

Purveyors of Clever Amusement

Diane O'Dwyer

The Great Caruso held operatic audiences enthralled. Douglas Fairbanks swashbuckled in neighborhood movie houses. Witty Dorothy Rothschild was yet to be acclaimed as Dorothy Parker, and the Divine Sarah Bernhardt was in her seventy-first year.¹

Although Lucius E. Pinkham, an appointee of Woodrow Wilson, was serving as fourth Territorial Governor of the United States Territory of Hawaii, the presence of Queen Liliuokalani, Hawaii's last monarch, emanated from her residence at Washington Place. She was in her late seventies. The year was 1915.

On April 28th of that year the first public performance of the Footlights club was given in the old Hawaiian Opera House² across from Iolani Palace, where the Federal Building now stands. The play was Pinero's farce "The Amazons." A yellowed newspaper clipping of the day notes that the cast of clever amateurs, all drawn from "Kamaaina" society, included Miss Helen Alexander, Mr. William Lewers and Mr. Gerrit Wilder.³

The Footlights had been formed by a nucleus group of Mrs. Alfred Castle, Mrs. Fred Waterhouse and Miss Helen Alexander, who all had a deep interest in the study of dramatics and a need for an outlet of expression. Asked to join them was Mrs. Francis R. Day, a past President of the Honolulu Dramatic Club, who had been a student of Professor George Pierce Baker's famous drama workshop at Harvard.⁴ Mrs. Day's husband, a physician, had been attached to the quarantine station in Honolulu.⁵

The Footlights was, however, by no means the first attempt to bring public entertainment to Honolulu. Legend tells us that before the arrival of the missionaries the natives of the Sandwich Islands were entertaining themselves with masques, pageants and charades.⁶ Before the turn of the century, entertainment in Honolulu ranged from circuses to cantatas. Crews of vessels stopping at the port of Honolulu gave performances more than once inter-

Diane O'Dwyer is a free lance writer. This paper won first prize in the 1975 National League of American Pen Women, Honolulu Branch, competition in Hawaiian history.

rupted by a sudden departure. From the 1890's on, music hall, vaudeville and resident and touring stock were popular. Queen Liliuokalani's great love was music. An account of a performance of "Rigoletto" given in March 1891 includes the fact that she "and her party occupied the royal box and most of Honolulu society appeared in full evening dress." There had even been an abortive attempt to feature the Divine Sarah herself in a special Honolulu appearance.⁷

There had been earlier amateur groups dedicated to theater. The Honolulu Dramatic Club performed "HMS Pinafore" in 1881. Among the performers were Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Harnden, grandparents of Kinau Wilder (later an active participant in the theater in Honolulu). In 1912 the Lanai Players, an offshoot of the Kilohana Art League, used the Lanai Theatre which stood where the Richards Street YWCA is today. Mrs. Alfred Castle had been President of the Lanai Players.⁸

The exact antecedents of the Footlights are not entirely clear, but it is fact that the group's first public performance was "The Amazons" and that 1915 was the date of incorporation. A newspaper article of 1921 claims that the Footlights was then "the only organization of its kind in Honolulu." Certainly Mrs. Castle and Mrs. Day had some prior theatrical experience. Others joined, or were invited to join, the small group of drama devotees. Especially important was the fact that "they had enlisted in their aid William Lewers, whose years of stage experience have since the first been generously devoted to the benefit of the Footlights."⁹ Returning to the newspaper review of "The Amazons," we find one notable exception to the "clever amateurs." "Mr. Lewers is a veteran actor with a metropolitan reputation."¹⁰ Lewers had been a professional actor on the New York stage. The date of his return to Honolulu is unknown, but since he had been of help "since the first" it is not unlikely that his influence may have been significant in the formation of the new dramatic organization.

