

# THE ALOHA SHIRT

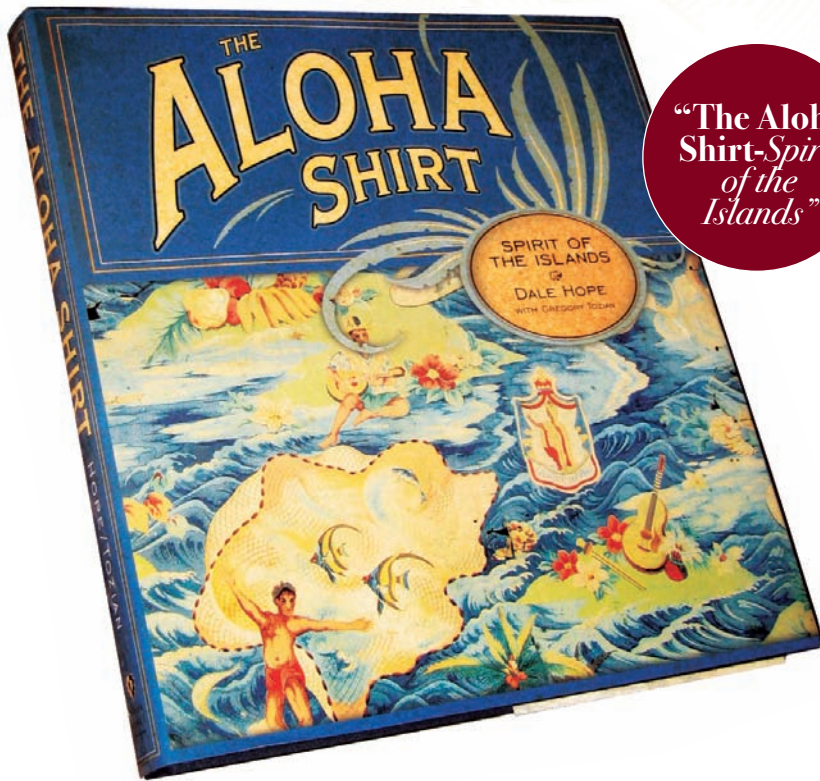
*Spirit of the Islands*

PROPOSAL FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM



REDHEAD ★ PRODUCTIONS





*“The Aloha Shirt-Spirit of the Islands”*

“If everyone wore Aloha Shirts, there would be no war....”  
Michael Goddard, author and reviewer



**THERE WAS NO AUTHENTIC HAWAIIAN MATERIAL** in those days, so I bought the most brilliant and gaudy Japanese kimono material, designed the shirts, and had a tailor make a few dozen, which I displayed with the sign “Hawaiian Shirts.”



**Ellery Chun of King-Smith Clothiers**

**B**ased on the vibrant and textured award-winning book by Dale Hope, **The Aloha Shirt: Spirit of the Islands** is a rich, storied collection about a unique time and place. This is the history of the Aloha Shirt, not only in Hawaii, but throughout universal culture, from its serendipitous and much debated creation, to its place today as an icon for the free and independent spirit in all of us. **The Aloha Shirt: Spirit of the Islands** evokes the mystery and allure of the Islands through the whimsical folk histories of the many people who brought Aloha Shirts to life, the celebration of the romance and beauty of Hawaii, as well as the stories told by the shirts themselves. The Aloha Shirt is the Ambassador of Aloha; it is the story of adventure and romance of Hawaii for the past seventy years. These colorful, magical shirts had supporting roles to play in the modern day history of the islands. During World War II, out of the darkness of Pearl Harbor, Aloha Shirts were the prized gifts servicemen brought home for their friends and families. They were worn by Presidents and royalty, and made famous by the biggest

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“Though I never made a lot of money, I felt very fulfilled. When I’d see somebody wearing the shirts I designed, that was the reward. A good Hawaiian print never loses its charm. And the people who have the shirts love them. It’s a love affair.”

-Louise Chun, fabric artist



**NAT NORFLEET OF BRANFLEET/KAHALA:** We copied some shirts made out of silk kimono cloth brought back from Japan; they were absolutely horrible but sold at a stand with coconut milk and pineapple juice, near a place frequented by Duke Kahanamoku and the Beachboys.



**Nat Norfleet of Branfleet/Kahala**

**M**ovie stars in Hollywood, from Montgomery Clift to Elvis Presley, and later, on network television by Tom Selleck. Just as the spirit of the hippie generation was defined by denim, the disco generation defined by its John Travolta white polyester suit, and the wild ride of the early 80’s by Bo Derek and her corn-row braids, the Aloha Shirt conveys a wealth of attitude. In the turbulent ‘60’s, they became a symbol for, if not a surfer’s life, then a surfer’s kick-back style. Today, the world is rediscovering that same sense of free spirit in the recent popularity of Hawaiian-inspired clothing lines.

