club. The Hilo newsletter in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on 27 March 1890 reported: “Hilo people have some rich treats in these literary entertainments, which serve to break the monotony of life, and give great pleasure to all who attend them.”⁴⁴

On 28 August 1890, Alme wrote to her Sisters in Equity:

The third Judicial Circuit of the Supreme Court sits here in May and last term was of special interest, although I did not take any active part in it. Four men—Americans—were on trial for their lives. Father was employed for the prosecution and I was a reporter for one of the daily papers in Honolulu. There was a good bit of good-natured rivalry between the other reporter and myself to see who could get off the latest news to Honolulu. The telephone, made use of by me and not by the other reporter helped me to get in the latest accounts.

The business of the past year has been good and my success in many cases fairly good. As father has attended all of the circuits wherein we had business, my work has been here in Hilo entirely. Father’s being away has thrown me on my own resources more and it has been a good thing for me, for I found that I was getting to depend on him more and more and was doing little thinking for myself. Office work is more to my liking, but when father is away the cases that come up have to be tried, and after screwing up my courage to the sticking point I enter the court room ready for work. Two weeks ago I had a Liquor case to defend. My uncle [Edward Griffin Hitchcock] being the Prosecuting Attorney and a keen lawyer, made me feel anything but joyful when I took up the case, but after two days fight I came off victorious and went out of the court room feeling much better than when I entered.⁴⁵

Alme explained how hard the cases were to try, as Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and others were being tried. The interpreters never put a question exactly as asked, and Alme wished that she spoke more than Hawaiian and English. She then described the 6 August 1890 earthquake to her Sisters but urged them not to be deterred from visiting her beautiful islands.

The Hilo news column in the *PCA* of 8 December 1890 remarked: “The Tax Appeal Board for Hilo commenced its sitting yesterday, Mr. Hatch, assisted by ‘Hitchcock and Hitchcock’, appear for the plantations.”⁴⁶

On 5 May 1891 the paper reported that a number of arrests for opium possession and gambling had come before the Police Justice

FIG. 7 (left). McKenney’s Hawaiian Directory, 1892–1893, p. 304. (AH photo.)

FIG. 8 (right). Dr. William Levi Moore, about 1895. (AH photo.)

D. H. HITCHCOCK

MISS A. E. HITCHCOCK,

HITCHCOCK & HITCHCOCK,

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

AND NOTARIES PUBLIC.

Hilo,

Hawaii.

L. SEVERANCE,

Insurance Agent and Auctioneers

Agency Royal Insurance Co.

Hilo Agency, J. D. Spreckels & Bros.

 The only licensed Auctioneer in Hilo.

 **J. M. HERING,** 

Hilo, Hawaii.



Jeweler

I make a specialty of repairing all kinds of

Jewelry, Clocks and Watches

Also Setting Diamonds and making Kukui Ornaments.

Engraving Neatly Executed.

Orders Solicited and Promptly Executed. All work guaranteed to give Satisfaction. Hawaiian Curios on hand.





and that chicken thieves were rampant.⁴⁷ These must have been some of the cases that Alme was concerned with. Also in 1894 the *PCA* made special comment on floral decorations at the First Foreign Church for their Christmas entertainment. A large star made of white flowers all sewed on, which took over two hours to make, attracted much attention. It was made by Alme and her older sister Etta Loebenstein.⁴⁸

During this time of working with her father (fig. 7),⁴⁹ Alme evidently corresponded with Dr. William Levi Moore (fig. 8), for in May of 1893, five years since she had last seen him in Michigan, he arrived in Hilo. On 24 May 1893, at her parent's home, Alme married Will. Later a reception was given there for the young couple, and all of Hilo turned out to congratulate them.⁵⁰

In June 1893 Dr. Moore was granted a license to practice medicine in Hawai'i, and in August the Moores moved to Kohala where Dr. Moore had a temporary assignment as the government doctor, taking over for Dr. Benjamin Bond who was on leave.⁵¹ On Dr. Bond's return, Dr. Moore and Alme moved to the island of Kaua'i, where he substituted as government doctor for Dr. Jared K. Smith of Kōloa.⁵²

While Alme was away her father continued his law practice but missed her assistance. He hoped that she would be back to help with his case load of burglary, divorce, desertion, bankruptcy, and other areas of law.