The year 1915 was of particular importance in the history of American drama. Commercial theatre was at a low ebb. In Europe the modernization of the theater had already begun at the end of the 1880's with the "Théâtre Libre" in Paris. The movement reached the "Freie Bühne" in Berlin and, finally, the Moscow Art Theatre, and the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. In America the new theatrical movement was first felt in 1915.¹¹ Professor Baker's students at Harvard were already trying experimental staging as well as writing plays. The Washington Square Players, the Neighborhood Playhouse, and The Provincetown were founded. In cities other than New York, there were The Chicago Little Theater, the Vagabonds of Baltimore, and Sam Hume's theater in Detroit. Whatever their individual genesis, whether in revolt against commercial theater, or seeking a form of self-expression that legitimate stage did not satisfy, they all had one thing in common, they were in earnest.¹²

The Footlights' program for their initial season in 1915-1916 was as serious an undertaking as any. Two meetings per month were scheduled on the second and third Mondays. Each month, with the exception of April (which was set aside for the public presentation of the annual play), was

assigned a theme. Mrs. W. F. Frear, sister of Walter F. Dillingham, and wife of a past Territorial Governor, read her paper "An Introduction to Maeterlinck" at one meeting. It was followed at the next by a reading of Maeterlinck's "Sister Beatrice."¹³ The Footlights were entirely *au courant*; the short plays of Maeterlinck were standard fare for art theaters on the Continent. At the same time, the one-act was the accepted form for little theaters throughout the country.¹⁴ The Footlights 1915-1916 activities also included private discussions of Anatole France, Rabindranath Tagore, Russian Drama and a reading of Anton Tchekoff's "The Seagull."¹⁵

Honolulu dailies were full of the doings of society. Old newspaper photographs enable us to picture a composite Footlighter: bobbed and waved hair covered with a dramatic hat, neck draped with pearls, dressed in *crêpe de chine* or *georgette*, feet fashionably shod in kid slippers. Club members motored from homes in Manoa, Nuuanu and Makiki to 10:00 A.M. meetings at the University Club.¹⁶

Club members practiced all the serious customs of dress of the war years. They were, after all, the products of strict Victorian upbringing; but far-reaching influences were beginning to be felt in America¹⁷ and in Hawaii.

The 1915-1916 constitution of the Footlights states that its purpose was "the study of the drams." The by-laws limited the membership to 25 active members who paid \$2.00 annual dues and to 50 associate members who paid \$3.00. Only active members, limited to those who actually took part in the readings and plays, were given a vote. That provision may sound exclusionary but its practicality cannot be faulted. A similar policy was practiced by The Provincetown.¹⁸

Although old values were crumbling and new movements beginning to be felt in the arts, the Footlights presented tableaux from Omar Khayam for a dinner dance at the University Club on February 16, 1916.¹⁹ The program suggests drawing-room "divertissement" rather than radical experimentation with new theatrical forms, but the choice of romantic and mystical subject matter is of interest. The Footlights' collective social conscience and support of the performing arts was demonstrated by their aid to an itinerant opera company.²⁰

The Shakespearean Tercentenary in 1916 was celebrated by the Footlights with a presentation of "The Taming of the Shrew" directed by Will Lewers at the opera house. Lewers was not eligible for active or associate membership in the Footlights. He was male and, at this time, membership in the Footlights was limited to women. As circumstances, and wives demanded, husbands and male friends were pressed into service in various roles.

In the fall of 1916, Bishop Hall at Punahou was the scene of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" directed by Mrs. Fred Ohrt²¹ and the ubiquitous Mr. Lewers. An account of the Wilde production claims that it "very successfully upheld the reputation long before gained by the club as a purveyor of clever amusement."²² No matter what the histrionic abilities of the Footlights actually were, "The Importance of Being Earnest" is one of

the wittiest farces ever punned; its display of verbal virtuosity allows it to stand on its own merits.²³

In the winter of 1917-1918 the club gave benefit performances for the benefit of the Red Cross war work. Possibly they were encouraged by Gerrit Wilder, as this early participant in "The Amazons" was Field Director of the Red Cross in 1918.²⁴ A group of one-act plays was given at the Lanai Theater. Included were "Eugenically Speaking" by Jules Eckert Goodman, one of the top playwrights of the day; "The Twelve-Pound Look" by Sir James Barrie; and "About Women" by Fanny Heaslip Lee. Known in Honolulu as Mrs. Hamilton P. Agee, Fanny Heaslip Lee was, at thirty-two, an active Footlights playwright and actress who became a well-known popular fiction writer for women's magazines. A later play of hers opened in New York in 1929.²⁵

The Footlights was fulfilling one of the important objectives of any little theater group—providing a showcase for original plays. Fanny Heaslip Lee wrote "Mariana," another one-act play in which she starred with Will Lewers in 1918. The same season Mrs. Alfred Castle²⁶ wrote "The King," described by a Footlights member as a "clever sketch of the more subtle sort . . . besides its interesting lines, it had a picturesque medieval stage setting."²⁷

George Bernard Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion" was the Footlights hit of 1919. Mrs. Fred Ohrt directed and Will Lewers starred as Caesar. "Brilliant in satire, replete with comedy situations and exceptionally well staged and acted, 'Androcles and the Lion' would have stood the test required of professionals," said the *Advertiser*.²⁸ Meanwhile, on the New York stage Helen Hayes was appearing as Margaret in "Dear Brutus."

