FROM MEDICINE TO ART:
NILS PAUL LARSEN (1890-1964)

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ABSTRACT

Nils Paul Larsen (1922-1964) was a significant transitional figure in Hawai‘i as it was changing from the plantation era to a modern Pacific community. Larsen, who lived in Hawai‘i from 1922 until his death in 1964, was recognized in varying degrees as a physician, director, researcher, writer, historian, politician, artist, playwright, inventor, association president, decorated war hero, Swedish consul, honorary kahuna, and Congressional delegate.

Larsen was especially acknowledged for his instrumental role in advancing plantation medicine and elevating public health in Hawai‘i as a pathologist and Director of the Queen’s Hospital. He used his professional influence to raise public awareness through numerous publications and associations in the field of health. His medical interests emphasized the need for better nutrition, notably with regard to infants and plantation workers. He was also involved with educational measures related to population control, sanitation, and industrial medicine.

Larsen became President of the Honolulu Print Makers Association and was nationally recognized for his original etchings. His artistic sensibilities centered on local scenery and nature themes. His etchings often reflected a social and cultural sensitivity that suggested ambivalence toward modernity and the Western impulse toward technology and development.

In the course of his many-sided career Larsen championed the cause of social justice. Among his interests were traditional Hawaiian herbal and medicinal practices that he concluded were superior to those of the early missionaries. His immersion in this line of study led him to the status of an honorary kahuna. There is ultimately a compelling
contrast between Larsen's role as a scientist and empiricist and his capacity to appreciate
the influence of nontraditional medical practices.

Larsen's political desires led him to accept the appointment as Swedish Consul. He advocated the change from Territorial status to statehood for Hawai'i and, in 1960, took an active role as a delegate in the Constitutional Convention to assist in the writing of the Constitution. His devotion to world unity led him to attempt to springboard the Hawai'i chapter of the World Federation, a group hoping to unite the nations of the globe in a "more perfect union."
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* All of the figures listed have been provided by the Morgan family.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Larsen’s unfinished portrait looms large on the wall in the foyer of Queen’s Hospital Historical Room. Those who are familiar with Nils Paul Larsen know the story surrounding the incomplete artwork and have shared it with spectators. It is the image of a person who was so occupied with a plethora of projects that he could not pose long enough for the portrait artist to finish painting his fingers. It remains as unfinished as his biography.

The information gleaned for this dissertation has been taken substantially from oral, taped, and written accounts by Larsen and his daughter, Lila Larsen Morgan. It also derives from the testimony of family, friends, colleagues, and accounts in the local press. It relies further on collected publications, documentation, and travel letters, as well as personal effects. Larsen conducted extensive research, published numerous bulletins, wrote for magazines and journals, presented scholarly papers, and kept medical records. He passed on several binders full of his published information, a tapa etching book entitled The Story of Etching, and file cabinets full of folders covering key topics that he concerned himself with. The Historical Room at Queen’s Hospital holds copious numbers of original documents that he left there for the eyes of future interpreters.

Medical research into atherosclerosis, industrial accidents, communicable diseases, sudden death syndrome, and nutrition were just a few of his areas of proficiency. A drive for health centers for plantation workers, preventoriums for tuberculosis patients, and better housing facilities for Queen’s nurses were some of the medical causes that Larsen fought for locally in Hawai‘i, and that were ultimately
accomplished. For public presentation, he exhibited collections on Hawaiian herbal medicine, produced large pageants showcasing medical history, and lectured on human sexuality to high school students. In the case of improving conditions in the sanitation of Hawai‘i’s milk industry, he strove to clean up unethical medical practices locally, such as unnecessary surgeries. He played a role in the experimental use of electro-convulsive shock therapy and estrogen therapy. In his artistic pursuits, Larsen rendered etchings that reflected his times. He began with the natural beauty of the islands that focused on man’s observations of ocean animals and plant life. As he developed his art he contrasted nature and technology as America entered World War II, such as his portrayal of a fish under water with a skull, a barb-wired rose, a squid enveloped in a smoke screen, and a school of military fish that were regimented for war. Larsen followed “the trail of ancient man” in cave explorations, artifact collection, and travels to foreign museums and exhibitions. He was a Swedish consul and World Federalist who pushed persistently for worldwide unity.

Larsen developed fruitful relationships with both prominent and controversial figures in his lifetime. The Prince of Sweden was feted at his home—as was Alton Oxner of the Oxner Clinic. Larsen officiated at the rededication ceremony of a Hawaiian heiau with David Bray and other Polynesian scholars. Through the Honolulu Social Sciences Association, Larsen shared papers with the likes of Sir Peter Buck and debated anthropological issues with Kenneth Emory of Bishop Museum. An alliance with Lorrin P. Thurston of the Honolulu Advertiser and government officials helped to curb infant mortality in Hawai‘i. Margaret Sanger became a visiting patient and a colleague with whom Larsen collaborated on
international conferences for Planned Parenthood. The acclaimed artist John Kelly, Sr., was his etching mentor, and he also conducted round table discussions on art with Madge Tennent. Investigating extra-sensory perception with a mysterious Dr. Langsner and cave exploration with John Warriner were among his other pursuits. Julius Scammon Rodman, a self-professed beachcomber with a passion for collecting artifacts for himself and for other enthusiasts, dedicated a publication to the doctor whom he often consulted on his findings.

Out of the seventy-three years of Larsen’s life, three were spent in Sweden, thirty-one on the East Coast of the United States, and thirty-nine in Hawaii. Larsen, who lived in Hawai‘i from 1922 until his death in 1964, was known variously as Nils, Paul, N. P., Major Larsen and Dr. Larsen. An incomplete list of titles he accumulated during his lifetime includes: physician, director, researcher, writer, artist, association president, decorated war hero, Swedish consul, honorary kahuna and congressional delegate. A chronology of Larsen’s life is labeled as Appendix 1 to this dissertation and highlights major turning points and events that shaped his existence.

The purpose of the present study is not to present a hagiography. Nils Paul Larsen’s life could be divided into distinct narratives, each one telling a unique story. To do so, however, would provide only a one-dimensional look at the man. This dissertation sets out to take snapshots of the multifaceted life that he led and to provide insight into several of his most passionate areas of endeavor. The following chapters provide glimpses into his upbringing, personal life, and numerous projects. They touch on his poor driving skills, failed business ventures, and personal health concerns. They reveal his often contentious work at Queen’s; his abundant research
and writing for plantation physicians; his revolutionary participation with workers and local community projects in Hawai‘i; his reflective artwork; his interest in ancient Hawaiian history, medicine, and culture; his involvement with the political change to statehood in Hawai‘i; and his interpretive accountings of international travels. Through these varied avenues his struggle between traditional practices and modern techniques is weighed.

Larsen’s life and works furthered the interest of public health, artistic vision, and social justice in Hawai‘i. From an American Studies point of view, his benevolent paternalism had an effect on Hawai‘i. He led an interdisciplinary life. The peculiar perspectives that he had drove him in many directions. The fastidious records that he kept can be interpreted to document changes in Hawai‘i that he facilitated. His respect for traditional historic practices, with a drive towards progress, showed him to be a transitional figure, seeking to legitimize his place in history and environment. This dissertation presents a chronology of events in Hawai‘i that would have been reduced significantly had he not been present and accounted for.
CHAPTER 2. ORIGINS AND EARLY EXPERIENCES

Figure 1: Larsen Family
[Front: Dan, Farmar, Helen, Farfar, David, and Mia
Back: Paul, Dave, Charlie, Mary, Elizabeth, Hulda, Sam, and Joe]
Bridgeport, Connecticut (circa 1912)

On Larsen’s Upbringing

Religion—whenever man developed beyond the animal stage he evolved a religion. He needs a religion, or some other strong inner urge—to remain sane and keep life interesting, worthwhile and happy.
He only gives that gives of himself, he only lives who gives. That is
the essence of religion (Larsen, “1959-60 Scrapbook”).

Lila Larsen Morgan has been a primary caretaker of many letters,
publications, and memorabilia of her father. She has also written a number of letters
and papers on her father on his varied interests for her children, the public, and for
historic preservation. In a document she labeled “NPL Ancestors,” dated June 5,
1998, Morgan wrote on family history. She stated that prior to the arrival of the
Larsen family in the United States, the record shows that the family had moved, had
experienced strife, and held a fervent religious belief. Larsen’s father, Emil, had been
apprenticed as a tailor in Sweden when he was ten years old. At sixteen, Emil went
to Norway to continue his education along the same lines. Here he changed the
spelling of his name from “L-a-r-s-o-n” to “L-a-r-s-e-n” because of animosity
between Sweden and Norway and the need to be accepted in Norway during his
educational training period. In writing, Morgan, Emil’s granddaughter, said that they
retained the Norwegian spelling even when the family moved back to Sweden
(Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

There is no record of when Emil went into the tailor business for himself, but
it is thought that it was about the time of his marriage to Maria Friman, when he was
twenty-four and she was twenty six years old. A translated letter from Emil’s brother,
Anders, dated March 4, 1878, reads:

You are really engaged, and to so loving and charming a girl as Maria,
whose equal I am convinced would be hard to find. You have found a
pearl in this world, happy brother. Happiness for the rest of your lives
(sic) with her. I know you will be happy. You have my very best wishes (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors” 5 June 1998 10).

From this approving letter, it is clear that Emil had the blessing of his brother regarding his choice of a wife.

Morgan’s “NPL Ancestors” revealed that Emil and Maria had seven children while living in a small apartment in the same building that housed his business. Their offspring, eldest to youngest, included Joseph, Samuel, Mary, David, and Dan. Nils Paul Larsen, the youngest son, was born in Stockholm, in the community of Valhallavagens on June 15, 1890, and Elisabeth, the youngest daughter, at Hagagatan two years later.

Emil’s tailoring business was facing bankruptcy, perhaps because credit had been extended to military officers and others, a commonplace occurrence at the time, and on August 26, 1892, the thirty-eight-year-old tailor set sail from Sweden for the United States with his second oldest son, Samuel. He planned to restart his trade using money borrowed from friends and family members to make the move to New York. The rest of the family stayed behind with the intent of meeting the father and son after they had started up business in America and could afford to send for the others (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

Emil and Samuel traveled to Peeksville, New York, and arrived in early October 1892. In June 1893, the rest of the family, with children ranging in age from one to twelve years, gave the remainder of their belongings to the local church and missions in Sweden and left for the United States to join them. After a harrowing experience crossing the ocean, a story kept alive in the family and eventually
memorialized in a poem that Larsen wrote about his mother upon her death, the family was reunited. The complete poem can be found as Appendix 3 to this dissertation. Larsen was three years old when his older sister lifted him up to see the Statue of Liberty (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

Once settled in Peeksville, Larsen’s mother, Maria, attended an Episcopal church and his brother Sam sang in the boy’s choir. All of the other children attended a Dutch Reformed Church Sunday School for their first three years in New York. After receiving a call from Reverend Lindegren to come to Bridgeport, Connecticut, to help start a Swedish Mission Church, Emil eagerly moved there and once again began his tailor trade (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

The Larsen family took a New York steamer and used a truck to maneuver their scant furniture across town to the Bridgeport boat. It was in Bridgeport that Larsen (known as Paul in his formative years) remembered growing up; Larsen was six at the time of their move. The family attended a small Swedish Evangelical church where Emil took on the position of the Sunday School Superintendent and the interim preacher. The three eldest siblings quit attending school to help support the family, while the youngest boys (Dave, Dan, and Paul) were encouraged to pursue higher education (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

According to Morgan, who has kept many of the records of her father, and wrote a letter to her children on September 30, 1996. She conveyed that Larsen had a very “stern ethical” upbringing by a father who was a lay preacher and a mother whose faith in doing good works kept her strong. She speculated that it was the upbringing of Old Testament believers, like Larsen’s parents, which made him such a
moral and ethical person. Within the Swedish Church, his father traveled to preach at any church where he was summoned in the New England area. In her nightly readings to her family from Christian teachings and magazines, his mother passed on a belief that Larsen also adhered to and which Morgan quoted. He was taught to believe that “you are responsible for your soul and the joy of living is the fight against oppression and evil” (Morgan, 30 Sep 1996 1). As New York immigrants, the Larsen family preserved their culture as they fought to gain economic independence and societal acceptance.

Larsen’s 1958 “Looking Back” speech, printed in The Pharos of Alpha Omega Alpha, states that Larsen’s father’s services were always spoken in Swedish and at least on one occasion Emil asked his youngest son, when he was old enough, to give sermons. Pressed by his family later on in life to recollect some of the contents of his sermons, Larsen surmised that they were most likely on sports since that was his major interest at this time. The heart of his sermons, he recalled, was built upon the belief that the “greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall” (Larsen, “Looking Back” 24). This was a message he incorporated into many writings throughout his life. Very early on, Larsen was encouraged to instruct others on how to live their lives—based on a religious doctrine that integrated responsibility and ethics. Besides religion, which was a major part of the Larsen upbringing, family entertainment, and education also played pivotal roles in his character development.

By the accounting that Larsen gave his daughter and that she relayed in her “NPL Ancestors” document, he said that his early life in Bridgeport was happy. He had lots of friends, was involved in sports, enjoyed hiking and vacations. While his
family was impoverished, they were joyous over the simple pleasures in life. One example of this was found in the amusement time spent with his brother. His older brother, Joe, known as the artistic one in the family, would make paper animals and the brothers would hunt the animals down and shoot them with spitballs. These were not the most benign or intellectual of activities; but were, however, boyhood entertainments prior to the time of television and computers that kept the boys creative, active, and away from bad influences as the Larsen family business experienced slow economic progress (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”).

As he grew into adolescence on the East Coast, Larsen’s character was aggressive and obstinate; he admitted that he was “sometimes grouchy.” Nonetheless, with his participation in both academic and extracurricular activities he seems to have been a well-rounded person. After his years at Bridgeport High School, he retained his team certificate for lettering in football, dated December 16, 1910, as well as his commencement program. Grades for each year of school and one meaningful English paper dated September 30, 1909, were also among his keepsakes. The critique written by his teacher on this paper warned him about being too poetic and sentimental in his writings. His teacher recommended, “Do not fear feeling strongly, or expressing your feelings; but let judgment and reasonable restraint tone down any excess in feeling or language” (Larsen, 30 September 1909). Despite this warning, Larsen had many strong opinions and sometimes he let sentimentalizing carry him away. Besides education, however, Larsen got his fair share of physical activity through sports and labor-related employment.
Morgan’s “Notes on NPL and Money” considers the fact that it took economic
desperation for Larsen’s father to move so many miles from Sweden to start his
business over again in America. As for Larsen, he had many jobs in Bridgeport as a
youth including cutting grass, washing windows, and cleaning yards. He began
working for hire while in grammar school and labored every day after school and all
day on Saturday. His reprieve from school and work was during football season
when he would cajole the other boys in the family to take over his share of the work
for him. In the winter he shoveled snow for neighbors. During high school vacations
he worked in a big steel mill as a box carpenter and would make as many as seventy­
five big wooden boxes wrapped in steel bands for steel shipping. “He could drive an
eight-penny nail in one blow and sink it to the hilt” (Morgan, “Notes on NPL and
Money” 1). It was necessary to do this because “there was always a group of twenty
to thirty men outside the gate looking for the job if you couldn’t keep up” (Morgan,
“Notes on NPL and Money” 1). His ethic of hard work came from his parents, but he
was especially close to his mother.

“NPL Ancestor’s” further tells that it was in Larsen’s graduation year that his
sixty-year-old mother passed away, and he wrote a poem in her memory that revealed
his deep love and respect for her. In essence, it marveled at how Maria handled the
passage to America, without the help of her spouse, and kept their family feeling safe
as they made the journey (Morgan, “NPL Ancestors”). The emotional words of the
admittedly syrupy poem that Larsen wrote about his mother showed how genuinely
affected he was by her courage and faith and how grieved he was upon her death. It
is included as Appendix 3. He saw in her a person who traveled to a foreign country,
survived disasters with grace and instilled in her children an appreciation for inner peace. In short, he seems to have had a healthy relationship with his mother and tried to memorialize her accordingly. Her fortitude seems to have inspired him and he obviously valued their relationship. However, though Larsen was close to his mother, he had been developing an identity as an individual and an American for a number of years.