By June 1894 the Moores were welcomed back to Hilo (fig. 9).⁵³ On 8 September Alme's father wrote from his home Pōhakuloa to his brother Edward:

I go down to try a week in Hilo and be there when Wilder [Gardiner K. Wilder] gets up as Alme has an attack of Billious fever and I'm feeling better, although I don't believe that I'm well enough to stop steadily at the office.⁵⁴

FIG. 9. The David H. Hitchcock family, about 1895. Back row, left to right: Alme's brother, Charles Henry Wetmore Hitchcock; Dr. William Levi Moore; Almada (Alme) Eliza Hitchcock Moore; brother-in-law Henry Schuler Townsend; sister Cora Etta Hitchcock Townsend, holding Sanford Dole Townsend; sister Ella Marian Hitchcock Loebenstein; nephew Albert Brown Loebenstein Jr.; brother-in-law Albert Brown Loebenstein Sr. Middle row, left to right: niece Etta May Loebenstein; father David Howard Hitchcock, Sr.; nephew David William Townsend; mother Almada Eliza Widger Hitchcock; niece Bertha Almada Loebenstein. Front row, left to right: David Howard Hitchcock Jr. (noted artist), seated on ground; niece Almada Elizabeth Townsend. Private collection photo.

On 14 September he continued on the same subject: "Came back a week ago as Alme was down sick with chills and fever and is not out of bed yet, though better."⁵⁵

By 25 September he wrote Edward: "Here Will, Alme and myself are rustivating while Wilder is running the shop."⁵⁶ On 30 September he continues: "I will have to stop at Pohakuola I think a good deal of my time and let Alme run the shop for me with Gardiner Wilder."⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Alme's health did not improve enough for her to run the shop for her father, and he had to rely on a series of partners.⁵⁸

Alme's health continued to decline, and on 9 May 1895, at the age of 32, Alme died in her parent's home in Hilo.⁵⁹ The *Hawaiian Gazette* of May 10 reported:

Just as the Kilauea Hou was leaving Hamakua on her last trip down, the sad news telephoned from Hilo that Mrs. Dr. W. L. Moore had just died. No particulars were telephoned, but it was known that she was suffering from a serious digestive trouble. Mrs. Moore was the youngest daughter of David H. Hitchcock, Esq. of Hilo, familiarly known to her wide circle of friends as Alme. She was possessed of many pleasant qualities, which made her an always welcome guest and her loss keenly felt. She received an education in the Law school of the University of Michigan and has shown an unusual aptitude for the profession. Hers was a life of bright promises.⁶⁰

Alme was buried in the Hitchcock family plot at Homelani cemetery in Hilo. Her mother joined her at Homelani five months later, when she died on 29 October 1895.⁶¹ After Alme's death her father had a series of law partners, the last of whom was Carl S. Smith, who joined him in June of 1898.⁶² David Hitchcock died at his Hilo home on 12 December 1899.⁶³

Dr. Moore's marriage to Alme lasted a brief three years. He continued to live in Hilo and on 20 December 1898 married Miss Nell M. Lowrey and moved to Honolulu. Another physician writing "In Memoriam" said that Dr. Moore was a man of more than usual ability but not an orthodox physician. He was an artist, poet, and very active in the community in many ways. Later in life, he seemed to have difficulty reconciling wider scientific beliefs, as in evolution, with his religious beliefs. However, he continued to practice medicine both for the government and in private practice. Will died on 22 October 1916 in Honolulu, leaving his wife Nell and three daughters.⁶⁴

For a female child of the late 1800s, Almeda Eliza Hitchcock accomplished a lot in her short lifetime. As Hawai'i's first lady lawyer, an early Notary Public, and the first lady law partner in Hawai'i, she left a legacy for women to follow, and many have.