In 1920 Edna St. Vincent Millay was the name on the lips of the literary cognoscenti, Mary Garden and Geraldine Farrar were the divas supreme, Pavlova was wowing them in Paris and Monaco, and Lionel Barrymore's profile caused feminine palpitations. President Wilson was ending his second term in the White House and Charles J. McCarthy was the fifth Territorial Governor of Hawaii.

For the Footlights, 1920 was a mixed year. "The Other Girl," a comedy, was produced in May. Dues rose to \$5.00 a year for both active and associate members and the total membership was 66: 6 honorary members, 31 active, 13 associate and 16 men. President that year was Mrs. A. G. Hawes. Fanny Heaslip Lee Agee was Vice President. The apparently slow year was, however, a milestone. The club was put on "an equal suffrage basis."²⁹

The 1920-1921 season began with ambitious plans to present a monthly play at the University Club. The productions were to be workshop plays "undertaken in order to give the club members a wider experience in directing and staging plays and also a wider latitude in the choice of plays to be given." The workshop plays were "Pierre Patelin," a 13th century French farce, "The Monkey's Paw," "A Night at an Inn," and "Suppressed Desires."³⁰

"Suppressed Desires" by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook was a minor landmark in the history of American theater. It was written by two of the founding Provincetown group and had been performed by them in the first year of their existence in 1915 in a "deserted old fish house on a wharf."³¹

It was one of the first authentic products of the little theater movement in this country. A satirical treatment of psychoanalysis, "Suppressed Desires" was a significant play produced both by the Provincetown and the Footlights.

The public performance of the club's 1920-1921 season was an evening of Barrie plays given in March at the Bijou: "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," "Rosalind," and "A Well-remembered Voice." The plays had been previously produced in both New York and London. Rehearsals of the Footlights' Barrie productions were directed by club members who had actually seen the plays performed on the Continent.³²

Ben Hecht's fantasy, "The Wonder Hat" was presented June 1, 1922. It was the final workshop play of that season. Given at the University Club, it was preceded by dinner and followed by dancing. One of the featured actresses was Fanny Agee.³³

A newspaper photograph of the versatile Fanny suggests that there was mischief in her dark eyes. "The Wonder Hat" was termed "a novel entertainment" by a reviewer.³⁴ Also novel had been the earlier May 6 performance of "The Lady of the Weeping Willows" given in Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham's Japanese Garden on Diamond Head Road, Waikiki.³⁵

In spite of the equal suffrage resolution of the Footlights, it was not until the annual meeting May 3, 1923, that Will Lewers was elected President. The honor was long overdue. Lewers directed the first play as well as many subsequent ones; he starred in several productions and gave frequent readings at private homes of club members. Since 1918 he had taught a "diction class" so that the group might learn "the placing of the voice, the quality and depth."³⁶ His class evolved to include instruction in make-up and stagecraft and the workshop play program, begun in 1920, was a result of his early efforts.

The 1923 annual meeting of the Footlights was held at Mrs. Philip Spalding's residence at 932 Beretania St. The need for a little theater as an actual physical entity was discussed, as was the need for "an art center where as many organizations as possible could find room for expression along their own lines." The 1923-1924 season saw proceeds from public performances earmarked for a little theater drive.³⁷

Another indication of the direction in which the Footlights was moving was that by 1923 Christian names appeared on the playbills;³⁸ and notices of Footlights meetings, once professionally printed, now appeared on typed postcards.³⁹

As the first decade of the club was ending, it finally obtained, if not a little theater, at least a private clubhouse: "Ainahau," the old Robert Louis Stevenson cottage on Kalakaua Avenue at Sans Souci Beach. Mrs. Charles Hartwell and Mrs. Atherton Richards had made possible its use. "Ainahau" had ample studio space and a romantic atmosphere. "It is felt that the atmosphere of such an historic place will prove a stimulant to greater effort."⁴⁰ The new clubhouse was the scene of workshop plays and readings.