Having known little of the European country of his origin, Larsen considered himself an American. Among a number of letters to his daughter dated August 1, 1959, Larsen wrote about his background and his graduation commencement speech. Chosen as one of five speakers for this occasion, Larsen spoke about Abraham Lincoln because Lincoln was one of his favorite heroes. It was after he gave this address that, much to his chagrin, Larsen's German teacher brought to his attention that he had a thick Scandinavian accent. They spoke Swedish at their home—as his mother never learned English. As he told his daughter in the letter, he became self-conscious of his telltale foreign pronunciation of words, and thereafter worked hard to get rid of the “dis/dat, dese/does/weat/weter and so on” (Larsen, 1 Aug 1959 2). Though he tried valiantly to rid himself of this distinctive accent, he was teased years later that traces remained despite having been brought up on the East Coast, despite having gone to war with men who spoke “Brooklynes,” and despite having lived in Hawai‘i for decades (Larsen, 1 Aug 1959 2). While he could not disguise the language of his heritage, his ability to speak and appreciate foreign languages became an asset throughout his life. Larsen broadened his East Coast upbringing when he chose Massachusetts to begin his higher education goals.
On College Years

A document written by his daughter entitled “Notes on Mass Agee,” dated August 17, 1998, relates that in 1910 when Larsen entered college at Massachusetts Agricultural College, commonly known then as “Mass Agee” and now known as the University of Massachusetts, he was interested in agriculture and intended to become a forester. His love of physical education led him to play football and many other sports. As an extracurricular distinction during college, he was offered the presidency at the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). He refused the position on the grounds that the organization would not allow Jews and Catholics to hold office, nor others “who accepted Christ’s philosophy as a guiding principle of life” (Morgan, “Notes on Mass Agee). Larsen was opposed to cultural exclusivity and opted to form a similar group called the College Christian Association that fought against fraternity fixing of campus elections. In the writing “Larsen Education” Morgan recalled that her father said that the membership of this college group he formed increased beyond that of the YMCA—a fact that Larsen made proud reference to in later years. Besides grappling with the concept of cultural inclusion, he also began to form his own religious beliefs (Morgan, “Notes on Mass Agee”).

Old Testament doctrine had a great impact on Larsen as he entered into early adulthood and he struggled with a restrictive religious doctrine as his interest in medicine took over. In his second year of college, he wrote a paper entitled “A Confession,” which can be found in its entirety as Appendix 2 to this dissertation. It stated his thoughts on the science-religion dilemma of the existence of a “Deity” and revealed that Larsen thought deeply about various religious beliefs before he formed
his own view, one that set him apart from his ancestors. In his writing, he pondered his own hypocrisy in associating with others not of similar faith and questioned the truth and believability of the recorded Biblical events. Larsen worried about the Bible’s Old Testament with its fire and brimstone language that often did not view the Deity as a kind and forgiving spiritual father. Debates such as the “creation” versus “species evolution” models of the origin of the world made it difficult for him to decide to choose a life of “works over faith” (Larsen, “A Confession”).

In the last section of Larsen’s youthful confession about religion, he revealed that the course he had set for himself consisted of acting in a righteous manner with the best interests of ordinary people in mind. He accurately foretold his path in helping others and creating a life in which he and his family could take pride—even if it was at odds with his formal religious training. Over the years Larsen became determined not to concern himself any more about understanding God and religion, and believed simply that God was the symbol of the highest ideal for humans. He would concentrate on doing his personal best to reach a higher plane rather than debate the existence and purpose of the Deity (Larsen, “A Confession”).

Morgan’s “Notes on Mass Agee” indicate that because of his popularity and physical abilities at the end of his third year of college football, Larsen’s team voted him captain for the next year; however, he decided to pursue another direction. As a college representative at a Christian Northfield Conference, Larsen learned that there was only one doctor for every million people in China and he felt challenged to pursue this career. It was at this point that Larsen decided to study medicine and become a physician (Larsen, “Notes on Mass Agee”). Little did he realize that his
interest in agriculture would still be utilized, albeit secondarily, as his career would lead him to plantation life many miles from where he was born and raised. He retained his interest in plants, particularly herbs.

While in college, Larsen was lacking in funds, but a deep-seated belief in his own success never let obstacles hinder him, according to his daughter in her "Notes on Mass Agee." His brother, Sam, assisted him by providing him with a home and, in the summer he covered his incidental expenses by working for Sam. Margery Hastert's Mamiya Medical Heritage Center web site says that Larsen received his Bachelor of Science degree from Mass Agee in 1913 and in 1916 he earned a medical degree from Cornell Medical School in New York City. As for community service, he displayed his love of and concern for youth when he organized two Boy Scout
troops in New York. They often went on excursions from the city slum areas into the woods (Hastert). His career was underway and his community service was headed in a positive direction; however, there were family medical concerns on the horizon.

Sadly, Larsen’s younger sister Elisabeth developed tuberculosis, an infectious disease that affects the lungs. His sister, Mary Larsen, corresponded with her brother in 1918. She said that Elisabeth was taken to a farm in the country in New Hampshire where she “could live in the open” (M. Larsen, circa 1917 1). When the disease advanced Elisabeth lamented to her sister, Mary, who had accompanied her, “Oh, how terrible it is to die and how long it takes” (M. Larsen, circa 1917 1). She was twenty-six years old (two years younger than Larsen) when she died. Tuberculosis was a disease that Larsen later tried to conquer in his medical career in Hawai‘i, along with atherosclerosis—a hereditary ailment that plagued the Larsen family. With his mother and youngest sister gone, Larsen continued his medical pursuits, having experienced the pain of mortality in his family. He was eager to pursue research that might remedy environmental and genetic medical problems. World War I brought him face to face with death on a larger scale.

**On Military Commission**

*That American Medley*

Our cook had been undertaken,

Our sergeant a great circus fakir

The Captain was clerk,

The Lieutenant and I Won’t Work.
But a company None e'er was greater ("106th Infantry Pamphlet" 3).

Figure 3: Larsen in Military Uniform (circa 1918)

Hastert’s Mamiya Medical Heritage Center web site says that in the summer of 1916, Larsen finished his graduate work in Biological Chemistry at Columbia and was granted a fellowship at New York Hospital. He served as an assistant pathologist there until April, 1917. During World War I, Larsen’s medical career was redirected and he received a commission as First Lieutenant in the Medical Corps 106th United
States Infantry. First Lieutenant Nils Paul Larsen went overseas in May, 1918, on active service in Belgium and France (Hastert 1).

It was clear that Larsen feared war. A letter written on a field typewriter to his sister on his way to France indicated his wartime apprehension. Despite attempts at remaining calm by reading the book she gave him, listening to musical talent provided for the soldiers, and making life-long friends—Larsen wrote to Mary on May 2, 1917, that his stark reality included the possibility of death or capture. When the troops were in safe areas and awaiting orders, he worried over a very real concern and acknowledged that “at any moment we will be called away again and be put into a concentration camp and there is no telling what will happen even five minutes ahead” (Hastert 1). As a further distraction from war, Larsen wrote poetry, such as the verse quoted above, which was printed in the October, 1919, edition of American Legion Weekly and whimsically describes his unit. The poetry was not of professional quality, but it served its purpose for the intended audience—wartime soldiers, engaged in life and death matters.

Larsen did, in fact, face combat duty. His name and an accounting of his actions are found in the 1919 Sanitary Detachment 106th Infantry History and Roster pamphlet. In the infantry Larsen received the Silver Star Citation that was signed by the War Department, Adjutant General’s Office Washington, and read:

For gallantry in action near Ronssoy, France, September 19, 1918.

While directing the evacuation of wounded from the front line trenches under a heavy concentration of machine gun and artillery fire, constantly exposing himself to such fire with utter disregard for his
own safety. Five of his seven litter bearers being killed or wounded, he crawled well forward of the front elements of the 106th Infantry and finding a wounded soldier who had lain in an exposed position for 36 hours, he carried him upon his back to safety; afterward searching the shell holes in front of the lines until all the wounded or killed of his regiment had been found. His undaunted bravery and devotion to his comrades inspired other men of the regiment to volunteer to aid him in this work ("106th Infantry Pamphlet" 5).

Hastert’s web site also discussed Larsen’s heroism in his military career. According to its information, Major Nils Paul Larsen was promoted in 1919. He was twenty-eight years old when he was awarded this military citation of distinction for his rescuing efforts. His military mission was short and honorable, and in 1919 he returned to New York to re-embark on his medical career at the University of Cornell, where he was an instructor in medicine and bacteriology and assistant visiting physician on the pediatric service at Gouverneur Hospital (Hastert). It was not long after this return that he planned a vacation to Hawai‘i.

**On Marriage and Career**

Morgan’s letter to her children, dated September 30, 1996, related more about the meeting of her mother and father. In the summer of 1919 Larsen went on vacation to Hawai‘i with his eleven-year-old niece. He visited with his adventurous brother, Laurentius David Larsen, who had come to Hawai‘i in 1908 as a plant pathologist and was an established manager for Kilauea Sugar Plantation. Dave was
living on the island of Kaua‘i with his wife, Hulda, and two children. It was through Dave that Larsen met Sara “Sally” Lucas in Honolulu. Sally had been among Dave’s circle of friends from his bachelor days.

In an interview with Morgan on September 3, 2003, she talked about her mother’s education and character. Sally Lucas was born and raised in Hawai‘i in the Makiki area of Honolulu. She attended Punahou School—a private school that began as a school for the children of the missionaries and came to be known as one of the best schools in the state. She was a light-hearted person, entertained her family with her piano playing, and made friends easily. Her schooling ended after high school. Family members were told years later and Morgan documented it in her September 30, 1996, letter to her children that it made a good impression on Sally that Larsen had brought his young niece along on a trip to Hawai‘i. Family was a priority in her life and she took a liking to Larsen. A September 3, 2003, interview with Morgan revealed that because Sally was several years older than Larsen, she kept her exact age a secret—so much so that the date put on her tombstone years later was not necessarily accurate (Morgan, 3 Sep 2003).

Unlike Sally’s jovial and sociable manner, Larsen’s character showed evidence of his strict upbringing in the form of puritanical beliefs about women. For instance, he claimed that dancing was something he never indulged in. In a letter to his daughter, Lila, dated August 1, 1959, he talked about his meager social life. Neither did he engage in much dating nor was he influenced by “temptations” in that regard. On one occasion he went skating and had a few meals with “the Carlson girls” (family friends) in New York. At one time Larsen had fancied himself in love
with a woman in college named “Gertie,” but she “had the good sense” not to wait for him to finish college. After his vacation, Larsen returned to New York, and he and Sally went their separate ways (Larsen, 1 Aug 1959).

Hastert’s web site on Larsen points out that when Larsen returned to New York, he continued his medical research at Bellevue Hospital that focused on pneumonia and asthma. For the next several years, he researched, wrote and worked with other prominent physicians. He published in The Journal of the American Medical Association and The Journal of Immunology. As Larsen conducted ambitious research on respiratory disorders his prospects for a lucrative medical career in New York rose. Additionally, he held the post of commanding officer of the First Field Hospital of the New York National Guard. Larsen was heavily occupied with progressing as a physician when Sally came to New York (Hastert).

The family chronicle, as related by Morgan in her letter to her children of September 30, 1996, discusses the re-acquaintance of her parents. Roughly two years after Larsen and Sally Lucas first met, an ambitious Sally went on a trip to New York with a friend on a half-hearted venture of making and selling coconut candy. In New York she was urged by her friend to call the young doctor that she had met in Hawai‘i a few years prior. When he agreed to come by to visit her, the lining of his jacket hanging out, she offered to mend it. This impressed him. The two embarked on a fast-paced romance after which Sally returned to Hawai‘i to prepare for an upcoming marriage to Larsen in September. It was unclear what happened to the candy venture that Sally had gone to New York to pursue. Nonetheless, Sally was to become Mrs. Nils Paul Larsen (Morgan, 30 Sep 1996).
In the same letter to her children, Morgan said that on September 1, 1921, Larsen and Sally wed in a meadow in Kensington, New Hampshire, at the summer home of Genevieve and Charles Bennett, with Sally carrying wild goldenrod flowers as her bouquet. They honeymooned in Maine at Sebago Lake, and lived in New York City where he worked at Bellevue Hospital and Cornell University Medical College. Meanwhile, Sally’s mother, Lydy Lucas, who wanted to keep her daughter in Hawai‘i, sought out possible employment for her son-in-law in Hawai‘i. Inquiring at Queen’s Hospital (later to be known as Queen’s Medical Center), Lydy discovered they were in need of a pathologist and suggested her daughter’s new husband. Upon receiving an offer for the position, Larsen was cautioned by his New York colleagues against burying himself in the Islands when he could easily build a name for himself in the progressive New York medical community. Given the deaths of his mother and younger sister, and his brother thriving in the beautiful island paradise as a plantation manager, while his new bride’s family was grounded in this distant place, Larsen had sufficient enticement to make the move to Hawai‘i. In a letter of acceptance in July 1922, Larsen agreed to the appointment as pathologist for Queen’s in Hawai‘i (Morgan, 30 Sep 1996).

In her September 30, 1996, letter to her children, Morgan added more information about the state in which her parents arrived in Hawai‘i. She wrote that Larsen and Sally left New York and traveled thousands of miles to Hawai‘i by train and ocean liner when she was six months pregnant with their first child. Larsen had no qualms about moving to the hometown of his wife, and when the newlywed couple first moved to ‘Oahu they even initially resided with Sally’s parents, Lydy and
Jack Lucas, on Lunalilo Street in Honolulu. There, they started their new lives, with Larsen learning all about his new environment and eager to prove himself as a physician (Morgan, 30 Sep 1996).

Larsen began working and traveling in his new environment and showed that he had an affectionate side. When away on a trip to the Big Island only a year into their marriage, on June 22, 1923, he dotingly wrote his wife:

Dearest, sweetest, nicest, dearest, bestest, darlingest, dollist little girl in the world: --And if I only knew some nicer words I would add them. Dolly, old girl, I was so busy running around and wondering that I had forgotten and what I had to do, I didn’t realize I was gone until the boat began to slide out of the harbor. Then old dear (true honest to goodness) I began to miss you, and how I wished our original plan had worked. It would have been wonderful.

Old dear, I only feel half here so I can’t even write...a sort of lonesome hungry feeling. I really miss you. As I sit here I feel as though I would like to chat with you and say, ‘ah, be nice to me.’ I see these young things flitting about and I think what a relief not to be flitting about. It can’t compare, Dolly, to the way I’ve felt during the last two years. Really you’ll never know how much my attitude has changed toward life under your kindly guidance. As I look back I sometimes wonder if I really wasn’t a true pessimist before marriage. I don’t feel that way now. Sometimes I wonder if I am too happy for my own good and I only hope you feel as happy. I thought we were
wonderfully happy a year ago when we came to Hawai‘i. Now I feel much more so (Larsen, 22 Jun 1923 1).

Further writings that Larsen authored about Sally in their travels together also articulated his care, concern and respect for her. It also confirmed his happiness for having moved to Hawai‘i.

Family was important to Larsen, according to Morgan’s analysis in “Untitled Notes” of April 10, 1998. Not long after the move to Hawai‘i, Larsen’s father died of cancer, but through his marriage to Sally he gained an extended family. It was in the home of Sally’s parents that their only daughter (their first born), Lila Elizabeth Larsen, was born on September 18, 1922, in a bed that had once belonged to Queen Lili‘okalani before being bought at an ‘Iolani Palace auction. The following year, the Larsens moved into a cottage on Diamond Head Road (Morgan, 10 Apr 1998).

On May 30, 1924, the Larsen’s second child, Jack Lucas Larsen (named after Sally’s father), was born. Within several years in Hawai‘i, he had the perfect family: a healthy daughter and son, and a tolerant, capable, and loving wife. While he was busy at work as one of Hawai‘i’s leading physicians, his wife and children had a family network of support. Larsen’s position as a pathologist paid him five hundred dollars a month to start and his additional duties soon thereafter as Director of Queen’s more than paid the bills (Morgan, “Untitled Notes” 10 Apr 1998).

While Morgan was told that Lucas, her grandfather on her mother’s side, took an instant liking to his new son-in-law, her grandmother was more critical of the doctor from the East Coast. Sally’s brother, Harry, with whom she was close, moved in with their mother when her father died. Larsen did not approve of Harry, perhaps
because he appeared to be a "mama's boy" and a bit "effeminate" (Morgan "Untitled Notes" 10 Apr 1998 2). Harry, an insurance agent for New York Life Insurance, had a flexible schedule. Sally, knowing of her husband's dislike, used to meet with her brother after her husband went to work. He would come over in his pajamas for oranges and conversation. Morgan remembered hearing the two of them laughing and sharing stories, something that Larsen took no interest in doing with Harry. Larsen's style was more no nonsense and on the go (Morgan, "Untitled Notes" 10 Apr 1998 2).

Money matters had little impact on the family and they became virtually a non-issue after one small but significant purchase. According to Larsen's daughter, her parents had a "knock down drag out fight" once over money because Sally had bought a three-dollar bath mat that Larsen believed to be a "rag." Her writing on "NPL and Money Matters" declared that the mat stayed, and there were no more disputes on financial issues surrounding the household. For the most part, Larsen never really worried about money, although he was not generally successful in his investments. For instance, he invested in a guava jelly-making operation in Hawai‘i (among other small business ventures) and it failed. Larsen believed that money should be spent foremost on travel, and he would mortgage the house to do so (Morgan, "NPL and Money Matters").

Unlike the Larsen family in New York, by no means were the Hawai‘i Larsens an economically disadvantaged family. After all, he was a hard-working, successful doctor and administrator. His daughter believed that he could have become an extremely wealthy man--a millionaire of the times--if he had had an
interest in saving his earnings (Morgan, "NPL and Money Matters"). Larsen’s education, career choice and drive were rewarded with the life of an upper-class physician.