Newspaper articles abound with stories of men and women around the world wearing Aloha attire to weekday meetings and by vacationers across the continents. Looking behind the scenes, the design and manufacture of Aloha Shirts was a fledgling industry, filled with hardship, sacrifice, and an unwavering belief in the special distinction of these shirts.

THE  
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**“Land of Aloha”**

The fascinating cast of characters in the Hawaiian garment industry during the “Golden Age” of the 1930’s to 1950’s pooled their talents and designs so much so that there has been a long-simmering debate as to who can take credit for designing the first Aloha Shirt. Either way, the early pioneers had no idea that they were setting the stage for an important part of Hawaii’s future economy, let alone a socio-cultural phenomenon. Today, collectors may pay up to \$5,000 for an authentic Aloha Shirt, and when the story is revealed as to how much thought, artistry, craftsmanship, and indeed, love, went into the making of these shirts, you will see why they command a high price. From the charm of the coconut buttons to the wild, fanciful colors, to the enchanting scenes of island life, the authentic Aloha Shirt can be considered a work of art in its ability to imitate life and elicit emotion.

“It seemed people everywhere wanted something to remind them of Hawaii. And manufacturers were only too happy to capture the enchantment of the Aloha spirit on shirts, and to ship them around the world.”



### **KOICHIRO MIYAMOTO OF MUSA-SHIYA:**

Using Miyamoto’s pidgin English, a copywriter began a series of clever, gently humorous ads, beginning in the 1920’s – Musa-Shiya beg to announce....natural consequence NEW SPRING SHIRT. Oh Happy Springtime. Feeling difference inside. Feeling very glad to do something but not work. Natural consequence NEW SPRING SHIRT.



**Koichiro Miyamoto of Musa-Shiya:**

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**“Hala”**

# Project Proposal

The Aloha Shirt: Spirit of the Islands

**DOCUMENTARY FILM:** 90mins

**FORMAT:** HD, with extensive archival elements. Music score comprised of original and pre-recorded Hawaiian music.

**DESIGN:** Vibrant, textured, multi-layered interview images, along with archival material. Re-creations of historical Hawaii scenes, as well as recreations of real-life inspiration for Aloha Shirt designs. Transitions between content sections to be woven or stamped, as if in fabric manufacture.

**The Aloha Shirt: Spirit of the Islands** is a story best told in first person interviews; from the perspective of an innovator, an artist, a designer, a manufacturer, a collector, a style maker, or a free spirit. It is their recollection or relationship with the Aloha Shirts themselves that drive the story. Woven throughout the film is the entertaining history, including the evolution of the Aloha Shirt industry, the impact of the Aloha Shirt in Hawaii and then around the world, as well as the undeniable way in which the Aloha Shirt captures the Spirit of the Islands.



## AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC,

Harold Onishi of Lauhala Sales Company became one of the more than 2,500 Japanese men who were accepted into the U.S. armed forces. The Japanese soldiers of the 442nd Regiment became one of the most decorated army units of the war, and an

Aloha shirt was later made to commemorate their heroism.



**442nd  
Regiment/  
WWII**

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# THE ALOHA SHIRT

*Spirit of the Islands*

## PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

*Dana Satler Hankins*

Hawai'i-based producer **Dana Hankins'** theatrical credits include Hollywood features Stakeout, Bird on a Wire, and Short Circuit, as well as the critically acclaimed independent release, Picture Bride. Hankins' documentary work includes a stint at National Geographic Television, as well as production credits on projects for the History Channel and Discovery/The Learning Channel. Hankins' formed Redhead Prods. in 2001, completing three short festival films and numerous international, national and local television commercials

on Hawaii's beautiful beaches. Dana's favorite aloha shirt is "Do the Hula" because it makes her want to dance.



## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/WRITER

*Dale Hope*

**Dale Hope** grew up running between school, surfing, and his father's garment manufacturing business, choosing the aloha shirt division as his own when he later joined the company. His warm memories of the people involved in the early days of the industry led him to write and design THE ALOHA SHIRT: SPIRIT OF THE ISLANDS. Dale Hope started the HRH line of shirts, reintroduced the brand Kahala into the market, created the Hawaiian Style line, and currently works with Patagonia, art directing textile designs for their Pataloha division. Widely recognized as an authority on aloha shirts, he consults with curators and historians around the world. Dale says he has too many favorite shirts to name just one. "Aloha shirts are like old friends. You want to keep and cherish them, along with the memories that go with them."



## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

*Georgette Deemer*

**Georgette Deemer** has worked in the film, television and communications industries for thirty years, most notably as the director of the Hawaii Film Office for fifteen years, and overseeing the development of the Hawaii Film Studio for the State of Hawaii. Previously, Deemer was senior director of public affairs for a local public relations agency, specializing in government affairs, issues management and crisis communications. She is now the Director of Communications for the Hawaii State House of Representatives. Georgette's favorite aloha shirt designs are the Polynesian inspired pareu and the traditional palaka plaids.



"DO THE HULA"



"HAWAII CALLS"



"HAWAIIAN LEI"