The last public play of 1925 was "Dulcey," a comedy by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly.⁴¹ The public may have considered the Footlights to be

"purveyors of clever amusement" as their public performances would seem to indicate. Privately, however, the club's choices were more substantial. "Desire Under the Elms" had been the first private reading of 1925, given for members only, by Will Lewers. It had just been produced for the first time in 1924 by the Provincetown in Greenwich Village, New York.⁴²

The Footlights ended their first decade with a New Year's Eve supper dance at "Ainahau." Over 200 couples in "party gowns and tuxedos" danced to the music of Dude Miller. Charleston and tango contests were held while colorful lanterns bobbed in the Waikiki tradewinds. The *Star-Bulletin* called the event "gorgeous."⁴³

The Footlights were indefatigable. They continued and expanded their original program of private readings and public performances. They were actively committed to establishing a little theater, bringing to Honolulu an important development in modern theater. The fact that the original members of the Footlights came from the same stratum of society contributed greatly to the club's early cohesion and consequent success.

Early in its second decade the Footlights used temporary headquarters on Kinau Street, ewa of Keeaumoku, for meetings and rehearsals.⁴⁴ The search for a permanent home continued. In May 1927, a committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. James Judd, wife of a prominent surgeon descended from the famous missionary family, was formed to raise funds to build a small theater.⁴⁵

Another option that was considered was to share facilities with the new Honolulu Academy of Arts. Just four years earlier, at the Footlights annual meeting at the home of Mrs. Philip Spalding, there had been, as noted earlier, a discussion of the city's need for an inclusive arts center. It is not known how Mrs. Spalding, benefactress of the Academy of Arts, may have felt about the Footlights proposal for a cooperative theater venture, but the Academy trustees rejected it.

The letter of June 7th from the Footlights Building Committee was read at the meeting of the Board of Trustees held yesterday, June 24. (1928)

I was directed to write you that since we are still in the experimental stage, with increasing demands upon the building and staff, and with growing complexities arising out of the adjustments of times of opening, and of obviating legal complications in regard to charges, the trustees do not see their way to arranging any cooperative scheme at present.

(signed) Catharine E. B. Cox, Director⁴⁶

Finally, by arrangement with the Dillingham family and Punahou School, the Footlights were able to present their public performances in Dillingham Hall when its construction was completed in 1929.

Dillingham Hall is a gift to Punahou Schools by Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Dillingham and augmented by their children (Mary Dillingham Frear, Marion Dillingham Erdman, Walter F. Dillingham and Harold G. Dillingham). It is a great honor that Mrs. Frear is our president and Mrs. Harold G. Dillingham the chairman of our new house committee at this time.⁴⁷

The Footlights presented the English comedy-drama "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" in Dillingham Hall, April 1929, as part of the auditorium's formal dedication. Mrs. Martha Steadman played the title role. Her husband, Alva E. Steadman, distinguished himself the same year by his appointment as Judge of the Land Court. Others in the cast of "Mrs. Cheyney" included Mary Dillingham Frear and Earl Thacker.⁴⁸

Although the players now had a place to perform, other serious problems existed. Adequate technical expertise was not available within the club membership to permit its functioning as "an independent producing group." In 1930, Gregg M. Sinclair, Footlights President, and University of Hawaii instructor in English, arranged for an extension course in theatrical production at the University especially for club members.⁴⁹ Although the Footlights was a closely knit group, it is interesting to observe that Sinclair was elected president shortly after coming to Honolulu as a member of the University faculty in 1928. Fourteen years after his arrival, in 1942, he would become President of the University.

The Footlights continued to function, producing plays and readings in the early thirties, but it also felt the need for the services of an experienced full-time director having a comprehensive knowledge of theater. At the same time, the Footlights realized its financial inability to guarantee the salary of a professional. The group's continuing commitment to theater, and to itself, led to a solution which has kept participatory theater in Honolulu alive to the present day.⁵⁰

In 1934 the still essentially private club decided to reorganize as a Honolulu community theater. Nearly fifty community leaders were interested in the project, with each pledging \$100 to underwrite the costs. In December 1934, the *Advertiser* announced:

A worthy Christmas gift to Honolulu presented by a group of enthusiastic and enterprising men and women is the newly organized Community Theatre, which fills a long-felt need in this city.