The Larsens employed workers who lived in a small house at the top of their property. According to Larsen’s son, Jack, in an April 27, 2001, interview, the “servants” had to walk down the hill where there was a toilet under the main house and a tub in which to bathe. Tanabe was the yardman and cook and Kimi was the maid who would also do the ironing. Jack said that he felt uncomfortable about their meager living quarters. On the other hand, Larsen took good care of any of their ailments as well as those of their neighbor’s servants (J. Larsen, 27 Apr 2001). Morgan concurred, and in her “Notes on Kimi, Tanabe & Asa” dated February 2, 2000, she added more. She said that the family also had a manicurist, Asa Hirano, who came over every other Sunday to do her parents’ nails. Sally believed that Larsen had beautiful hands and needed to take care of them. They would all sit out on the porch next to the ocean while they were having a manicure and sometimes Lila would have hers nails done, too (Morgan, “Notes on Kimi, Tanabe & Asa”).

Larsen’s children were educated at Punahou, just like their mother. They shared feelings of admiration and affection for their father. Both remembered numerous swimming and boating outings. Moreover, life with their father could be foolhardy. In interview, Jack specifically remembered some of the accidents that occurred over the course of time, such as when Larsen broke his leg in 1928 when the rowboat they were on suddenly turned, broad-sided a wave and capsized. He also remembered how poor a driver his father was. The doctor was known for driving
well above the speed limit. Once when going to a polo match at Honolulu’s Kapi’olani Park, Jack’s father hit another vehicle head on and Jack ended up with two broken front teeth and a cut on his head. Both of the children remembered going on house calls with their father, and Larsen holding up his doctor’s bag if they were pulled over for speeding. The policemen always let him go. He was not above taking advantage of his position to keep his record clear. A reputation for careless driving extended even to the parking area of the Medical Group, when he would put his car in reverse and back up into other cars and objects. The jolt of the hit would force him to put his car in forward gear and continue driving (J. Larsen, 27 Apr 2003). When Morgan interviewed Dr. John Payton of the Medical Group about her father on March 15, 1998, he claimed that his own car was worse for the wear because it was assigned reserved parking next to Larsen’s (Payton, 15 Mar 1998). Larsen was lucky not to be involved in any major automobile accidents. This did not dissuade him from driving and taking his children along.

Larsen was an involved father. Sometimes he took his children with him to his job on Sunday. In an interview with Morgan on February, 18, 2001, she harkened back to playing at Queen’s on some mornings when she was around ten years old. She and her brother would help their dad check in on patients. In the laboratory, they would play with the rabbits used for experimentation that the hospital held in confinement. She also remembered rolling mercury balls around, staining a number of gold rings and turning them to rust. At home her father listened and critiqued his daughter when she rehearsed for educational presentations, speeches and other events. She won the prestigious Damien Speech prize at Punahou, she believed, because of
the coaching she received from her father. A strong advocate of physical fitness, he planned a weeklong bicycle ride around 'Oahu for his daughter and seven of her friends. The group stopped and slept over at various plantation hospitals along the way, such as Wahiawa Hospital, as well as at private residences. Likewise, Larsen took his son on hikes, fishing boats, and excursions. During their school years, the children generally ate an earlier dinner with their mother, but when their father came home later, his dinnertime was spent talking with them. He also reserved weekend time for his children (Morgan, 18 Feb 2001).

Figure 4: Larsen Family: Lila, Jack, Larsen and Sally (circa 1928)

Morgan’s September 30, 1996, letter to children told about how Larsen used his religious upbringing to educate his children. While Larsen did not attend organized church activities, he used to tell dramatic Bible stories about “Samson” or
“David and Goliath” on Sunday mornings. They served as inspirational teachings and were used to give moral lessons to his children. He seems to have retained the formative characteristics set in motion from his early religious background, carrying Christian beliefs into his personal life and medical career practices. This system of beliefs led him to take a stand on accepting accountability for one’s actions and “doing the right thing.” As the children approached adolescence, Larsen held frank discussions with his children on the topic of sex education. In her April 3, 2000, writing on “Puppy Love,” Morgan discussed the confidences Larsen shared with his children. He confided to Jack, in one of his father-son discussions, that he was a virgin when he got married at thirty-one years of age. He also told his daughter, Lila, about “puppy love” and the men in her life who would say to her “I love you,” but he counseled, “don’t you believe it. They want one thing, and don’t you give it to them (Morgan, “Puppy Love” 1).

Morgan said that Sundays for the family were also devoted to playing at the “Fairy House” in Kane‘ohe. This was leased land in Haiku where her parents had built a crude shack. The family would mostly go for day trips and enjoyed the fresh stream and small pool. This is where she and her brother had many birthday parties and where they would hike and tell stories with friends and family. Often Queen’s nurses were also invited along with their boyfriends. In Morgan’s account of the “Nursing School,” written on October 28, 1999, she talked about the nurses that she met. They shared many fun ti-leaf slides as well as guava fights there, using her father’s balding head as a target; at least she and her cousin did. Her dad would often tie a knotted handkerchief around his head to protect it from sunburn. The “Fairy
"House" property was taken over in 1940 as a communication center for the Navy. The family still kept their fond memories of the weekend get-aways with each other and friends that would join them (Morgan, "Nursing School").

The medical practice of their father sometimes seeped over into the children's lives. Larsen's tolerance did not extend to people in his profession who were involved in unethical activities. He was also protective of his family and Morgan talked about this fact in a personal interview on February 18, 2001. Morgan recalled that she was not allowed to play with three sisters who lived next door to them on Diamond Head Road. She later found out that the girls' father, a prominent Honolulu physician had been ousted from practice for months after Larsen had headed a campaign for honest surgery. The neighboring physician was publicly accused of performing unnecessary hysterectomies during an investigation of medical ethics in Hawai'i. Eventually, Morgan and the girls next door would become friends (Morgan, 18 Feb 2001).

Morgan knows more about the guests at the Larsen home who were often incorporated into their family life. No doubt, the doctor's experience as an immigrant who spoke Swedish in the household had an effect on his desire to befriend those of other nations. Morgan remembered that the Prince of Sweden came over to their home for a swim with her father, who was also the Swedish consul. Because he had various interests outside of his medical profession, her father often had the opportunity to meet important and influential people. The Larsen children were not entirely aware of the celebrity or stature of the guests that their father entertained at their home (Morgan, 18 Feb 2001).
Larsen made a point of maintaining friendships in his life, and even after he left the East Coast, he kept in touch with many of his medical classmates, and colleagues. He enjoyed doing character sketches and keeping track of the friends he made throughout his life. Over the years, he and several of the other doctors he had worked with in New York reported to each other on their medical accomplishments.

In an annual Cornell Medical School alumni newsletter, they regularly reported on the state of their lives. The newsletter called “Hell-O Sketch of 1916,” for instance, went over some of the alumni’s medical involvements. One physician had performed a successful operation and removed twelve bullets from a man’s abdomen, another had worked, with some success on a TBc bacillus—and another was described as a “successful pill peddler.” Others from medical school years reported from stations overseas where they had contracted flu, pneumonia, and a variety of sicknesses themselves. Personal issues like marriage and the children born during the year were communicated. An excerpt from this newsletter is included in this dissertation as Appendix 4. This alumni newsletter was one means of keeping up to date with old friends just as visiting acquaintances when traveling served the same practical purpose (Cornell Medical School Alumni Newsletter 1916). Being in Hawai‘i Larsen needed to keep in touch with the medical community in other parts of the nation and the world. He socialized and networked as a physician and for Queen’s where much of his energy was directed.

As seen throughout Larsen’s upbringing, Larsen’s life in America as a member of an immigrant family relied on hope and possibility. When he arrived in New York as a three-year old, he was raised under traditional Swedish practices that
included strict religion mixed with lower-class ambitions. Among these ambitions were education, influence, and economic self-determination. Since he did not come from an affluent background and was used to struggle, he had an appreciation for overcoming obstacles. Brought into a multi-ethnic world and somewhat sheltered within the Swedish-American community as a youngster, he later worked to lose his accent. While his father and older brother toiled in the tailor trade, he was considered one of the males in the family chosen to pursue higher education. Away at college, he saw exclusivity and prejudice directed against certain groups of people and challenged this status quo within organizations. Working diligently, he also excelled in sports. While doing so successfully, he decided that his real calling lay in a field where his abilities were more in demand and where he would be helping those less fortunate. Even though he was warned by medical colleagues against losing touch with higher career ambitions, it was his choice to move to a “more primitive place,” to become “a larger fish in a smaller sea.” Along with his ability to be accepted as a physician, he also had the respect and acceptance of his wife. Additionally he had the support and influence of his wife’s mother, who secured a position for him at Queen’s and which let her keep her daughter in Hawai‘i. He arrived at a time when technology was on the rise and his “can do” attitude and training, both as a soldier and a physician, put him in a powerful position. Education, good fortune, and timing set Larsen up for being able to study his new environment and work towards progressives changes in medicine in Hawai‘i. It certainly did not hurt to be a physician in a place of high demand and marry into an established local family. He brought with him medical knowledge, a strong work ethic, and a paternalistic desire
to make change. He obviously appreciated the beauty of Hawai‘i as he changed from visitor to resident status and was forming an interpretation of his environment through his new family and employment opportunities. Larsen’s career shaped this interpretation.
CHAPTER 3. DR. LARSEN AND QUEEN’S

Figure 5: Doctor Nils Paul Larsen (circa 1955)

Medicine is my religion and Queen’s is my Church. (Larsen).

When Larsen came to Hawai‘i to work as pathologist for Queen’s, he took pains to know the medical history of Hawai‘i, especially with regard to mortality and disease rates. He wrote several historical accounts about the plantations, Queen’s, the nursing facilities, and diseases. In his Social Science Association essay of 1959, “A Few Old Historical Comments,” however, Larsen presented his accumulated knowledge of the time in which there were no hospitals.

In this essay, according to Larsen and his sources, when counted at the time of Captain Cook’s arrival in 1778, the population of Hawai‘i was roughly estimated at 350,000; and when counted under a missionary census in 1823, it was down to only 70,000. The huge decrease in population was caused by of a variety of medical maladies, most especially venereal disease (especially syphilis), smallpox, and infant
mortality (from diarrhea and poor nutrition). Epidemics "of measles and influenza took away thousands" (Larsen, "Social Science Association Essay of 1959" 2). Larsen cited personal accounts that he had read about and took to heart. One poignant testimony handed down by resident J. Hill, in 1850, gave a sense that the Hawaiians felt that they were "on the skids to oblivion":

One of my European friends at Honolulu, who mingled much with the natives, informed me that there was a general impression among them of their early extinction. In most of the houses into which we entered, two or three had been carried off, and in some there was not a single tenant remaining. All had been buried within a month. In one hamlet that we visited, as we came in the center of the closely packed group of huts, we observed a middle-aged man seated upon his mat at the door, and wrapped up as if he were feeling the cold. We approached and were informed that every human being in the hamlet had been buried within the last week. When urged to leave, he replied: 'I do not want to live. All my friends are gone, and I shall soon follow them.' (Larsen, "Social Sciences Essay of 1959" 2).

Larsen was deeply disturbed by the Hawaiian peril and his essay continued to express the level of Hawaiian despair that Hill observed and wrote about:

In another house which [sic] I was invited to enter by some young native woman sitting down on their mats in front of it, I observed a bed (the room was rather dark for want of proper windows) and placed myself upon it. Attempts to talk led to mirth on the part of some of the
women present. Suddenly my eyes becoming accustomed to the obscurity, I perceived a woman lying upon her back on a mattress. I asked why she was lying so still. One of the women desired me to go and look at her. I observed her head was ornamented with leaves and wild flowers. I was about to shake her and found she was not sleeping but dead. I returned to my seat (on the bed) and now perceived I had been sharing it with the lifeless body of a native man lying in a wooden coffin (Larsen, “Social Sciences Essay of 1959” 2).

Larsen shared with his audience the message that Hill received from the Hawaiians: foreigners were responsible for their medical dilemma. Among Hawaiians there were feelings of confusion and xenophobia because of newly introduced and fatal diseases. Neither traditional nor foreign medicine was advanced enough to combat these devastating epidemics, so there were also feelings of hopelessness. Because Western medicine was not developed enough at this time to cure the deadly ailments, it is no wonder that Hawaiians were skeptical about welcoming Western medicine. As for building Western medical facilities, there were also economic and political obstacles to overcome in their creation.

In 1940, Larsen wrote a history of the genesis of hospitals in Hawai‘i for the “First Annual Meeting of the Hospital Association of Hawai‘i.” Of course he placed an emphasis on The Queen’s Hospital (renamed The Queen’s Medical Center in 1967) since by then he had been employed there for almost twenty years and had a vast amount of history to report. He found that the Board of Health had been in existence for over a hundred years in Hawai‘i; however, it was not until 1851 that the
Hawaiʻi Legislature voted to give five hundred dollars to the Department of Education for distribution to the poor. The doctor reported that, of the initial five-hundred dollars spent, the funds given for medicine to help the sick in Hawaiʻi went mostly for Epsom salts, castor oil, and calomel. It was not until 1859 that a bill was passed granting the Minister of the Interior power to establish a hospital on each island, and by then, Larsen believed the native population was down to 60,000. Land was granted for medical construction sites with values of up to $5,000, provided that each proposed hospital contributed $5,000 of its own money toward the project (Larsen, “First Annual Hospital Association Speech”).

Larsen’s version of Queen’s history pointed out that because no funds were appropriated by the Legislature for a public hospital, and there was a general feeling of hopelessness for many Hawaiians, it took the bequest of a part Hawaiian, part English woman, Emma Rook--Queen Emm--to set the ball in motion. Despite the doubts and concerns of Western medicine helping Hawaiians, she wanted to invest in modern medical facilities out of desperation. After she appealed to her husband King Kamehameha IV, they took it upon themselves to solicit funds and jointly contributed $1,000 towards it themselves. They raised $13,150 through donations (often going door to door), to which the Legislature added $6,000. A temporary building (with only eighteen beds) opened its doors on August 1, 1859, on Fort Street in downtown Honolulu. According to Queen’s publication, Ke Kumu: “The Source:” The Official Information and Heritage Handbook (1859-1990), The Charter of Incorporation for Queen’s read as follows:
WHEREAS, it has been made known to me that a number of persons residing in Honolulu, and other parts of the Kingdom, have entered into a voluntary contribution, by subscription, for the purpose of creating a fund for the creation and establishment of a Hospital at Honolulu, for the relief of indigent sick and disabled people of the Hawaiian Kingdom, as well as of such foreigners and others as may desire to avail themselves of the same (Cameron, Kanahele, and Hastert 4).

*Ke Kumu* also discussed the early conditions of the medical center. The cornerstone of the permanent hospital was laid on July 17, 1860, and the diminutive two-story building was inspected and opened on December 6, containing merely 124 beds. Dr. William Hillebrand was appointed as the first, sole physician and during the opening year it was documented that out of the 604 patients treated, 91 patients were foreigners. The mission of Queen’s was primarily to take care of the waning Hawaiian community; however, they would not discriminate against foreign patients, especially the indigent—regardless of race and origin. This was a philosophy that Larsen was proud publicly to endorse (Cameron, Kanahele, and Hastert).

The Queen’s publication also asserts that after the passing of King Kamehameha IV on November 30, 1863, and of Queen Emma on April 24, 1885, a large trust was left for Queen’s. By 1886, there were just two doctors in charge of the facilities, a Dr. McKibbin, chief, and Dr. John Brodie, assistant. In 1892, Dr. C. B. Wood was employed as the first surgeon, as well as Dr. G. P. Andress, the attending
physician. In August of that year, an honorary board of physicians was created (Cameron, Kanahele, and Hastert).

In the years to come, other advances were made by the hospital. *Ke Kumu* marks that, in 1905, the Pauahi Wing was constructed and the first known blood tests were taken in Hawai‘i. The following year the first intern, Dr. Homer Hayes, was employed and in 1916 a training school for nurses opened. In his 1940 “Speech for the First Annual Hospital Association” Larsen told his audience that, in 1918, the American College of Surgeons had developed minimum standards for hospitals after an evaluation of American hospitals had found Queen’s to be paltry and lacking in facilities for the poor. Their findings were so shocking, Larsen said, that they were not published until work had begun on upgrading services. The new standards included: proper records, laboratory, x-ray assistance, staff control, and surgery. Hospitals were also required to have regular death evaluation meetings, and at least a fifteen percent autopsy rate to ensure honesty in diagnosis, better treatment and quality of scientific interest (Larsen, “First Annual Hospital Association Speech”). In 1920, the Bishop Annex was constructed and the first pathologist, Dr. Eric Fennel, began his work. In 1922 the original building was razed, the first female intern, Dr. Marie Faus, was hired and the Nalani wing was built. Larsen took on the responsibilities of pathology for the hospital, and times were obviously ripe for improvement (Cameron, Kanahele, and Hastert). He would start by getting physicians together in a group to meet.
Thursday Morning Rounds

At the time when Larsen went to work in 1922, Queen’s had been in existence for approximately sixty years. When he became Medical Director, he immediately went to work studying the current population and researching various local medical maladies. Moreover, he envisioned and pushed for needed additions to the hospital to update and improve it for better, more efficient, and modern usage. Projects that Larsen helped establish ranged from occupational therapy service, a research department, and the development of a training school for nurses. Thursday Morning Rounds, endorsed and enhanced by Larsen’s enthusiasm and promotion within the medical community were a major improvement to Queen’s because they encouraged experts from across the nation to attend. In little time the often-heated Thursday morning clinic, called “round table discussions” vigorously conducted instructional sessions, mainly for interns.