NOTES

I wish to acknowledge the inspiration of Maile C. Williams of the Lyman House Memorial Museum (LHMM) for urging me to put Alme's life on paper. Suzanne E. Case, Elizabeth E. Larsen, and Jane Silverman gave me expert help with research.

The Libraries of LHMM, HMCS, HHS, AH, Hawai'i Medical Society, Hawai'i State Library, and Punahou, in Hawai'i, and the University of Michigan, Harvard Law School Library, and the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women at Radcliffe College, provided information not supplied by family letter collections.

Original spelling and punctuation have been kept in all direct quotations.

- ¹ Mrs. Edward Hitchcock Sr., *The Genealogy of the Hitchcock Family*, (Amherst, Mass.: Carpenter and Morehouse, 1894) 1-3.
- ² Mrs. Edward Hitchcock Sr., *Genealogy* 13.
- ³ *Missionary Album: Portraits and Biographical Sketches of the American Protestant Missionaries at the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: HMCS, 1969) 114-115.
- ⁴ *Missionary Album* 165.
- ⁵ *Missionary Album* 114-115.
- ⁶ David H. Hitchcock, letter to "My dear Root" (classmate Henry Root), 19 April 1898, *Williams College Class of 1856-Report 1898* (Whitehall, N.Y.: n.p., 1898) 21. The lawyer's name is not given, but it is possibly Hon. J.C. Farwell of Lāhainā.
- ⁷ George F. Nellist, *Women of Hawaii*, vol. 2 (Honolulu: Paradise of the Pacific, 1929) 115.
- ⁸ Mrs. L. C. Lyman, *The Ancestry and the Journal of Almeda Widger Hitchcock, ts.*, B-556, LHMM.
- ⁹ FO & Ex Broadside, Appointment for Hawai'i, 16 March 1856, AH.
- ¹⁰ Lyman, *Ancestry and Journal*, B-556, LHMM.
- ¹¹ *Grantee Index*, vol. 106, Island of Hawai'i, 1845-1869, book 12, Deeds: 408, AH.
- ¹² David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 16 Aug. 1858, author's letter collection.
- ¹³ Luther Severance, *Scrapbook, Men of Hawai'i Who Are Remembered*, B-1211: 60, LHMM.
- ¹⁴ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 16 Aug. 1858.
- ¹⁵ *The Holy Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1868), family record pages, Hester Hitchcock Mattox collection.
- ¹⁶ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 15 Jan. 1864.
- ¹⁷ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter to Dear Sisters in Equity, 30 April 1888 *The Equity Club Annual 1888* (Ann Arbor: 1888), Mary Earhart Dillon collection A68, folder 405-406 Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College; Horace W. Fuller, ed., *The Green Bag* (Boston: Boston Book, 1890) 19-20.
- ¹⁸ Mary Charlotte Alexander and Charlotte Peabody Dodge, *Punahou 1841-1941* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1941) 349-350.
- ¹⁹ Alexander and Dodge, *Punahou* 350.
- ²⁰ Mary Castle Hitchcock, letter to sister Harriet (Hattie) Castle, 15 June 1881, Hildreth Hitchcock Walker collection.
- ²¹ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual 1888*: 26.
- ²² Invitation, 13 March 1882, author's collection.
- ²³ Luther Severance, *Scrapbook 1877-1917*, B-173: 155, LHMM.
- ²⁴ Frederick Bagot, ed., *McKenney's Hawaiian Directory, 1880-1881* (San Francisco: Pacific Press, 1881) 416.