The Community Theatre is a reorganization of the Footlights on a broader and more communal basis. The annual meeting of the Footlights was held in June, and members voted unanimously that a committee on reorganization be appointed. Harvey Hitchcock, then president of the club, appointed a committee, which held several meetings during the summer. A large deficit fund, to meet whatever expenses may occur in the reorganization work, was raised.⁵¹

The *Advertiser* further supported the community theater with an editorial, remarking upon the infrequency of Pan-Pacific theatrical tours and adding, "Whatever plays we see, then, we must produce ourselves." An even more important aspect of a community theater, the paper continued, is "the opportunity it offers to those who wish to act."⁵²

From the Footlights point of view, "a new group representative in every possible way of the community would produce more and better plays," and, "... with every citizen of Honolulu a possible actor or actress or worker back- or front-stage the director would have a free hand and excellent support."⁵³

The first production of the Honolulu Community Theatre, also sponsored by the Morning Music Club, was ambitious, "The Mikado." In New York and other Mainland cities, the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan were enjoying enthusiastic revivals due to the tour of London's D'Oyley Carte Opera Co. It was said, "If a New York public can go wild over the opera's ["The Mikado"] revival, it is more than likely Hawaii's cosmopolitan people will at least be mildly anxious."⁵⁴

"The Mikado," presented in March 1935, starred composer R. Alexander Anderson as Koko and his wife, Peggy Center Anderson, as Yum-Yum. Both were Honolulu born of Island families. McKinley High School Auditorium was the scene of an extravagant public production directed by Elroy Fulmer, dramatic director of Punahou. Thirty-five Honolulu Symphony musicians contributed their talents under the musical direction of Fritz Hart, Symphony director. To insure authenticity, Mr. and Mrs. Hisamatsu, Japanese stage actors, acted as consultants on make-up, costumes and Japanese stage technique. The production brought to Honolulu a new experience for many " . . . here is something we should not see unless we produced it locally."⁵⁵ It was also a financial success.⁵⁶

From its beginnings as the Footlights, the Honolulu Community Theatre has gone on to gain stature as the second oldest continuing community theater in the United States. It provides an outlet of dramatic expression for the entire community, attracting participants from all walks of life as well as several descendants of the Footlights. It has also served as a showcase for the professional and preprofessional talents of many, and it has produced several plays by Island authors.

With the 1975-76 season, the Honolulu Community Theatre celebrates its 60th anniversary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank the Honolulu Community Theatre and Mr. Norman Wright, historian, for permitting access to the Footlights' scrapbooks and to correspondence and data compiled by Mr. Wright. It should be noted that the Footlights' scrapbook, circa 1915-1925, was the principal resource for this paper. The scrapbook includes newspaper clippings, agendas, membership rosters, notices, and playbills.

The Footlights first came to the author's attention in an interview with Newell L. Tarrant, Artistic Director of the Honolulu Community Theatre in the spring of 1974. The competition sponsored by the Honolulu Branch of the National League of American Pen Women provided the impetus to research and to develop the subject.

Appendix A

LOCATIONS OF FOOTLIGHTS PERFORMANCES

Public Buildings

1915-1916	Opera House (King & Richards Sts.)
1916-1930	The University Club (King & Richards Sts.)
1916-1929	Bishop Hall, Punahou
1917-1918	Lanai Theater (Alakea Street)
1920-1923	Mission Memorial Hall (King Street)
1920	Wilcox Hall, Mills College (now Mid-Pacific Institute)
1923-1928	Scottish Rite Cathedral (Wilder and Kewalo)
1925-1926	"Ainahau," Sans Souci (Waikiki)

Private Homes (Meetings and Readings)

1917	Mrs. Adams
1920, 1922, 1928	Mrs. F. M. Swanzy
1920, 1922, 1923	Mrs. Richard A. Cooke
1920, 1921	Mrs. A. Lewis, Jr.
1921	Mrs. Harry von Holt
1921, 1923	Mrs. Philip Spalding
1921	Mrs. J. W. Waldron
1922, 1927	Mrs. A. W. I. Bottomley
1923, 1927, 1928	Mrs. Walter F. Frear
1922	Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham

Appendix B

CAST OF THE FOOTLIGHTS FIRST PRODUCTION

"The Amazons" by Pinero

Rev. Roger Minchin	Mr. George Potter
Yonatt, a servant	Mr. Gerrit Wilder
Miriam, Marchioness of Castejordan	Miss Helen Alexander
Lady Wilhemina Belturbet	Miss Margaret Center
Lady Thomasin Belturbet	Miss Evelyn Cunningham
Lady Noeline Belturbet	Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham
"Sergeant" Shuter	Mrs. G. B. Cooper
Andre, Count de Grival	Mr. L. Y. Correthers
Gasfred, Earl of Tweenways	Mr. William Lewers
Barrington, Viscount Litterly	Mr. James Haines
Fitton, A Gamekeeper	Captain Cutts
Orts, A Poacher	Mr. R. E. Lambert

Appendix C

ORGANIZATION OF THE FOOTLIGHTS (1915)

Officers

President	Mrs. F. R. Day
Vice President	Mrs. C. B. Cooper
Secretary	Mrs. James Judd
Treasurer	Miss Helen Alexander

Standing Committees

Executive Committee	Mrs. Frank Armstrong, Chairman
Plays Committee	Mrs. Alfred Castle, Chairman
Publicity Committee	Mrs. Ferdinand Hedeman, Chairman

Membership

Active Members	23
Associate Members	40
Honorary Members	3

Appendix D

CAST OF "THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY"

by Frederick Lonsdale

Presented by the Footlights upon the dedication of Dillingham Hall, April 26-27, 1929, under the direction of Frank A. Deroin; Assistant to the Director, Anita Hagood; and stage manager, Murray Johnson.

Charles—a Butler	Russel Price
George—a Page Boy	Herbet Wood
William—a Footman	L. E. Miller
Lady Joan Houghton	Marjorie Wood
Lady Mary Sindlay	Annie May Young
Willie Wynton	Earl Thacker
Lady Maria Frinton	Mary Dillingham Frear
Mrs. Wynton	Helen Gaylord
Lord Arthur Dilling	Rufus H. Hagood
Lord Elton	David W. Anderson
Mrs. Cheyney	Martha Steadman
Mrs. Ebley	Mary White
Jim—a chauffeur	Frank Spelvin
Roberts—a Butler	Francis Ross, Jr.

NOTES

- ¹ Cleveland Amory and Frederick Bradlee, *Vanity Fair: A Cavalcade of the 1920's and 1930's* (New York, 1960) used as a general source for the mood of the period prior to 1925.
- ² Louise MacMillan, "Seven Years Behind the Footlights," PCA, May 15, 1921. (Article preserved in the Footlights scrapbook in collection of the Honolulu Community Theatre). (HCT) cf. Appendix A for locations of Footlights performances.
- ³ A newspaper clipping, from PCA, April 29, 1915, preserved in the Footlights scrapbook called it "strictly an English farce, with lords and ladies, game keepers and poachers, tea in the park and prize Herefords in the paddock." The same article adds: "Cleverly acted, exceptionally well staged and before a house which called for the SRO signs, 'The Amazons' appeared last night at the Opera House with an all-star cast picked from amongst Honolulu's cleverest amateurs." cf. Appendix B for cast of this production.
- ⁴ MacMillan, "Seven years." cf. Appendix C for officers of the Footlights (1915).
- ⁵ Opinion of Norman Wright, HCT historian.
- ⁶ Anonymous, an untitled short outline of theater in Hawaii, in collection of HCT.
- ⁷ Helen Topham, "A History of the Theater in Hawaii: 1891-1900," p. 7. (MA Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1950.)
- ⁸ Wright, noted in HCT files.
- ⁹ MacMillan, "Seven Years."
- ¹⁰ PCA, April 29, 1915. (Clippings in Footlights scrapbook.)
- ¹¹ Harlan Hatcher, editor, *Modern Dramas* (New York, 1948), p. 5.
- ¹² Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau, *The Provincetown* (New York, 1931), p. 5.
- ¹³ Footlights agenda, 1915-1916, preserved in scrapbook.
- ¹⁴ Deutsch, *The Provincetown*, p. 26-27.
- ¹⁵ Footlights agenda circa 1915.
- ¹⁶ Early Footlights membership rosters preserved in scrapbook give several members' addresses on Oahu Ave., Punahou St., Nuuanu Ave., etc. The University Club, located at Hotel and Richards Streets, merged with the Pacific Club in 1930. Dr. Day was one of the early presidents of the University Club.
Biographies of prominent Honolulu men contain references to University Club memberships. (*Centennial Memoirs of the Pacific Club in Honolulu*, by Ben Hyams and E. Curtis Cluff (Honolulu, 1951), pp. 58-61, 68; *Men of Hawaii*, ed. by J. W. Siddall (Honolulu, 1921).
- ¹⁷ "The Little Review" was printing 'Ulysses' in installments. Gertrude Stein had discovered a new language—"The New Republic" was in the first flush of its youth, Stieglitz was making magic with the camera. The International Exhibition had brought modern art to America. . . ." (Deutsch, p. 5.)
- ¹⁸ Footlights constitution, 1915-1916, preserved in scrapbook; Deutsch, p. 38.
- ¹⁹ MacMillan, "Seven years."
- ²⁰ "About this time (1916) the De Folco company of operatic singers became stranded in Honolulu, due to the town's lack of interest in the opera season given by them. For awhile it looked as if stout sopranos, plump tenors and imposing basses were about to do a little involuntary fasting, but the Footlights came to the rescue.
"A 'cash performance' for which all tickets had to be paid in cash to a representative of the club, was arranged and through its success the singers were paid their salaries and enabled to return home. The opera given for the benefit performance was 'Thais' and it was the last opera to be given in the historic old opera house, now demolished." (MacMillan)