On January 30, 1923, the “House Physician’s Report,” written by Larsen about the weekly meetings noted:

...Thursday morning rounds are now made by the Honorary Board of Physicians. These are weekly conferences at which interesting cases, undiagnosed conditions, therapeutic problems are presented for discussion. The response by the members of the Board to the number of 10 to 20 each week has been very gratifying. Their interest and discussion has helped materially to improve the service and stimulate to more thorough work. At these conferences the deaths of the week are also discussed. The cooperation by the members of the Honorary
Board through constructive criticism and helpful suggestions make it possible to more speedily check defects and errors which results in better service to the patient (Larsen, "House Physician's Report").

Over the years the popularity of these meetings grew. They used the spacious nurses' classroom with large window screens. The sills were wide enough so that latecomers could sit on them. According to Morgan, who spoke about the "Thursday morning meetings," passersby could humorously witness the long row of participants' rear ends from outside the building. Interns would present their cases, as locally established physicians, like Dr. Fennel from Straub, would lecture (Powers). Prominent visitors added to the appeal of the meetings. The "1928 Report of the Medical Director" noted:

...The Thursday Morning Clinics have continued without a break and with increasing attendance. Many mainland visitors have expressed wonder when they find over 50% of the whole medical profession gathering weekly to discuss their medical problems. We have also been most fortunate in having with us some of the very best men in the country. When we mention Frank H. Lahey of Boston, Martin H. Fischer of Cincinnati, J. W. Finney of Baltimore, Mellon M. Portis of Chicago, Wallace Terry of San Francisco, Professor Guyer of the University of Wisconsin, James Rae Arneill of Denver, Arthur Dean Beven of Chicago, D. S. Hills of Chicago, W. W. Fulton of West Virginia, and many more. It sounds like the top of Who's Who in Medicine. These men have each taken part in the discussion and
helped us with our problems. Few people realize the value thus reverted by the hospital to the community (Larsen, “1928 Report of the Medical Director”).

Annual reports were generated and continued yearly until 1936, and often mentioned the progress of these meetings, and on a few occasions related disputes between physicians, usually over ego. As the discussion group increased in size, the meetings moved into even larger classrooms that held more attendees. Larsen had created a forum for communicating important medical information, as he was able to learn from other physicians about their research. Over the years, he concentrated his efforts on the most needy of projects. He specialized in learning about and curbing infant mortality, worked to have better resident facilities for nurses, and establish preventoriums for tuberculosis victims, among other things. His crusade for cutting the high number of infant deaths and elevating the health of plantation workers was waged in better nutrition and regulating the milk supply in Hawai‘i.

Milk Campaign & Infant Mortality Rates

Larsen wrote about the “History of the Campaign for Better Milk in Hawai‘i.” He calculated through his statistics that the territory mortality rate for infants was 139.1 per thousand, and 305 for Hawaiians. In 1923, Filipino infant mortality was out of control with 366 deaths per thousand, and it became clear that the medical community needed to take measures against this. Through milk campaigns on the East Coast, Larsen was aware of potential problems with milk on health. He suspected a problem, and a surprise inspection of Honolulu dairies uncovered
unsanitary conditions that led him to spearhead a drive against bad milk. The “milk campaign” in Hawai‘i, as it came to be known, began at Queen’s laboratory in November of 1922. By collecting samples, the tests from “baby milk” sold on the streets of Honolulu showed a bacterial count of five million per cubic centimeter. In one inspection Larsen found a man sieving milk through a mosquito net. He claimed that it would “strain out them germs you’ve hear about” (Larsen, “Campaign for Better Milk” 9). Another inspection found a milker “squatted before a cow whose ulcerated udders were distended three times their normal size with streptococcus infection” (Larsen, “Campaign for Better Milk” 9). Drinking local milk in Honolulu was “as safe as drinking a swig of water from a stagnant pool” (Larsen, “Campaign for Better Milk” 9).

As Medical Director of Queen’s, Larsen, along with Colonel Craig, Commanding Officer, Medical Corps of the Army; and Trotter, President of the Board of Health; M. B. Bairos, Territorial Food Commissioner/Chief Bacteriologist and Chemist for the Board of Health; and Schultz, Chief Sanitary Inspector, joined together to set about correcting the situation. They decided to meet first with the dairymen and take the matter to the public thereafter. The dairy industry in Hawai‘i, they believed, only pretended to deliver clean, safe milk (Larsen, “Campaign for Better Milk” 10).

A coalition of Queen’s, Tripler and the Board of Health became involved in a drive to test and analyze Honolulu milk. When all three laboratories confirmed a problem with bad milk conditions, the matter was taken to the editor of the Honolulu Advertiser, Lorrin P. Thurston. After Thurston was shown the relationship of milk to
infant diarrheas, septic sore throats and other milk-born epidemics, as well as the bacterial count and dirty handling of the milk, he became involved in a newspaper campaign to clean up the milk. At this time there were no laws on the books regarding milk, except the Territorial pure food laws that stated that milk had to be cooled to seventy-two degrees before delivering it to the public. The Medical Society formed and passed a resolution for standard milk regulations and laws (Larsen, "Campaign for Better Milk" 10). This would not be enforced until the heated debate in the press that Larsen instigated.

In the first of a series of articles delivered by the Honolulu Advertiser on April 28, 1923, the headlines read: “Children of Honolulu are Perishing as a Result of Germ-Laden Milk.” Others followed, such as “The Milk Problem,” “Unclean Milk Killing Babies, Doctors Claim,” “158 Instances of Adulteration in One Month Here,” and “The Milk Question.” The headlines continued into 1924: “Milk Campaign Supported by Local Pastor,” “Health, the Most Vital Community Question,” “The Relationship of Bacterially Clean Milk to Public Health” and “What Clean Milk Means to Honolulu.” Clearly their aim was to warn and incense the public about the need for clean milk.

The newspaper also agreed, after many meetings and conferences, to publish weekly counts done by the Board of Health to monitor the dairies. They published the names of the dairies involved that were by then up in arms over the negative publicity. Several weeks into the campaign, Trotter asked for an end to the publicity because the public had already been made aware of the problem. It became apparent that political pressure was involved in calling off the campaign. Colonel Craig took a
stand, wherein he banned any further purchasing of milk for the military if this campaign did not continue (Larsen, “Campaign for Better Milk” 11).

Because of the publicity, Cyril Smith, the Superintendent of the Royal School, became interested in the milk survey. He offered a prize for an essay on “What Clean Milk Means to a Family” which was won by an eighth grader named Lydia Mendez. Trotter called for a meeting of the dairymen and when Larsen arrived, he found himself facing the angry men alone because Trotter took a “sudden trip to Maui.” On the other hand, the dairymen had the support of a kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Russell, who gave testimony that the milk industry was trying to do a good job and helped with her classroom children. She claimed that they should be praised rather than chastised. Only a few headlines, however, advocated a positive view of the dairy industry. For instance “Milk Branded Falsely, Says Commissioner” took that stance as late as September 26, 1924. The milk problem continued for four years after the initial discovery. To further bring about change, individual dairy sites were mentioned in articles, along with their bacteria count. They were rated and one dairy was classified as very dirty; 6 were dirty; 22 were slightly dirty; 35 were found fairly clean and 50 clean. Some of the bacterial counts ranged into the millions (Larsen, 12).

Headlines in the Honolulu Advertiser finally improved for the milk industry, especially beginning in 1925 with: “Milk Inspectors Aiding Dairymen,” “Dairymen’s Association had Admirable Facilities for Distributing Milk,” “Improvement in Honolulu Milk” (July 10, 1925), “Health Board’s Drive Results in Better Milk” (August, 1925), “Campaign for Pure Milk in Honolulu Has Won Victory Writes
“Doctor” (September 1, 1925), “Removal of Tubercular Cows from Dairy Herds Insures Better Milk” (January 10, 1926), and “Milk Here Held to be as Good as Any” (June 14, 1926). They indicated that the pressure put on the industry was working.

On January 14, 1926, it was finally announced officially that the milk in Hawai‘i ranked as well as Mainland milk. Later in the year it was shown that Honolulu had more certified and pasteurized milk than any other comparable city in the United States. In a two-year legislative battle, Larsen, et al., won support for hiring milk inspectors that would clean up the milk problem found to be responsible for killing children. The success was publicized nationally when “Plantation Babies Okay Now” appeared in Reader’s Digest. This was one of Larsen’s major victories, along with helping to establish a preventorium for victims of tuberculosis, after the milk campaign was abated.

**Palama Settlement & a Preventorium**

An article by Paula Rath entitled “Palama Settlement: 100 Years of Serving a Neighborhood’s Needs” in the Hawai‘i Medical Journal makes clear the role Larsen played in the history of Palama Settlement. Larsen, along with other prominent Honolulu physicians, like G. Straub of Straub Hospital, worked on a number of health programs and clinics at Palama Settlement on the outskirts of downtown Honolulu. Larsen was a member of the Board of Trustees for the settlement that provided specialty care to the people of the economically disadvantaged county and to the city. Programs like milk stations, prenatal clinics, public health nursing, and camps were developed to teach health, hygiene, and stress management. Moreover, the
tuberculosis committee was developed and courses were offered at the University of Hawai‘i in public health. Branch dispensaries were also overseen beginning with Palama Settlement, the headquarters for what Philip S. Platt referred to as "Honolulu’s Hull House" (Rath).

Rath explained the purpose of the Palama Settlement. She stated that it sprang out of the settlement movement of the 1800s on the mainland for those in the community who were not able to afford medical care. The settlement was established "to allow social workers, health care providers, and community leaders to gain an understanding of the geographical neighborhood they lived in—and to enlist the aid of the more fortunate to improve these conditions" (Rath 774). They did so by moving into the community and living with the people in the area of need. This was the plan to be followed in Hawai‘i.

In 1905, James Arthur Rath was recruited by the Hawai‘i Evangelical Association to form a settlement out of Queen’s Chapel, because the religious organization was unable to meet the profuse needs of the neighborhood. Rath, the son of a civil servant physician, raised in India, and later sent by the YMCA to attend college in Massachusetts, was given the assignment to work for the organization after graduation. On July 21, 1910, a charter established the creation of Palama Settlement as a charitable organization under a volunteer board. Rath became its executive director. With the support of Central Union Church and prominent Hawaiian families like the Castles, Dillinghams, and Baldwins, Palama Settlement opened its doors. It brought in health nurses for maternal care and nutrition, well-baby clinics, tuberculosis clinics, and medical and dental clinics to poor people. Between 1910
and 1923 all of the tuberculosis clinics for the city were held there. At its inception there were no physicians on staff, only nurses, including part-Hawaiian Mabel Smyth. Smyth was a Public Health nurse from the Palama area (between 1919 and 1928) who was sent by Rath for special training in Boston in order to bring back and pass on her skills to others in her neighborhood. Smyth became well known for her ability and dedication as a nurse, and worked with Larsen in establishing medical services at the Palama Settlement (Rath 774).

Larsen was involved in numerous improvements in the medical community because of his position at Queen’s, and a few years after he arrived in Hawai‘i, Palama Settlement was yet another challenge. Palama Settlement changed its clinics and scope according to the times and needs of the area. In 1925, Palama Settlement provided health care clinics for a multitude of ‘Oahu communities outside of the Palama area including Beretania, Castle Kindergarten, Iwalei, Kakaako, Kalihi, Kauluwela, Moiliili, Punchbowl, St. Mark’s Mission, and Waikiki. While Palama Settlement provided for a variety of medical concerns, one that Larsen was personally involved with, since his sister had died of the disease, had to do with the treatment of tuberculosis (Rath).

Larsen believed in the creation of preventoriums, residential places for the care of sick children, particularly those suffering from tuberculosis. It was defined by the Committee on Preventoria of the National Tuberculosis Association as “a twenty-four hour, twelve month institution for the care and observation of children substandard in health” (Rath 775). The first preventorium was established in Farmington, New Jersey, in 1909, the same year that the Honolulu Central Anti-
Tuberculosis committed originated, and a year prior to the creation of the Tuberculosis Bureau of the Board of Health. Local interest in Hawai‘i preventoriums arose in the early 1920s when R. S. Anderson, manager of Leahi Home, expressed interest to the National Tuberculosis Association, but nothing ever panned from this correspondence. Instead, Hawai‘i supported tuberculosis day camps (Rath).

While Palama Settlement operated a tuberculosis day camp from 1910 to 1920 and a summer camp for children in need of special rest, nourishment and recreation at its Fresh Air Camp at Waialua, this was not sufficient for the total care of many of the children in need. In 1926 Dr. A. L. Davis, Director of the Bureau of Tuberculosis, wrote in the Annual Report for the Board of Health: “There is an urgent need for a Preventorium where pre-tubercular children can be treated” (Davis). On July 19, 1927, Larsen, as a member of the Health Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, once again called for the creation of a preventorium. Because his sister had died of tuberculosis in 1918, Dr. Larsen had a personal reason for wanting premium medical care for children with this serious affliction. He was asked to bring the matter up with the Trustees of Leahi Home. The proposed site, an old Honolulu Military Academy, was estimated to cost $140,000 and would serve up to one hundred children. At the time of this recommendation, the cost was considered to be excessive and so the matter was again dropped. It was not until the next wave of interest was brought to light, that preventoriums stood a chance (Rath).

It was not until the establishment of settlements and preventoriums to fight against tuberculosis had become the vogue on the mainland that it became a possibility in Hawai‘i. The first preventorium in Hawai‘i was established in 1926 on
the less populated island of Maui, in connection with its County Sanitorium at Kula. The Health Committee of the Council of Social Agencies on 'Oahu had called for the need for one in its annual medical report. The Director of Leahi Home, Dr. H. H. Walker, wrote an article that he presented to the Territorial Conference of Social Work, also urging for the establishment of a preventorium. It would be created not only for the purpose of helping sick children, but also as a community savings. Dr. A. N. Sinclair read a paper to the same committee that stated the need for a preventorium as part of a successful strategy for combating tuberculosis. Larsen and Dr. S. E. Doolittle provided information to the Board of Governors to convince them of the importance of such a venture (Rath).

Due largely to information provided by Drs. Sinclair and Larsen, the College Club (which had taken a long-standing campaign against tuberculosis in the Territory) renewed its commitment to create the treatment facility. In 1929 and over the next year and a half, they encouraged many welfare and public health agencies in Honolulu to add their support. Finally, in 1930, the director of Palama Settlement offered to lease, free of charge, three settlement residences for preventorium purposes. The Trustees of Leahi Home secured the Attorney General’s support that it could spend its funds in conducting this type of residential institution. On July 7, 1930, a five-year lease was signed between Leahi Home and Palama Settlement for the use of the buildings. Under the leadership of Mary Dillingham Frear, the College Club provided much-needed monetary assistance to this project. The balance of the funds came from the memorial fund of Dr. Francis R. Day, who was the first to "outline a definite crusade against the spread of tuberculosis in Honolulu." Funds,
amounting to about $10,000, were donated to the College Club to recondition the buildings and equip it for caring up to thirty-nine children (Rath).

Larsen was appointed to the original membership of the Advisory Committee of the Palama Settlement to assist the Medical Director, Dr. A. N. Sinclair, in conducting the preventorium. Others on this committee were R. S. Anderson, Dr. S. E. Doolittle, and Dr. Phillip S. Platt (Director of Palama Settlement). Additional members served on the committee at the close of the four-year period: M. L. Smyth, Director of the Bureau for Nursing of the Board of Health; T. R. Rhea, director for the Division of Health, Education; Nell Findley, Director of Social Service Bureau; James Russell, Junior League nutritionist; Mary Dillingham Frear; and, Dr. C. A. Dougan. During the first four years of operation, the Advisory Committee met regularly to discuss ideas, experiments, and evaluations. They conferred on topics of nutrition, weight, follow-ups, intelligence quotients, dental conditions, family relief, and other issues (Rath). According to Larsen:

The attitude toward the work was never one of smug satisfaction, or one of restless criticism, but of the demonstration, coupled with the desire of evaluating the immediate and ultimate value of the work. Its possible educational value to the community was particularly felt and valuable results have come from the definite plan to get parents, teachers, nurses and social workers to come to the Preventorium at the regular follow-up clinics to see at first hand what was being accomplished (Larsen).
Eventually, preventoriums were no longer needed because severe cases of tuberculosis had diminished with preventative shots and effective outpatient treatments. Palama Settlement continued operation and celebrated its one hundred-year anniversary in 1996. As it has changed to meet the needs of the community it provided for, many of its programs discontinued have been because other establishments were able to offer these services. For the people in the Kalihi-Palama area, the Palama Settlement still served them in areas of education, social, and recreational activities. Over time, with Larsen’s influence, Queen’s took over many of the functions that Palama Settlement managed, with the opening of Queen’s own outpatient clinics. Larsen remained committed to the treatment of tuberculosis. Additionally, he pursued other causes, such as the substandard residential quarters for nurses at Queen’s (Rath).