- ²⁵ David and Edward Hitchcock, Puakala Guest Book 1883-1896, private collection.
- ²⁶ Charles H. Hitchcock, LL.D., *Hawaii and Its Volcanoes* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette, 1911) 118-119.
- ²⁷ David Hitchcock, letter to his brother Edward, 8 Sept. 1894, private collection.
- ²⁸ Isabella C. Lyman, letter to her children, 25 Oct. 1882, LHMM.
- ²⁹ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual* 1888: 26.
- ³⁰ David and Edward Hitchcock, Puakala Guest Book 1883-1896, 15 Nov. 1883, private collection.
- ³¹ Frederick Bagot, ed., *McKenney's Hawaiian Directory 1884-1885* (San Francisco: Pacific Press, 1885) 276.
- ³² Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual* 1888: 26.
- ³³ David Hitchcock, Booganville guest book 1885-1889, Hester H. Mattox collection.
- ³⁴ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual* 1888: 26.
- ³⁵ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual* 1888: 4.
- ³⁶ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter to the Ladies of the Equity Club, 1 May 1887, A68, folder 405-406, Mary Earhart Dillon collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
- ³⁷ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter, 30 April 1888, *Equity Club Annual* 1888: 26.
- ³⁸ Kate Dickson, letter to her sister Hessie, 9 June 1888, Hester H. Mattox collection.
- ³⁹ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter to Dear Sisters-in-Law, 8 May 1889, A68, folder 405-406, Mary Earhart Dillon collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
- ⁴⁰ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter to Dear Sisters-in-Law, 8 May 1889.
- ⁴¹ Luther Severance, Scrapbook 1887-1917, B-173: 10, LHMM.
- ⁴² First Foreign Church records 1868, First Protestant Church, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- ⁴³ David and Edward Hitchcock, Puakala Guest Book 1883-1896, 13 Jan. 1890, private collection.
- ⁴⁴ Luther Severance, Scrapbook, B-173: 34, LHMM.
- ⁴⁵ Almeda E. Hitchcock, letter to the Ladies of the Equity Club, 28 Aug. 1890, A68, folder 405-406, Mary Earhart Dillon collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
- ⁴⁶ *PCA*, Hilo News, 8 Dec. 1890: 2.
- ⁴⁷ *PCA*, Hilo News, 5 May 1891: 3.
- ⁴⁸ Luther Severance, Scrapbook 1877-1917, B-173: 16, LHMM.
- ⁴⁹ Circuit Court of the Third Judicial Circuit, May term, AH.
- ⁵⁰ *PCA*, 19 June 1893: 6.
- ⁵¹ Luther Severance, Scrapbook, 17 Aug. 1893, B-173: 168, LHMM.
- ⁵² *HG*, 7 Nov. 1893: 9.
- ⁵³ Luther Severance Scrapbook 1877-1917, B-173: 228, LHMM.
- ⁵⁴ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 9 Sept. 1894, HMCS.
- ⁵⁵ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 14 Sept. 1894, HMCS.
- ⁵⁶ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 25 Sept. 1894, HMCS.
- ⁵⁷ David H. Hitchcock, letter to brother Edward, 30 Sept. 1894, HMCS.
- ⁵⁸ David H. Hitchcock's law partners were Almeda E. Hitchcock, Gardiner K. Wilder, William Seaburn Wise, and Carl Schurz Smith.
- ⁵⁹ HMCS Annual Report 1895: 24, HMCS; *PCA*, 2 Nov. 1895: 6.
- ⁶⁰ *HG*, 10 May 1895: 5.
- ⁶¹ *The Holy Bible*, family record pages.
- ⁶² *Hawaii Herald*, 16 June 1898: 1.
- ⁶³ *Hawaii Herald*, 14 Dec. 1898: 1.
- ⁶⁴ University of Michigan Alumni Records Office; In Memorium Scrapbook, vol. 5, Hawaii Medical Society Library; *HSB*, 21 Oct. 1916: 1.