- ²¹ The biographical sketch of Mrs. Ohrt's husband in *Men of Hawaii* includes the facts that he was a civil engineer born in Maui, a Cornell graduate and a member of the Territorial Board of Health. Later he was the head of the Board of Water Supply for many years.
- ²² HCT scrapbook.
- ²³ ALGERNON: All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.
 JACK: Is that clever?
 ALGERNON: It is perfectly phrased! And quite as true as any observation in civilized life should be.
 JACK: I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever now-a-days. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.
 ALGERNON: We have.
 JACK: I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?
 ALGERNON: The fools? Oh! About the clever people, of course.
 JACK: What fools!
 (Oscar Wilde, "The Importance of Being Earnest," in *Plays from the Modern Theatre*, ed. by Harrison Steeves, New York, 1931) p. 201.
- ²⁴ *Men of Hawaii*, 1921.
- ²⁵ Norman Wright has corresponded with Mrs. Agee's daughter (Mrs. Joe Warren Stryker of Alexandria, Virginia), who calls her mother's plays "drawing-room comedy." "Lolly" opened in New York in 1929 in an off-Broadway theater. Among the first-nighters were Arlene Francis and Theodore Geisel, later known as Dr. Seuss. The crash caused the play to close after a short run.
- ²⁶ Mrs. Castle, member of the kamaaina Schaefer-Robertson families, and a graduate of Bryn Mawr College, was the wife of Attorney Alfred Lowrey Castle. Mrs. Castle served three terms as Footlights President. She was a well-known patroness of the arts and her collection of rare books was one of the finest in Honolulu. She designed the setting for "The Amazons" in 1915 and appeared in "Earnest" in 1916.
- ²⁷ Newspaper clipping circa 1918, preserved in scrapbook.
- ²⁸ Anonymous article, PCA, ca. 1919, preserved in scrapbook.
- ²⁹ Scrapbook data. "The Constitution says that 'the purpose of the Club is the drama,' and until last year the 'students' were limited to women, such men as were needed being invited to participate in the plays. But feeling, perhaps, that life and drama were too much akin to permit of such discrimination, we put the organization on an equal suffrage basis in October 1920. At the same time, a program for the winter was evolved. . . . We borrowed the 'Workshop' idea developed by Professor Baker at Harvard. (Report by Rosamund S. Morgan preserved in Footlights scrapbook.)
- ³⁰ MacMillan.
- ³¹ Deutsch, *The Provincetown*, p. 7. Deutsch remarks: "'Suppressed Desires' was not just an amusing comedy; it was a keen satire on a viewpoint then coming into exaggerated vogue. It speaks well for the group (The Provincetown) that at a time when psychoanalysis was being taken up seriously by every housewife and professor, they should have been able to poke good fun at it." The same may be said of the Footlights' production.
- ³² MacMillan.
- ³³ Article, scrapbook, circa 1922; "Those who remember Mrs. Agee's remarkable performance as the mother in 'The Monkey's Paw' will be interested to see her as 'Columbine,' a role one would more readily associate with the Fanny Heaslip Lee one knows through her romantic stories of Hawaii." (Review, circa 1922, scrapbook.)
- ³⁴ Newspaper article, circa 1922, scrapbook.