**Harkness Hall**

**A Nurse’s Prayer**

In all I do and in all I say
Father keep me stronger every day
That I may help those in pain and distress
Comforting them along life’s path
I need thee, Father, I confess
In nursing others in life or death,
May I in love and sympathy always be,
Doing lowliest, kindliest tasks for thee (A. Chong)
Larsen was involved in many other aspects of Queen's aside from launching a campaign against toxic milk and setting up clinics for tuberculosis patients. Improving conditions for nurses was one of them. He included the above prayer in a pamphlet distributed for the opening of their new quarters, named Harkness Home. On May 17, 1932, The Honolulu Star Bulletin featured “Harkness Home for Nurses is Open Today.”

Lorraine Carlton did research into the nursing school when she wrote her dissertation for the University of Hawai‘i called “A Case Study of Queen’s School of Nursing.” She noted that the nursing school at Queen’s originated its training program in 1916 by recruiting women from plantations. They worked for about ten dollars a month—with twelve-hour days, and three-year contracts. Many women signed up for the nursing program because they wanted to help alleviate the pain and suffering their families experienced on the plantations. Women had few outlets away from plantation life and when they witnessed their mothers dying in childbirth, they were often stirred to leave that lifestyle in favor of the hospital life. Unfortunately, the facilities the nurses resided in were in shambles and needed repair (Carlton). The “Ka Hakaupila School of Nursing” yearbook of 1934 told of the conditions that the nurses endured:

Nurses were housed in the Supervisor’s Cottage, Graduate Quarters and Probationers’ Cottage. Living conditions there were crowded and not very pleasant. In the wooden dormitory termite droppings were said to have fallen on them (Ka Hakaupila).

Obviously there was a need for a better place for nurses to live.
When Larsen first visited Hawai‘i in 1919, he was a guest at the first graduation class from the nursing school. According to Carlton, in 1924 when Larsen became the Director of the hospital he championed the causes of the nurses to the hospital trustees and prompted improved living conditions for them (Carlton). In 1931, Mr. Lapham of Chicago visited the meager cottages and, through his efforts, Mr. Harkness of New York donated $125,000 towards a nurses’ home. Dr. James Judd and E. Faxon Bishop, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Queen’s, also became involved in raising funds. The hospital raised the remainder of the money needed to build a new structure for the nurses from nineteen other contributors. Harkness Hall, was designed by architect C. W. Dickey and built in 1931. It was a substantial building with a sizeable lobby; in places it was a two-story and others a three-story structure. Each nursing superintendent had a suite consisting of a bedroom, living room, bathroom, and a petite kitchen. The housemother had a similar suite and supervisors had connecting baths between each pair of rooms. The quarters were used to house nurses for over thirty years until in 1966 it became staff offices (Carlton).

During his years with their staff, Larsen felt compassion for the nurses at Queen’s. He was popular with them and they even asked him to sign their class book. In the class book, *Ka Hakaupila*, from 1934, Larsen wrote a dedication for the class. In his typical style, he provided inspirational advice for the nurses:

Senior--An ambition attained--a goal reached--

a journey started--an opportunity ahead--
Congratulations! A philosopher—one who had learned from the facts of life that true joy was not found in “getting away with it,” not in putting one over, not in always looking out for No. 1 and not in the spirit of “nobody can tell me.” This philosopher summed up a basic truth thus “If you cannot work with joy, but only with distaste, it is better that you leave your work and go sit at the temple gate and accept alms from those who work with joy.” Don’t pass this off with a “you’re telling me” but think about it. Develop some real convictions and each day try harder to reach your goal. Use mistakes and hardships as stepping-stones to greater attainment. The offer has been made to you—a course of life has been outline— you are the pilot—shallow water might look smooth, but be intelligent—a journey is reaching new ports, not looking for easy ways (Larsen, “Dedication for Class of 1934” 15).

These well-meaning words of guidance were aimed at giving nurses a sense of the reality that their chosen careers would be demanding. Larsen saw the difficult path as rewarding and valued the struggle that the nurses at Queen’s were engaged in. With the new facilities for residential nurses intact, Larsen had another notch on his belt for improvements in the name of Queen’s. Unbeknownst to him, however, he would suffer from a medical emergency that would plague him for years and make him change his mind on a disease that would turn out to be a personal struggle.
Typhus

A VIKING TOAST

If all the pain
and all the agony
and all the suffering in this world
is nobly borne
and faithfully endured
there will arise a SPIRIT--
the strength of which will overcome
all the forces of evil (Larsen).

Larsen fancied himself a “fighting Viking” and the poem above in praise of the nature that he identified with was found in a biography file on him at the Morgan residence. He had an occasion to use his strength personally when he was stricken with a disease that Larsen had downplayed in his research before his own experience with it. In 1939, when Larsen was 49 years old he fell ill. Morgan wrote “Notes on Typhus” on February 28, 1999 to discuss his serious affliction. He believed to have gotten typhus as a result of a fleabite that he obtained when he worked under his home in Diamond Head in a dark room where he developed his film. There was a tremendous rat problem, especially in the attic and the rodents carried fleas throughout the residence (Morgan “Notes on Typhus”). The 1939 “Case Report--Typhus Fever,” on his illness said that he was admitted to the hospital on November 27, 1939, three days after the symptoms began. At first, Larsen came down with a mild case of diarrhea and minimal abdominal cramps. He developed a slight
headache and loss of appetite on the second day. Finally, on the third day his temperature reached 102 and his symptoms increased to “general malaise, excessive peristalsis, and a wide-awaken state” (“Case Report--Typhus Fever” 1). He was toxic when admitted to the hospital, felt chilly, had increased headaches, and experienced pain in the lower lumbar region with aches in his legs. The medical record also stated that he had “severe diaphoresis” (“Case Report--Typhus Fever” 1).

After four days Larsen’s temperature dropped to normal and he felt much better. However, on the fifth day his temperature rose again. It soared to 104 and averaged 103. On the sixth day of typhus, he developed a rash of small red spots on his abdomen. As they increased to cover his whole body, including the top of his head, palms of his hands, and soles of his feet, and “part of the rash was hemorrhagic” (“Typhus Fever--Case Report” 2). The rash was particularly profuse on his abdomen and back, did not disappear with pressure, and contained mostly “moderate sized irregular macules” (“Typhus Fever--Case Report” 2). His symptoms continued and were recorded as a chilly sensation, constant and severe headache (especially in the temporal region), painful eye movements with a definite sensitivity to light, “sacroiliac regional pain,” and sensitivity along most of his spine and aches in his legs. He experienced extreme fatigue, but also a great difficulty in getting sleep “even after given two A.S.A. compounds, 1/4 morphine, 1/60 dilaudid, 2-1/3 grains pantapon)” (“Typhus Fever--Case Report” 2). Inhalations of pure oxygen gave some relief for his headaches, but he had a complete loss of appetite and loose bowels (“Typhus Fever--Case Report” 2).
On the ninth day of the disease Larsen developed an irregular arthritis that involved his ankle, knee, hip, left shoulder, both wrists and several finger joints. They were described as moderately painful, red, and lasted from two to three days. He also jaundiced and had an “acute nephritis,” according to laboratory reports. Larsen lost twenty-two pounds during this time period. It was not until the fifteenth day that his temperature dropped to 98 and thereafter stayed between 99.4 and 100.8. His pulse remained consistently below average. Larsen began having heart pains following his recovery that remained until he underwent surgery to cut a nerve and remove the pain (“Typhus Fever--Case Report” 2).

Larsen’s admission record showed his hospitalization stay to be 20 days. After his discharge, he took a more active interest in understanding the disease. Several months after his recovery, on January 4, 1940, Larsen initiated correspondence on typhus with the famous Dr. Hans Zinsser of Harvard Medical School who had been a Professor of bacteriology and immunology at Columbia. Zinsser’s research on typhus took him to a number of foreign countries, i.e., Russia, China and Mexico. Larsen had met Dr. Zinsser when he was in Hawai‘i and was familiar with Dr. Zinsser’s book “Rats, Lice and History” Larsen wrote to him saying: “I had occasion recently to meet your good friend with whom you have been so intimately associated with throughout your professional life--namely typhus fever” (Larsen, 4 Jan 1940). Larsen charted the disease in Hawai‘i to discover that contrary to his original thoughts, typhus was more prevalent in Hawai‘i and his bout with it prompted him to know more about its prevalence and severity. His correspondence
with Zinsser was aimed at getting any information he could on combating murine typhus.

Larsen wrote Zinsser about the increased number of cases of typhus in Hawai‘i and apologized to him for errors in his previous report that indicated that most cases of typhus in Hawai‘i were mild. He wrote that the first case he encountered was in 1933 at which time there were four other cases. In 1934, there were 14 cases, in 1935 there were 19 cases, in 1936 there were 50 cases, in 1937 there were 34 cases, in 1938 there were 46 cases, and in the last six months of 1939 (which was when Larsen was diagnosed with typhus) there were 36 cases reported. Although Hawai‘i currently did still have mild cases of typhus, Larsen reported that there was an increase in cases with severe symptoms. In fact, Larsen related that his own was said to have been among these cases, from the standpoint of rash, temperature and other symptoms (Larsen, 4 Jan 1940).

Larsen informed Zinsser that the disease seemed to appear in more affluent sections of the community rather than the poor ones and in the dryer regions more so than the wet ones. Larsen discovered that in parched areas dry, fine dust naturally occurred under homes. Larsen had reports from an entomologist who found that after rats were killed in traps, they were often left indefinitely in this powder. The fleas escaped off the dead rats and lived for some time in dry, dusty areas. Larsen’s own home had double walls “excellent places to breed rats, whose scampering can be heard at any time, night or day” (Larsen, 4 Jan 1940 1). According to Morgan’s writing entitled “Typhus,” Zinsser died during the course of the year and, while Larsen did not receive any written feedback from him before this unfortunate event,
his investigation into typhus helped decipher the root of the disease in Hawai‘i and developed safeguards from the spread of it (Morgan, 28 Feb 1999). Larsen took a particularly hard look at typhus after his own personal experience with it. He continued his work at Queen’s through further expansion and progressive changes.

**Queen’s Expansion and the Medical Group**

In the years between 1922 and 1942, when Larsen worked at Queen’s, the hospital grew in other areas as well. Margery Hastert records in the Miyama Medical History Center web site a number of areas of growth. The intern program was approved by the A.M.A, the Liholiho Wing was constructed, a Department of Physiotherapy was initiated, a Mental Health Clinic and a diabetic clinic were opened, the Mabel Smyth building was dedicated, and a Blood Bank was established. In 1927, and again in 1946, Larsen served as President of Honolulu County Medical Society; in 1929, he became chairman of the first Pan-Pacific Surgical Congress; in 1930, he became medical advisor to the H.S.P.A. (Hawai‘i Sugar Planters’ Association) and was the editor of *Plantation Health Bulletin* until his death. Additionally, Larsen began as a consulting physician for Tripler Hospital (Hastert).

In addition to his work at Queen’s and other associations, in 1934, Larsen became part of a medical coalition. The Medical Group was established on South Beretania Street in Honolulu, a location that the Hawai‘i state capitol later occupied and where its front stairs are now situated. Doctors James Judd, Arthur Molyneux, Peter Halford, and R. L. Mansfield decided to created the joint venture in order to share expenses and profits. Larsen, who rented office space for his consulting
practice, joined in. The purpose was to cut down on overhead and provide better patient care. According to “The Medical Group of Honolulu” brochure, it also behooved the group to be part of a team. It afforded them relief from such things as bookkeeping and paying for expensive equipment individually. It additionally advanced their knowledge of medicine because they could work together, and provided permanency in their profession as well as retirement provisions. In 1939, they formed a formal partnership and decided to construct their own building on Punchbowl Street in Honolulu. The cost was to be split among the partners. Deciding to air condition the building caused a controversy at this time because it seemed to fly in the face of naturally utilizing the beautiful Hawaiian climate (“Medical Group Brochure”).

By 1924, two years after Larsen became Medical Director of Queen’s, it became the first officially recognized hospital in the Territory to have met American Medical Association standards. The hospital had just been approved as competent enough to offer a residency in pathology--his medical specialty. Plantation hospitals, as well, attempted to reach better standards of care. In 1937, Kahuku Hospital became approved by the American College of Surgeons and by 1940 there were forty-eight hospitals established in the Territory. Only thirty-seven of these hospitals fit within the type and size to be rated by the American College of Surgeons. Of the thirty-seven, eight hospitals received an “A” rating. Because of this low percentage (only twenty-two percent), Larsen wished to unite Hawai‘i hospitals in their goal to improve hospital facilities (Hastert). He also spent time in his later years to pass on the history of medicine and Queen’s through an artistic pursuit that some found
entertaining and others found amateur. His creation of pageants also dealt with history—slanted towards recognizing the traditional medicine of other cultures, but validating his vision for Queen’s.

Hospital Pageants

Larsen enjoyed his position at the hospital and wished to convey its history, medical contributions, and accomplishments to the community. Moreover, because of a love for the theatrical, when the occasion arose, he enjoyed telling stories. Pageants were one way he related historical events to others. These generally had to do with medicine and its connection to Hawai‘i; and sometimes he used casts of hundreds. The historian in him portrayed Hawai‘i’s harrowing medical past as Pacific Islanders experienced diseases, health issues, and hospital history in his performances. Through big events like dedications, commemorations, and pageants much of Larsen’s knowledge of medical history and differences in cultures were presented for large audiences. Between 1956 and 1960, three major pageants: The Birth and Growth of Surgery in the Pacific, A Century of Medicine in Hawai‘i, and E Ola O Emmanlani (Queen Emma Speaks) were produced by Larsen. While not theatrical masterpieces, they did, nevertheless, give Larsen’s perceptions of historical events to rather impressive audiences and spoke to the issues of historical inclusion of peoples of other nations that was uncommon for this era. The first of these pageants, The Birth and Growth of Surgery in the Pacific, concentrated on informing about Hawaiian medicinal herbs and comparing medical practices between Europe and Polynesia.
**The Birth and Growth of Surgery in the Pacific**

On October 13, 1954, at the dedication of a new surgical wing of Queen’s, and in conjunction with the Sixth Meeting of the Pan-Pacific Surgical Association, a pageant was produced called *The Birth and Growth of Surgery in the Pacific*. Along with Nesta Oberner, the educated and vivacious wife of one of Larsen’s patients, Larsen wrote, directed, and narrated the event at the hospital. Actors performed on the stage as he recited the script. The pageant went back in time to when the Spanish explorer Balboa declared all of the lands and waters of the Pacific as the property of Spain. It dramatized Hawaiian kings, medical *kahunas*, and provided a procession of the Hawaiian royalty in full-feather regalia, showcasing medicinal herbs as they walked across the stage.

Larsen was particularly intrigued by the use of herbs in Hawaiian medical practices and used this opportunity to convey a portion of his knowledge on the topic. An accompanying program for the pageant discussed some of the 300 herbs, including *kukui, noni, and pohoe hoe*: the first was used as a physic, the second to draw out localized infection, and the third flower as a dressing after the dorsal slit operation—the Polynesian circumcision. The program also covered other forms of medical therapy, such as massage with stones, sticks, hands, and steam. Other types of medicines were displayed, such as the use of taro juice as an astringent to stop bleeding, and *ti* leaf and *tapa* splints for broken bones. There was mention of the use of soothing starches and alkaline earths for bleeding ulcers, and sunshine was prescribed for open wounds, acknowledging this treatment to be far more effective in preventing infection than the Western method, since Western medicine had generally
recommended packing and covering open wounds with linen that was often dirty and far from germ free ("Birth and Growth Program").

The surgical growth pageant continued, as Larsen directed knife-wielding Fijians who danced wildly while the narrative centered on the first surgical operation performed by the pre-European Pacific Islanders. The scene portrayed that “a Fiji islander had received a barbed arrow in his right side between the 5th and 6th rib (an inch back from the nipple). The arrow had broken off about three inches from the point under the 3rd row of barbs” ("Birth and Growth Program" 5). The whole piece was perfectly concealed from any external view as the native surgeon arrived and removed the arrow. The pageant program explained:

The patient was now lying on his back, but a little inclined to his left side. This was considered a favorable position for the operation. The wound had been received the day before and on pressing the finger upon its surface (though painful), the broken end of the arrow could not now be felt ("Birth and Growth Program” 4).

The entire procedure was described with the two-inch marking of the wound with charcoal, using bamboo, five or six motions, and considerable pressure. A splintered shell was used to maneuver the arrow and the incision was widened on either side. A strong noose went over the barb to keep it still. By the gentle twist in one direction of a finger and thumb, the surgeon withdrew the projectile in several minutes, bringing along part of the lungs. The struggling patient, who needed to be restrained by others because of the pain, was then turned over on the right side and a piece of tapa cloth was placed under the shoulder and pelvis with the intent that the patient make a full
aspiration to get rid of blood. Once the patient had drawn air into the lungs, the surgeon positioned a portion of banana leaf between the ribs and anointed the wound with coconut oil to keep the wound lubricated and open. Even if painful, this proved to be an effective procedure. Larsen considered the procedure to be ingenious for the time and conveyed this message to the audience ("Birth and Growth Program" 5).