³⁵ Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham was the wife of the prominent railroad President and financier, Harvard graduate and grandson of the missionary Lowell Smith.

³⁶ Postcard, scrapbook, circa 1918.

³⁷ Anonymous, report, circa 1923, scrapbook. On February 25, 1925, "When We Were Twenty-One" was given as a benefit for the project. "The Hottentot" had been presented for the same purpose earlier in the season. On the eve of the opening of "The Servant in the House" at Scottish Rite Hall, at Wilder and Kewalo, a local paper said:

A most deserving institution is the Footlights Club which for 9 years has kept alive the fires of enthusiasm for the little theatre movement in Honolulu. Organized in 1915 by a group of devoted spirits it has steadily persevered with but little public support, sponsoring readings and performances of worthy stage literature. (scrap-book).

³⁸ e.g., Mrs. H. P. Agee was listed as Fanny Agee.

³⁹ Observed in scrapbook collection.

⁴⁰ Newspaper article, scrapbook, circa 1924.

⁴¹ Given at Scottish Rite Auditorium with Mrs. Fred Ohrt directing.

⁴² Agenda circa 1925, scrapbook; Deutsch, p. 278.

⁴³ HSB, Jan. 2, 1926 (Clipping in scrapbook).

⁴⁴ Notice to members, scrapbook, circa 1926.

⁴⁵ Minutes, May 31, 1927, scrapbook.

⁴⁶ Copy of letter preserved in minutes, October 20, 1927.

⁴⁷ Notice to members, April 18, 1928, scrapbook.

⁴⁸ cf. Appendix D.

⁴⁹ Letter from Gregg Sinclair to Miss Susan Fountain, a former President of Footlights, 10/18/30, scrapbook.

For a long time Footlights has felt the need of a group within its own membership trained to handle the technical problems of the plays . . . to meet this situation the University is giving an extension course two evenings each week. The periods will be two hours but you may be sure they will last as long as the members wish to work, Mr. Wyman and Mr. Rempel both being tremendously interested in this course.

. . . With this training we should be able, under direction, to be an independent producing group. There must be members in the club just as interested in building scenery as others are in acting. An organization as large and as old as the Footlights should not have to hire this sort of work done any more than they have to hire actors. This course is designed for Footlights members especially, and we trust that if you are interested in this phase of stage work, you as a Footlights member will take advantage of this opportunity.

⁵⁰ Minutes, May 11, 1928, and October 1929.

⁵¹ HA, Dec. 20, 1934.

⁵² Editorial, HA, Dec. 20, 1924.

⁵³ Letter from Mrs. Marjorie Wood, HCT Executive Secretary to Editor, HSB, Dec. 29, 1934.

Sir: At the annual meeting of the Footlights last June [1934] the members voted unanimously to re-organize the club into a genuine community theatre and authorized the President to appoint a committee on reorganization. It seemed to the members that a new group representative in every possible way of the community, would produce more and better plays, and that was precisely what every Footlights member

wanted—more and better plays. Also—with unlimited casting possibilities—with every citizen of Honolulu a possible actor or actress or worker back- or front-stage—the director would have a free hand and excellent support.

As a result of a series of meetings, a board of directors of 46 members and an executive committee . . . has been selected to do whatever is necessary to form a community theatre.

A more formal organization is planned and will be presented for approval later . . . meanwhile the committee will function as a continuing organization of the Footlights, taking over its assets and liabilities. . . .

⁵⁴ HSB, Feb. 2, 1935.

⁵⁵ Editorial, HA, Dec. 20, 1934.

⁵⁶ Total gate receipts were \$4,000; profit was \$1,000.