Referring to the Caucasian influence in Hawai‘i, the pageant booklet described them as the “high-foreheaded, straight-nosed, thin-lipped, stalwart Caucasoid race with HI blood group A” that pressed eastward through the Micronesian Island and reached Hawai‘i about 600 A.D. ("Birth and Growth Program" 5). An account of a radical breast operation performed by early missionaries before the days of anesthesia, aseptic technique and antibiotics was described according to the research of the Vice President of Queen’s, Dr. Peter Halford. Definitely out of context for the times, Larsen showed creativity in his display of medical procedures theatrically performed and found it useful to show differences and changes in medical procedures between cultures and times for the lay audience.

The pageant broadened its scope into the area of Asian medical influences. Chinese surgery demonstrated needle techniques and the use of opium as a postoperative sedative for patients. Actors in Korean native dress presented this culture’s medical contributions. Japanese-clad performers shared a medical kit in which “Shochu,” a distilled spirit from sake, was used for sword wounds and abscesses. In Japan, infection treatments were given by means of “hibashi”—a chopstick-like iron rod heated to the red-hot point before using. In addition to these
Asian medical contributions to history, the pageant exhibited Italian, German, Portuguese, English, Scotch, Irish, and Swedish actors on the stage within their various ethnic costumes as well as the unique surgical equipment they brought to medicine.

After international contributions to medicine were displayed, the pageant concluded with a large group of doctors who donned white smocks and stethoscopes, as well as several nurses who conducted a processional march from the staged Blood Bank. Using an auditory flashback to the dedication ceremony at the cornerstone of Queen’s on July 17, 1859, Larsen exclaimed the words of its royal originator:

Founded as it mainly was, by individual charity, its existence bears honorable evidence to the feeling with which this community regards the necessities of its humble members at the time when they are least able to express their wants. A long-sighted policy of love toward those who need other hands than their own, to smooth their restless pillows... after all, the destitute and the sick are our brothers and sisters--are a lot happier for the time being, but our liability to want and suffering the same... society makes distinctions broad enough, but strip us of our artificial robes and we are one and all equally naked and equally exposed to the keen winds of want and the torments of disease (“Birth and Growth Program” 5).

Revisiting the sentiment that the hospital was meant for all, the program concluded by presenting the new changes made to Queen’s. The audience was invited to tour the hospital. Larsen announced:
The house is open! Death is defied and postponed! Another bulwark to guard Hawaii against the ravages of disease has taken its place in this battle to make Hawaii a healthier, happier community. All those who wish may now inspect this building. You will see the most modern surgical equipment that 1954 has to offer. Surgery in Hawaii has matured from the rapid stroke of a bamboo knife to the most elaborate instruments and equipment that an inventive material age can produce ("Birth and Growth Program" 6).

While the pageant was simplistic in detail and showy by nature, it provided insight into the background for modern medical methods. The advances of an array of different cultures were acknowledged as precursors to new methods and technological advances. The pageant was a successful fundraiser and raised awareness for historic and cultural differences in medicine. The pageant became an avenue that Larsen enjoyed and would utilize again to commemorate events and entertain audiences. His next pageant project commemorated medical advancements from 1856 to 1956, which Obermer and Larsen entitled A Documentary Presentation Cavalcade: A Century of Medicine in Hawai‘i, referring to the hundred-year span in which Queen’s had been in existence.

**A Documentary Presentation Cavalcade: A Century of Medicine in Hawai‘i**

Roughly two years after the pageant on surgical history, Larsen was involved in creating another pageant. This one was also created with Nesta Obermer. They wrote, produced, and put it on in honor of the Hawai‘i Medical Association
Centennial Celebration. The pageant entitled *A Documentary Presentation Cavalcade: A Century of Medicine in Hawai‘i* was performed at McKinley Auditorium in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. Performed on April 24 and 25, 1956, the pageant depicted epidemics and maladies of the era, such as Hansen’s disease, beriberi, and Bubonic plague, as well as early plantation medicine. Stepping ahead historically, there was a section on medical involvement in the community after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As with his first pageant, the performance depicted some rather grim topics in medicine. It included treatments and progressive medical techniques that had enhanced the state of health in Hawai‘i. The show ended with a call for cultural understanding and a challenge for Hawai‘i to teach the world that it was possible “to live, love, laugh, work and worship amicably together” (“*A Century of Medicine Program*” 5).

Among the files that Larsen kept on his pageants was a two-page, typed paper entitled “The Ceremony at Dr. N. P. Larsen’s.” As a behind-the-scenes aside, it claimed that in the course of the play a culturally offensive word, “‘auwe,” or “alas,” had raised concerns from a local Hawaiian society involved in the production. It was said that if a ceremony to undo the evil mana was not executed before the performance, something bad would befall the cast or production. Larsen took the warning seriously and two Hawaiians were asked to officiate the ceremony, Mary Pukui and David Bray. Pukui deferred officiating because she said that Hawaiian women had not traditionally performed these types of ceremonies (Larsen, “The Ceremony”).
The ceremony, which Pukui attended, consisted of laid offerings: cooked taro greens, a mullet, a boiled egg, a piece of cooked salt salmon, a small glass of gin, one of brandy and one of 'awa. Each offering had a symbolic meaning. The taro greens symbolized the vegetable form of the pig; the mullet symbolized the pig of the sea, the egg symbolized a chicken, while the salmon, gin, and brandy were post-European adaptations. Brandy was called *palani* (*pa*, to touch; and *lani*, the sky), hence an appropriate offering to convey the petition to the realm of the gods. Gin was *kini* in Hawaiian, which means multitudinous—a wish for blessings to be such. Salmon was *kamane*, chosen for the *mana* in its name, which also suggested multitude (Larsen, “The Ceremony”).

The ceremony at Larsen’s home included a charge to Kane (giver of life), to Lono of rains and plant life, and to Pele of the Volcanoes that asked for blessings, forgiveness, and removal of all evil influences. David Bray requested that everyone place a pinch of each offering in his platter. Then, the person who ate a bit of the dedicated offerings was asked to dip a finger into each of the glasses containing the gin, brandy, and ‘awa and swallow whatever liquid adhered to the finger. After everyone else, Bray followed suit. He explained that he was last because he wanted to be sure that if an evil sorcerer was present it would serve as “bait” to destroy him and then he finished the offering. When the ceremony was over, those concerned felt satisfied that they had cast off the bad mana. At least nothing was ever reported to indicate to the contrary (Larsen, “The Ceremony”). The ceremony stood for Larsen’s openness to Hawaiian beliefs and attempts to bridge historical barriers. Once again his ambivalence between tradition and modernity was evidenced by a willingness to
waylay evil omens on his production by means of a traditional method or exorcism. The third of his major pageants, *E Ola O Emmanalani* ("Queen Emma Speaks"), changed courses and validated Larsen's desire to justify modern practices.

**E Ola O Emmanalani ("Queen Emma Speaks")**

Four years later, on October 3-4, 1960 a documentary play was presented on the occasion of the Centenary Celebration of Queen's at McKinley High School. Again it was written by Larsen and Obermer and entitled: *E Ola O Emmanalani* ("Queen Emma Speaks"). The play that they co-wrote included a cast of a hundred actors, singers, and dancers who represented nurses from Queen’s (whose name had officially changed the year before). It told the fantasized story of Queen Emma who appeared in modern times to the nurse’s leader, Kalani, and looked back on the history of the hospital. The hospital, which came about because of the Queens’ aspiration to help save the Hawaiian population, harkened back to a necklace given to her by the King which she used to help raise funds needed to start the hospital ("*E Ola O Emmanalani* Program" 3).

*E Ola O Emmanalani* intimated the real fear and distrust that Hawaiians had in using hospitals because the change of tradition from Kahuna to hospital care seemed impersonal and unnatural to them. In some ways it was similar to the other two pageants that Larsen wrote. There was one scene that gave homage to the various ethnic groups and how they contributed to Hawai‘i medicine. Much of the pageant visualized improvements that had developed over the years, like the use of the first rubber gloves by physicians. A film was interspersed into the performance on the
history of modern medicine and how Queen's fit into it. Another scene described the use of the hospital after the bombing of Pearl Harbor ("E Ola O Emmanlani Program" 5).

The timeframe for the presentation started with the building of the original medical structure and spanned to the newest research methods such as the use of animals in testing, x-ray machines, artificial kidneys, operating rooms, EKG machines, and their diet kitchen. In a critical vein, one section of the play discussed the many unnecessary procedures that occurred over the course of medical history at the hospital. When the Queen Emma "spirit" was asked if she was shamed by the modern hospital, she gave the spotlight to her husband, the King, who quoted from Tennyson: "The old order changeth, yielding place to new, and God fulfills himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world" ("E Ola O Emmanlani Program" 32). Queen Emma replied: "But there is one order that must never change. Members of Queen's! That order is--LOVE! Love your work! Love your patients! Let love and Faith dominate Queen's...forever!" ("E Ola O Emmanlani Program" 32). As the stage broke into song, Queen Emma ended her appeal with the words: "And as you sing--Look forward!" ("E Ola O Emmanlani Program" 32). In this pageant a melodramatic Queen gave her blessing for modern changes to Larsen's audiences.

As for E Ola O Emmanlani Phil Mayer of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin gave the documentary play a thumbs down review for the most part. On the positive side, Mayer wrote that the topic was appropriate for the occasion and it involved about two hundred well-intentioned people and an influential audience of doctors and their
wives. Nevertheless, the main criticism against the production was that there was such a big effort to get everything in about the history of Queen’s, yet “good intentions are no substitute for rehearsal” (Mayer). Neither was he impressed with those who played “Four Acute Fallopions,” “The Two Dropped Colons,” “Three Fallen Kidneys,” nor the appearance by Tom Kartak as a “Normal Appendix.” While Mayer did give praise to several of the actors playing royalty, he found those portraying Hawaiian patients to be “charming but inaudible.... “and said that the usherettes were beautiful” (Mayer). Larsen was criticized for the vastness of this project that reduced medical history in Hawai‘i to a pageant in a light-hearted fashion. The writer’s decision to have Queen Emma show her support for modernity in the production could be questioned. On the other hand, she initiated the creation of the medical facility that currently existed. The production served to validate Queen’s and Larsen’s improvements.

Despite the unflattering review for *E Ola O Emmanlani* Larsen and Obermer collaborated on several more plays that had more universal messages. In 1957, they produced *The Royal Dagger*, a Chinese-centered play that was set in Cambodia. This story centered on a clandestine romance, a King with a harem of thousands, and his attempt to gain one more beautiful maiden. Her family planned to unite themselves with another close family through her marriage to the son, which they desired. The couple secretly married, and to her new husband’s surprise, his true heritage revealed him to be the Emperor Chu of Tonkin. They traveled to Tonkin and the story ended with their bringing peace to an unsettled nation. The message smacks of the rewards
of true love in a monogamous relationship and reflects one of Larsen's themes to choose the harder course.

Larsen worked solo on another pageant about "The League of Nations." It was based on the "Spirit of Ages" and presented messages of universal collaboration and unity between nations. The underlying meaning was that no one nation had the key to universal understanding. Each place had its own gifts to offer the world. Along with this message, Larsen offered that life is cyclical and all nations must strive for equality and unity. In the end of this production all of the nations passed through the arch of the Spirit of Ages. This indicated that over the course of time, different nations would rise and fall, but, through cooperation, they would be able to survive.

Larsen's pageants, involved sweeping, large-scale themes and a cast of thousands, were far from perfect. Although some of his performances appeared melodramatic and as sentimental as his English writings in his youth, stage productions seemed a perfect arena for Larsen's emphasis on history, imagination, and culture sharing for large groups. He created them whenever he found the opportunity. As with his enjoyment of giving slide show presentations of his travels, he seemed comfortable entertaining on a grand scale before varied audiences and was not deterred by negative criticisms. All in all, they offered people an opportunity for thinking about the medical past and/or cultural contributions. His backdrop was often Queen's, to which he added historic information as well as modern medical insights. Larsen included some gory and unpleasant happenings in his performances--before
the ultimate arrival of his happy endings. His later pageants were geared towards universality and commonalities.

As demonstrated in this chapter, Larsen came to Hawai‘i at an opportune time to develop health programs. Research into the history of medicine in Hawai‘i and conducting statistical analysis showed racial, economic, and environmental differences that disturbed Larsen. His mainland medical knowledge gave him an advantage in determining some health issues, such as milk sanitation. His personal experience with typhus added a measure of humility to his career, since he had to admit that he underestimated its prevalence and severity. He formed a weekly group of physicians to discuss problems and solutions, piloted a program that introduced healthy food on plantations, and a campaign to fight against infant mortality. His program and campaign saved lives. Another change he advanced was the formation of preventoriums for tuberculosis patients that would keep both raise their health and keep them quarantined and away from other that they could infect. With increased knowledge of medicine, preventoriums were no longer needed.

Larsen took his career seriously, wanting to understand its history as a part of planning his own vision. He appreciated the goal of Queen’s and discussed publicly the kind of fear that enveloped Hawaiians due to epidemics and a lack of medical knowledge to stop the death toll. In looking at the history of the Islands, he took stock in problems that he needed to address as a physician and a Director at a hospital that was built to serve the poor and indigent of all races. He took an active role in upgrading the facilities and supporting the staff, as with the establishment of Harkness Hall for nursing quarters.
The pageants that Larsen and Obermer produced for various events, and mostly shown to visiting physicians and those interested in Queen's, showed a keen interest in relating the early story of medicine in Hawaii as well as cultural differences among the ethnic population. They illustrate Larsen's paternalistic desire to educate others on the history of Hawai‘i prior to Western influence. While many of the performances were seen as unprofessional and eccentric, they did record a history that was previously ignored or dismissed concerning other cultures and their contributions to medicine. Larsen used his platform to validate the changes he supported at Queen's with regard to technology and modernization.
CHAPTER 4. PLANTATION HEALTH

Early Plantation Medicine

Larsen became part of plantation medical history at a time when sugar plantations were of major importance to the economic livelihood of the territory. Lela M. Goodell wrote about life in Hawai‘i prior to the time when the twenty-seven self-contained plantations dominated the islands for nearly a century. The plantation history she described in “Plantation Medicine in Hawai‘i, 1840 to 1964: A Patient’s Perspective,” in 1995, provided a backdrop for the dramatic changes that took place in the world of medicine prior to Larsen’s arrival. She wrote that the Chinese “coolies” were the first of the ethnic groups that arrived in the 1800s on Kaua‘i (and there was evidence of isolated stone grinding mills.) Sugar cane grew wild and in the 1830s Europeans organized sugar plantations. While the industry did not make a profit for almost forty years, contract laborers were brought to the islands in 1852 because of the declining native population. Ethnic laborers arrived in waves and Goodell found that passenger lists of plantation laborers were included right along with the imported farm animals. On the cargo lists for the ships that brought laborers in, contract workers were referred to by racial group rather than by individual name. Western (Caucasian) passengers were the first to be listed (albeit by name), followed by such entries as:

5 natives
3 cows
4 Chinamen
6 heads of hogs (Goodell 786).
Granted these kinds of inventory lists were not uncommon, especially with large groups of migratory immigrants throughout America in the field of agriculture. Because laborers were brought in to help create profits for agricultural operations, the medical needs of early laborers were not of primary concern to their contractors, since this lessened profits. Plantation owners sought out and found a steady supply of laborers. The laborers were willing to make the journey to plantations for a fee that offered the hope of better wages and conditions than they had access to in their homelands (Goodell).

On January 10, 1999, Helen Wong-Smith gave a presentation on “Nils P. Larsen, M. D. and Plantation Medicine,” wherein she cited differences between early plantation medicine and the improved conditions that he helped implement. She described the conditions of a doctor serving on a plantation in Koloa in 1852. Drawing from the writings of Dr. J. W. Smith, who came with the tenth company of American missionaries, she gleaned insight into how medicine was practiced on Kaua‘i at that time. Dr. Smith had made no real distinction between practicing medicine on the plantation and in the general community. In his notes of April 17, 1855, Dr. Smith wrote that his duties included ordering medicine for Lihue Plantation, giving children music lessons, and transplanting trees. Paraphrased from his written daily journal, on May 12, 1856, she stated that he started out for Waioli at “9 1/2 o’clock” in the morning, changed horses at Lihue, crossed Waimea River for the first time on the new ferry and returned the next day after vaccinating in the village until eight o’clock at night. He said that on August 4, 1856, Smith received a note from C. Titcomb that asked him to return because one of the plantation men had
an accident. He started off to Hanalei to attend to the patient and visit with missionary families until nine that night. When he finally arrived again at Koloa he was totally exhausted after a long fifty-two-hour ride. As a dedicated practitioner Dr. Smith regularly endured lengthy trips such as this to assist his patients and had to be prepared for any kind of medical emergency with minimal assistance or facilities (Wong-Smith).

In her research, Wong-Smith found one of the earliest references to the life conditions of a Chinese laborer who arrived in Hawai‘i in 1882. The laborer had neither been to a hospital nor knew of any nearby. His picture bride wife bore twelve children without the use of a doctor and only visited one three days after the birth of each child to obtain a birth certificate. When he fractured one of his bones, the laborer recalled pulling the bone together and treating the wound with herbs. This, he said, “resulted in a life-long limp” (Wong-Smith).

Wong-Smith additionally found commonplace epidemics of two diseases: typhoid, a bacterial infection of the digestive system that is caused by ingesting contaminated food or water, and diphtheria, caused by bacteria that attacks the membranes of the throat and releases a toxin that damages the heart and nervous system. Women often died in childbirth, and infant mortality rates were exorbitant. Another prevalent and often fatal disease was beriberi, a degenerative nerve disease is caused by a vitamin thiamine deficiency and marked by inability to move, swelling, and pain. Moreover, there were no hospitals and so it was typical that physicians performed operations in their homes. By 1915, however, there were two dispensaries/hospitals on Kaua‘i. Almost exclusively, midwives handled prenatal
care and delivery, since the use of doctors was generally frowned upon by the older generation of Japanese. It was seven years later that Larsen would arrive at Queen’s, and modern medicine was on the rise.

**Plantation Health Centers**

A man will know when he is chosen  
By the Gods to a life of quest,  
For the restless urge within him  
Is an eagle in his breast  
An eagle with frantic pinions  
Which may not be caged or tamed,  
With eyes on the far horizon  
And becoming stars unnamed  
The goal may be veiled in mystery  
And the seeker may have no chart  
But let him turn from his seeking  
And the eagle will eat his heart  
Then after the search is over,  
After the finding....rest?  
There is no rest for the seeker  
With an eagle in his breast (Don Blanding).

The above quote was found in a fax memo entitled “Memories of Nils P. Larsen,” as one of Larsen’s favorite inspirational quotations.
Larsen wrote “Tuberculosis on Plantations: 100 Years of Plantation Medicine,” for the Hawai‘i Medical Journal in March, 1956. After thirty years of research he discussed his meticulous and longstanding recordation of one of the most fatal diseases on Hawai‘i’s plantations. Larsen learned that every year forty-five out of 100,000 of the population died of beriberi. Several times more plantation workers died from gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and the intestines that is usually the result of bacterial or viral infections. Both were preventable ailments. Six hundred children succumbed because of diarrhea from poor food or sanitation. Tuberculosis ran rampant, with 800 active cases at the time of his study and 160 deaths per 100,000 annually. The death rate of Filipinos on the island was 350 per 100,000 yearly. Larsen was aghast at this shoddy state of affairs and blamed the condition on neglect and ignorance. With his promotion to Director of Queen’s in 1928, however, Larsen was able to make changes that others could not. He was particularly interested in making changes to plantation medicine (Larsen, “Tuberculosis on Plantations”).

After several years as Queen’s pathologist and Director, in 1928, he was invited to speak before the members of the Hawai‘i Sugar Planters’ Association (H.S.P.A.) at its annual meeting to discuss recent developments in medicine. To the members’ utmost dismay, instead of discussing progress in the medical field in Hawai‘i he began to describe the worrisome health conditions found on some of the plantations. He pleaded for the creation of a plantation health center. His argument regarding the work atmosphere on the plantations was one to which the agriculturalists could relate to economically: “At your experiment station, scientists
have demonstrated that it pays to improve crops. Let me show that it also pays to improve human conditions” (Larsen, “Hawai‘i Sugar Plantation Speech of 1928” 4). When one irate Planters’ Association member commented that they were not in the business of public health, Larsen responded, “How much cane can a sick man cut?” (Larsen, “Hawai‘i Sugar Plantation Speech of 1928”). He went further to offer an eighteen-month trial health improvement program to see if it would not reduce the costs of producing cane. “If it does not lower the cost of producing cane, we’ll abandon the project” (Larsen, “Hawai‘i Sugar Plantation Speech of 1928”). Larsen sold them on the idea and the H.S.P.A. agreed to a trial period based on these terms. In addition to his position at Queens, he took on the job of creating the Ewa Health Center, an expansion of Palama Settlement and Board of Health’s healthy baby clinic. The Ewa Health Center became the hub for medical improvements (Larsen, “Hawai‘i Sugar Plantation Speech of 1928”).

One of the first changes that Larsen suggested was in improving nutrition overall. He drew attention to the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables in the diet. After seventeen months, Larsen proved to the plantation directors that “workers who ate twice their former amount of protective foods suffered less than half as many sick days as had the other laborers” (Larsen, “Hawai‘i Sugar Plantation Speech of 1928”). Fruit trees and other edible plants were brought in and cultivated on the plantation so that workers could enjoy a variety of fresh food. Dr. P. Howard Liljestrand, Larsen’s right-hand physician since 1938, discussed the results of the trial period for health improvement in the 1956 “100 Years of Plantation Medicine,” and found that:
I am now completely convinced that the population in general gets far less medical care than it needs and can use, because of fee for service payment. It is true that plantations have a high rate of office calls and a high rate of hospitalization, but Dr. Larsen’s figures indicate that it pays off in good health (Liljestrand).

In his 1954 “20-Year Review of Health Work on Hawaiian Sugar Plantations,” Larsen relayed the work that he had done over the years with the plantations. He convinced plantation stores to sell protective food at cost, and nutritious lunches were served to school-aged children for five cents. Good food was also encouraged in the way of growing gardens of fresh banana, papaya, avocado, mango, alligator pear, and guava trees. Evidence of the better health of the plantation laborers was seen in a dramatic decrease in the cases of tuberculosis and hookworm. From 1936 to 1946, there was a decrease from 200 to 64 cases of tuberculosis, and virtually no cases of hookworm that had been at an astounding rate of ninety-two percent ten years prior (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

Experiments in providing meals for plantation workers were conducted. These meals were well balanced, affordable and offered a better nutritional option than the limited rice-only diet that the men had been used to. The plantation store began offering chocolate milk. While Larsen understood the reason why rice was such a popular meal because of its cheap cost and the tight budgets of workers, he educated them on the importance of a balanced diet using color charts and giving comic books for children to learn from. The meal program fluctuated because the
workers simply did not like all of the food provided. Some meals became impractical and were not regularly delivered (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

In working on the Ewa Health Center, Larsen analyzed records that shocked him with regard to infant mortality rates. Women were having too many children too close together and this resulted in deaths. In one instance a thirty-five-year old mother gave birth to her twelfth child after having lost six of her others. A woman diagnosed with tuberculosis was pregnant with her tenth child. A mentally retarded woman died giving birth to her fifteenth child and there were no provisions for the children. The doctor recommended birth spacing and birth control on plantations for the well being of mothers and infants. Condoms became available for three to ten cents despite strong religious opposition. As for pregnant women, they were given rides to the health center for examination and prenatal education. They were encouraged to deliver at the hospital rather than in unsanitary camp shacks. Postnatal care included home visits by nurses (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

In 1929, the Ewa plantation had reached a tragic infant mortality rate of 174.4 per thousand. Physicians had then initiated a diet regimen for newborns that included local, natural ingredients. Beta lactose, unsweetened evaporated milk, and cane syrup were given to infants until breastfeeding began. After a few weeks, there was an introduction of cod liver oil and orange juice into their diet. At three months of age children, were given poi and strained vegetable soup. Infant mortality rates had dramatically improved. On Kaua‘i, the maternal mortality rate plummeted from 7.86 per thousand in 1934 to 1.21 in 1937. The health center also prepared formulas for
babies in sterile bottles that were delivered daily for a year and then supplemented by soup (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

Blake Clark wrote “Nils Larsen--Pioneer in Plantation Health,” for Hygeia in November, 1946. He stated that Hawai‘i had experienced a boom while Larsen was at the plantation medicine helm and, since agriculture was the occupation that employed the majority of workers in Hawai‘i, Larsen’s work for plantation medicine was important to the lives of many people. Every plantation expanded its health program, especially after 1935. Larsen, who initiated the program, analyzed the results in 1942 and found that even after a year of war, nightly blackouts and unventilated homes, health had dramatically improved. Clark concurred that “probably nothing accomplished in Hawai‘i was ever more significant” (Clark 854). Results showed that infant mortality on the plantations had lessened to a mere sixteen per thousand compared with the rate of the rest of the Hawai‘i Territory which was forty-four per thousand, and the United States figure of forty-six per thousand. Larsen attributed this success to weekly maternal and infant clinics. Pregnant plantation women, as a rule, were brought by station wagons to clinics for examination and consultation and ninety percent now had their deliveries in hospitals (Clark).

The “Twenty Year Review” for the H.S.P.A. was full of improvements in the area of health on the plantations. The occurrences of beriberi and other dietary problems dissipated with the intake of fruits and vegetables. Infant mortality was down as were the cases of dysentery. Likewise, disease rates dropped: Cases of tuberculosis were halved between 1935 and 1942. Even the rate of colds dropped in these same years, but they could not be measured against rates for the United States,

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as no records had been maintained of the kind that Larsen held for the Territory (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

There were other factors involved in the decrease of medical problems that Larsen acknowledged. He cited the declining number of single men on the plantations that produced much less crowded conditions, especially since the housing program had expanded. By the 1940s, even the cases of mental illness, suicides and homicides were lowered on the plantation as compared with both the Territory and the United States. Suicide rates per hundred thousand were calculated. The plantation rate was 7 percent, Honolulu was 24 and the United States was 14.2. Homicide rates per thousand were 3.5 on plantations and 8.3 in the United States. Mental illness cases per thousand were 79 on plantations and 106 in the United States. Many of these statistics could be explained by a combination of increased medical knowledge, proper medical implementation, changes in plantation management style, and overall improvement of conditions for workers (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

Industrial accidents, another major concern of Larsen’s, had been high on ‘Oahu; and after 1937, when specialists were assigned to minimize this figure, ‘Oahu’s rate of accidents on the job plummeted from 2450 per hundred thousand to 930, and the death rate was significantly lowered as well. The number of appendicitis operations was studied in order to guide physicians regarding surgical protection. The rule was that the operation rate should be neither too high nor too low and deaths should be infrequent. The numbers of operations were calculated for the plantations; however, no such numbers were generated from the United States so there could be
no comparison. However, with regards to death from appendicitis, the plantation records showed 1.2 per hundred thousand as against the United States number of 10.8. This, Larsen commented, suggested good methods. It also indicated vigorous record keeping (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”).

Larsen lived during an era when steamships brought visitors back and forth, tourism was at an all-time high, Hawaiian youths could go to the mainland for college and the trans-Pacific telephone brought Hawai‘i closer than ever to the United States, proper. Larsen spoke out about civil rights for plantation laborers and their need for advanced medical services and access to better nutrition. By the 1940s, major epidemics had been curtailed. With the use of sulfapyridine, the cases of death from pneumonia had decreased close to threefold. Since the best expectancy for this time with the proper use of sulfapyridine was seven per every hundred cases of fatal pneumonia, the eight percent rate that plantations achieved suggested “that plantation people quickly get the benefits of advances in medical science” (Larsen, “20-Year Review of Health Work”). And this drug was recommended in Hawai‘i in 1939 before the drug was even on the open market—an unseen advantage of being a Territory. The plantations became the most healthful places to live in Hawai‘i moreso even than the Mainland. The death rate was 5.29 per hundred thousand versus the mainland figure of eight per hundred thousand.

With regard to the high medical standards that Larsen helped establish on Hawai‘i plantations, Helen Gay Pratt opened up a conundrum in her 1944 book Hawai‘i Off-Shore Territory when she inquired:
The question naturally arises, what will happen to Hawai‘i’s high standard plantation workers after the war, when markets of the world are thrown open? Will the doctors, the nurses, the hospitals disappear from the villages because a competing area raising sugar cannot, or does not, afford the best medical care? Will there be no more baby clinics, no more clinics for mothers? Will the nice homes fall into disrepair? Will no more pleasant homes be built in the villages? Will the wages—long the highest paid to agricultural workers anywhere—be lowered? Will the whole standard of rural village life fall lower and lower because Hawaiian sugar had to compete with sugar produced in some tropical area where workers receive no health protection, and where the pay is low? ... Will the pineapple plantation villages of Hawai‘i be forced to reduce their living standards, or will the sugar cane industry die out because all the workers who can be employed will go to the more prosperous pineapple towns? (Pratt 378).

Pratt saw the value of Larsen’s medical interest in striving for the best health and living conditions that sugar plantations had to offer because it was good business—to a point. She claimed that paternalistic policies made possible the plantation improvements. She quoted the dictionary definition of paternalism as:

[P]rinciples or practices of a government that undertakes to supply needs or regulate the conduct of the governed in matters affecting them as individuals as well as in their relations to the state and to each
other, on the assumption that it can best secure their highest welfare
(Pratt 379).

This, she contended, plantations did in the same respect that the New Deal, social
legislation, and public welfare did. She added that, “people living in an advanced
community today are unwilling to permit those who cannot best secure their own
highest welfare to live as carelessly as they choose” (Pratt 379). The results of
improvements on the plantations were astounding, even more than for the Territory in
general. Tuberculosis cases were generally confined to sanitariums that lowered the
cases on the plantations; however, the rate of deaths for the Territory measured in
1930 was 106.8 per hundred thousand and in 1941 dropped to 53.26. Obviously,
paternalism worked towards health improvement.

Pratt found Larsen’s reply to her vexing observations ominous:

In Hawai‘i the workers (in agricultural industries) are guaranteed
work, food, shelter, recreation, health opportunities, education and
care in infirmity. This can only be maintained when sufficient income
makes it possible to maintain it. If American agriculture could insert
(at a future conference table) at least minimum requirements for a
standard of health protection and security for agricultural workers,
progress would be made. If the model presented could be the one
already attained in Hawai‘i, this model could be presented as a fact
rather than academic theory. If in the most backward areas of large-
scale agriculture the minimum standards can be demanded, then the
present standard can be continued and improved in Hawai‘i under free
trade conditions unless there is written into the organization of the new world mandates the requirement that every commodity package sold in the open markets of the world must be labeled "Produced under the international health standards." Then, and then only, will an enduring and progressively healthful industry in Hawai‘i be guaranteed (Pratt 379).

In other words, it would take worldwide cooperation in matters of health standards to ensure minimum health standards everywhere and sufficient income for Hawaiian sugar plantations to retain their superior health care and/or their livelihood.

The state of medical conditions on plantations was one area that Larsen had immensely improved while he was overseeing them. He fought in many ways to change the sad number of deaths due to plantation maladies. Coming from the New York medical world, he had progressive views on technology and physician alliances that took shape and made Hawai‘i healthier, especially its immigrant population on the plantations. Writing for Plantation Health Bulletin in April, 1961, Dr. L. L. Sexton, Sr. asserts that:

A discussion of plantation medicine would not be complete without the highest commendation to Dr. Nils P. Larsen whose name is synonymous with plantation medicine. His encouragement to the inexperienced young intern, or words of restraint to the over-aggressive has brought plantation medicine up from its crude beginnings to a degree of efficiency second to none in any other agricultural area in the world. He molded the disorganized, inefficient
system of plantation medicine into the modern association of plantation physicians whom today we salute (Sexton 43).

Larsen’s efforts in the creation of a better health, welfare, and living environment for plantation workers paid off. **Plantation Health Bulletin**, a publication for plantation physicians was another means by which Larsen documented and communicated important medical news for other physicians to share. A look into Larsen’s areas of expertise shows his interest in understanding his new environment, being sensitive to working and living conditions, and paying attention to personal health matters in his own family genealogy. The sample articles set forth below show the diversity of his knowledge, and an awareness of political, cultural, and medical concerns. They support the case that Larsen’s understanding and implemented improvements to the Hawaiian medical community were vast and pushed for modernization. They scrutinized problems and also indicated a need to publish positive advantages of the environment that could be used to promote the visitor industry. **Plantation Health Bulletin** guided other physicians around the islands toward a new order. Sharing international ideas suited Larsen’s push for world unity.

**Plantation Health Bulletin**

Larsen was a prolific writer and wished to communicate his ideas in various arenas, such as in *The Queen’s Bulletin*. He published his research findings in medical journals (especially *Hawai‘i Medical Journal*) and wrote on other topics in local magazines (particularly *Paradise of the Pacific*). In 1936, **Plantation Health Bulletin** began its publication, sponsored by the H.S.P.A. in connection with the
experimental Ewa Plantation Health Center that Larsen had fought for. Dr. Charles L. Wilbar, Jr., M.D., and Dr. Howard Liljestrand, M.D., were the first two editors for the bulletin. Larsen began as an editorial consultant and wrote for the quarterly magazine. In October, 1947, Larsen took on the editorial role and continued writing until 1961. The Plantation Health Bulletin contained a collection of articles for and from the many plantation doctors regarding their interesting cases, new findings in medicine or transmitting information they wanted to share. This was a way that colleagues could keep in touch with each other on all of the islands, lessening their professional isolation. It was a cohesive force so that whenever there were medical meetings, the doctors were familiar with each other's dilemmas and happenings. Larsen had physicians compile statistics on every subject that concerned them. These were subjects ranging from deaths, diseases, accidents, and births, where the doctors wrote on anything of concern. Plantation Health Bulletin became a history of plantation health over its twenty-five years of publication. The various artistic covers that Larsen created for each edition of Plantation Health Bulletin generally followed the theme of sugar cane—the sweet, natural plant that brought Hawai‘i into economically prosperous times. They also stood for the use of a major Hawai‘i food source that could be used for overcoming illness.

In the first editorial for Plantation Health Bulletin, the purpose of the Hawai‘i Health Project was outlined. Larsen said that for the last five years (1931-1936) the Health Center had been maintained by the efforts of the H.S.P.A., the Research Department at Queen's, and the Ewa Plantation Company. Their purpose:
1) Improve the general health of the plantation population and study the methods to bring this about.

2) Evaluate the bad effects of a high rice diet upon general health and resistance to infection.

3) Attempt to determine what cheap foods can be used to reduce the high rice diet.

4) Try and evaluate the specific factors in the foods which are responsible for the improvement of health.

5) Observe the clinical effects of the use of taro produce and try to teach their use to the plantation populations.

6) Determine the economic value to plantation of health improvement.

7) Develop an experimental health center for all plantations, from which health information and new evidence can be distributed to all plantation physicians. Use this center for instruction of plantation personnel connected with health work.

8) Conduct a thorough annual dental, laboratory and physical examination to discover other causes of ill health among plantation children (Larsen, “Plantation Health Bulletin Editorial”).
For those who condemn bitterly uncorrected faults should try to remember that 'Rome was not built in a day,' and realize that this same thing is true in improving health situations (Larsen, "Plantation Health Bulletin").

Larsen, as consulting editor, wrote numerous articles for Plantation Health Bulletin, many of them having to do with the health center. Moreover, his editorials often had to do with the status of the plantation, news or politics. Articles varied and ranged in purpose; however, the topics that Larsen covered included: tuberculosis,
preventive medicine, white rice diets, the physician as educator, accidents, dividends from public health measures, syphilis, community health education, infant mortality, nutritional education, dental issues, plantation sanitation, and more. They revealed Larsen’s medical challenges in many areas, as well as personal, political, and historic insights into the time in Hawai’i territorial history when plantations were the primary source of income for what would become a state. Many of the topics that Larsen wrote about merit examination. Several topics emerged as themes from among the multitude of his medical, social or political writings such as the environment, industrial accidents, and health concerns.

Environment & Health

Larsen first visited Hawai‘i as a tourist and knew that one major enticement for many people to visit or live in Hawai‘i was its climate. Having grown to adulthood on the East Coast of the United States with its variety in seasons, Larsen was curious about how the weather in Hawai‘i affected health. In 1937, he wrote a medical article on “Climate in Hawai‘i,” that systematically defended the way in which the climate and environment in Hawai‘i had not contributed to health problems. He investigated cases of anemia, control of insect-born infections, water and milk sanitation, parasites, the prevalence of poisonous fish and plants, crowded conditions, venereal disease, effects of isolation, or chronic infectious diseases. The doctor’s tone was optimistic about dealing with and overcoming Hawai‘i’s health issues. There were also no signs of climatic deterioration in Hawai‘i. The article was written as useful information for physicians to have on hand to answer the many
inquiries that visitors seemed to have on a daily basis (Larsen, “Climate in Hawai‘i” 8).

In a 1946 edition of Plantation Health Bulletin, Larsen wrote “Arthritis and Rainfall” that reported that Hawai‘i enjoyed more days in the human comfort zone than almost any other place in America. Because of its variable rain levels, Hawai‘i was a well-suited place to evaluate wetness and its relationship with disease. Rheumatoid arthritis, according to Larsen, was suspected of having a “climatic relationship” and was more prevalent in wet and cold or hot areas rather than in warm, temperate environments. Since 1941 Larsen concluded doctors on plantations had been reporting three different kinds of arthritis, and in his tabulation; he saw a rough connection between rainfall and rheumatoid arthritis. His article called for all plantation doctors to be diligent in noting the climatic conditions for arthritic patients in order for him to keep precise records (Larsen, “Arthritis and Rainfall”).

Larsen was keen to discover any environmental diseases that could be considered potential threats to Hawai‘i. Epidemics had plagued Hawai‘i several times and Larsen believed in preventative medicine to curtail similar medical outbreaks. A study, Round Table discussion, and subsequent article written in a 1944 edition on “Tropical Disease Dangers” ruled out possible threats to Hawai‘i. Larsen was particularly concerned that malaria could be introduced through mosquitoes arriving on airlines or other means. In 1939, Larsen suffered a rather severe case of typhus and initiated an aggressive campaign for prevention that included discarding all leftover food that would increase rat infestation. Additionally, he published a promising treatment for Weil’s disease, a severe form of leptospirosis, usually
resulting from contact with urine of infected animals, like rats, a disease which Larsen believed twenty-two percent of cane cutters suffered from (Larsen, "Tropical Disease Dangers").

Another environmental concern of Larsen’s was allergies and asthma. In a 1945 issue of Plantation Health Bulletin Larsen addressed the subject of “Atopy: How Can We Help the Hypersensitive?” In this article he said that: “10% of human beings are sensitive to substances which can be taken with impunity by the other 90%.” The Hawaiian Islands being small islands surrounded by water made a great place for experimental research on environmental health concerns because of its naturally isolated laboratory where one could study the impact of plants on patients prone to this type of suffering (Larsen, “Atopy”).

With regard to those who suffered from atopic or hereditary tendencies towards allergens, the more a patient was exposed to a sensitive substance the more sensitized they became to it. Larsen targeted the common ragweed for causing hay fever and asthma because of the amount of pollen it produced. If ragweed were reduced, it would decrease allergies and sensitivities for many people. People with dust allergies, he attested, should be made aware that Hawai‘i was associated with wind and hence—dust. For those who suffered from allergies: air-conditioned sleeping spaces, fewer hangings, fewer carpets, reduced numbers of dust catchers and thorough dust cleanings were recommended. Consideration of allergies was one reason why Larsen had his medical offices air-conditioned despite the objection others had in keeping it a more natural environment. Certain grasses additionally posed problems for the sensitive, as did sugar cane. On the other hand, Larsen noted
that many of the beautiful showy flowers in Hawai‘i were less likely to have the same problematic effect as smaller grasses and trees. Because of their evolution, eye-catching plants developed survival characteristics that tended to attract bees rather than develop the small air-borne pollination methods that produced allergic reactions in humans (Larsen, “Atophy”).

Basically, Larsen used statistical proof to verify the ways in which the Hawaiian weather and environment in Hawai‘i were healthy. Taking advantage of his education and location, he proactively advanced medical pursuits in these areas. He influenced others to see the value of understanding everyday conditions in the world, how they affected people, and drove them to learn from it. His eagerness to see the relationship between plants and people and consequent publication of his investigations in Plantation Health Bulletin fostered collegiality between interested physicians in this field of study. Further writings in the field of industrial medicine were geared towards modernizing and raising health standards within the labor force.

**Industrial Medicine and the Individual**

Larsen was a civil rights defender from his college years. He practiced medicine at a time when industrial medicine was beginning to be understood and the rights of workers to good health was just evolving. Because of his affiliation with plantation life, he was engrossed in safeguarding plantation workers and wrote about it on many occasions. Plantation work often involved heavy labor, repetitive tasks, and often potentially unsanitary conditions, so his concern was to minimize trade
accidents, diseases, afflictions on plantation grounds, and to become an industrial medicine pioneer.

In a 1936 edition of Plantation Health Bulletin, Larsen wrote a brief note on incidents of accidents on sugar plantations in Hawai'i, stating that 'Oahu had a significantly greater occurrence of injuries than the other Hawaiian island plantations. The doctor suggested a careful analysis of accidents and provided forms he devised and began to circulate. In the bulletin he asked for physician cooperation and precision when filling out the forms. Keeping accurate records was a concern for Larsen. Through the statistics from the forms generated, he was able to make everyone aware of the magnitude of injuries, to brainstorm with management and workers about ways to reduce accidents, and to involve physicians in greater advocacy for their patients--since they had to think and write on every episode. (Larsen, "Oahu Plantation Accidents").

Again on the topic of industrial medicine, in 1941, Plantation Health Bulletin included Larsen's article: "Industrial Medicine--A Growing Specialty" to highlight a symposium on industrial medicine held in San Francisco, its rising popularity and how it could be applied to plantation medicine. He also wrote "Analysis of Health Figures of H.S.P.A. Plantation," which reported the need for plantation workers to be able to enjoy human rights, including an income sufficient to protect a family from preventable disease, live in a decent home and be able to enjoy recreational pursuits. He called for doctors in Hawai'i to "become better specialists in the field of 'industrial medicine'" (Larsen, "Industrial Medicine" 15). Advancing the goal of industrial medicine Larsen advocated for the "total life" welfare of plantation
workers. In 1941, Larsen proposed a pre-paid health plan to H.S.P.A. and submitted a Plantation Cooperative Plan. He proposed a sliding scale to service plantation laborers who earned more than $100 a month wherein doctors would receive only thirty to forty percent of what they would have received in private practice (Larsen, "Industrial Accidents" 15).

Larsen wrote about industrial medicine with regard to individuals with heart-related problems. In 1950, Larsen wrote "Panel Heart Disease in Relation to Employment," an article centered on a panel discussion on the topic for which Larsen acted as moderator. They discussed pre-employment evaluation, how to detect heart problems, and how to treat patients who suffered from it. Changes had been made in medical knowledge about heart disease and patients were no longer restricted as invalids for the rest of their lives. Each case, he commented, differed, but rather than sticking with the old idea of six weeks in bed and six weeks of slow reconditioning, a patient could be allowed to do whatever they were physically able to do without a reoccurrence of symptoms. To be prudent, a three-month minimum and even a six-month vacation from an active job was still considered appropriate. Larsen summarized the panel discussion and said that physicians should not be bound by strict rules with regard to heart and circulatory patients because there were too many variables involved. Every situation required strict evaluation and the study of all possible criteria. Larsen did not want to set rigid guidelines for recovery that could not be flexible enough for workers with quick recoveries nor make concessions for those who needed a longer period of recuperation. Individualized treatment plans were vital to the doctor's idea of proper patient care (Larsen, "Panel Heart Disease").
The interest in flexible, individual treatment was based on the belief in differences in health that Larsen took note of. His understanding of differences led to his try to understand general racial and ethnic tendencies.

Racial Differences & Health

The October, 1946, Plantation Health Bulletin article "The Hawaiian Says Goodbye," provided Larsen’s comprehension of the Hawaiian population decline. He claimed that it was "typical of that seen in many other parts of the world when a relatively simple culture is overrun by an overbearing one" (Larsen 20). Trying to understand cultures that had been taken over by world exposure, he surmised that once these people were affected by outside influences they were unable to adjust, lost inner pride, and leadership failed. The recent mortality rates for both Hawaiians and Filipinos in Hawai‘i showed that while the Hawaiian population was very much on the decline, the Filipino population (once also in peril) was on the upswing. Since few Hawaiians worked on plantations, Larsen attributed this to the guidance on health issues and availability of medical facilities that the Filipinos now received on the plantations (Larsen, “Hawaiians Say Goodbye”).

Two years later, Larsen found that the prevalence of tuberculosis among the large Filipino population on plantations in Hawai‘i was a particular quandary. In 1948, he wrote, “Tuberculosis Problem on the Plantations” for Plantation Health Bulletin. A great deal of research had been done on tuberculosis; nevertheless, it was still a dilemma in Hawai‘i with no cure. Larsen believed there to be two schools of thought on why Filipinos had a heightened rate of contracting it. One line of thinking
purported that “primitive” races had a “lower degree of natural resistance to it” (Larsen, “Tuberculosis on Plantations”). The other view contended that economic conditions for Filipinos, played a part in the higher rate of incidence because of overcrowding, poor diets and sanitary conditions. Tuberculosis, Larsen showed, manifested itself differently in Filipinos as evidenced with 25 percent of the cases ending in death, whereas only 10 percent of the general population died after contracting it. In order to curb the disease, plantation physicians were given information on where to send patients for treatment, medicines available like streptomycin that could lessen symptoms of some forms of T.B., and preventatives like BCG. The doctor urged x-rays before plantation workers were hired (Larsen, “Tuberculosis on Plantations”).

In the fight against tropical diseases an April, 1947, edition of Plantation Health Bulletin included “A Tribute to Dr. S. M. Lambert.” This article gave praise to a man considered to be an expert on filariasis, a mosquito-borne disease that occurred in areas of stagnant water. Lambert believed in training local natives in the field of medicine, who were willing to work in areas where other doctors feared tropical diseases or lack of remuneration. Filariasis was one affliction that many doctors feared. After years of being exposed intimately with carriers it had been known to cause elephantiasis and, therefore, needed fresh doctors to combat it. Dr. Lambert was known as the “Yankee Doctor in Paradise” and took many “hells” for it because he appeared to be tampering with people of other cultures in foreign areas. Not only did the doctor instruct others on effective medicinal ways to fight against filariasis, but he also studied and learned methods derived within other countries.
Lambert died in 1946 and left behind a letter that Larsen believed to be of historic magnitude. It conveyed the message that islanders were not only able students in learning and implementing modern world advances, but moreover, they were often teachers in the art of living in harmony and peace (Larsen, “Dr. S. M. Lambert”).

In a different vein, Larsen saw the evils of medical technology in advanced civilizations. He wrote numerous book reviews for the newspaper and in October, 1949, he reviewed *Doctors of Infamy* by Alexander Mitscherlich, M.D. for *Plantation Health Bulletin*. His review, entitled “Medical Horrors Reported from the Trials at Nuremberg,” expressed his disgust of the medical mayhem brought on during World War II. Mitscherlich wrote about the twenty-three doctors and scientists—all but seven of who were found guilty of war atrocities and hung. The physician’s book provided testimony by people who had been tortured in the name of “state” medicine, the perfection of German science, totalitarian rule and its ideology. Stories of sterilization (x-ray castrations and uterine injections), injections of gas bacilli, gas chambers, and unnecessary amputations, bone transplants between victims, and hunger and thirst experiments horrified readers. Methods of extermination were often based on gender, age, and racial groups. There were freezing experiments in which people were exposed to sub-zero temperatures. Larsen quoted from Albert Deutsch regarding the appalling experiments and tortures: “They produced not a single new cure, nor did a single important discovery result from the experiments performed on their human guinea pigs” (Larsen, “Drs. of Infamy” 27). The ghastly experiments did, however, result in a change in the Hippocratic oath by the World Medical Association in Geneva to include in part:
I will not permit consideration of race, religion, nationality, party politics or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient. I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of its conception. Even under threat I will not use my knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity (Larsen, “Doctors of Infamy,” 27).

From his discussion of this book Larsen highlighted two important concepts that he believed in. First, that state medicine was potentially harmful because it put too much power in the hands of a group, as it did in the case of Nazi Germany. Secondly, euthanasia was exposed as a dangerous two-edged sword, since Hitler used it as permission to kill. An idea that started as death to prevent suffering was rationalized to include murder of the insane, then inferior races, those with diseases, enemy prisoners and political prisoners--an unlimited right to kill man (Larsen, “Drs. of Infamy”). Larsen’s desire for world standards not only scrutinized Germany’s unethical practices, it stood as an example to mark the worst case scenario for medicine internationally. He also wrote on medical services elsewhere to see what worked in other nations that could be part of a world standard.

**Medicine Around the Globe**

“The most dangerous man in a community is a starving doctor” (Larsen, “Looking Back”).

The quote above from an article entitled “Looking Back” in The Pharos of Alpha Omega Alpha written in January, 1958, describes Larsen’s view on doctors’ finances and the need to provide competitive wages for them (Larsen, “Looking
He believed this was essential in order to keep good physicians in the field. He observed the ways in which other countries approached medicine and did a survey of the number of places that he visited in this regard. A 1952 edition of Plantation Health Bulletin featured Larsen’s article on “Strength and Weakness of European Health Plans as Observed During a Recent Visit in Europe,” which drew from Larsen’s travels. In this article, Larsen compared medical systems in seven different countries. He said that Ireland had an independent system, because they did not want the English system imposed on them; however, many Irish went to England to have babies free of charge. In England, Larsen was told, the new medical system was preferred over the old, although the medical administration believed that the system was wasteful and should be given more controls. In Spain seven percent of a person’s income went to the hospital fund, and government clinics and hospitals were free; however, the best care for the serious ill was with a private physician. Because income for the average person was so low, few people could afford extra money for medical care. Much the same in Portugal, Larsen found that the rich got better care and the masses received the lesser care dealt out by the government. In Scandinavian countries, Larsen found medicine to be much more equivalent to that of the United States. However, the philosophy of “something for nothing” government assistance from “cradle to grave” had hampered pride in progress and workmanship (Larsen, “European Health Plans” 18). A top industrialist predicted future disaster with this continued attitude. The Swedish doctors felt the Danish system was horrible, while they copied the British system. Medical rates were very low—resulting in “prescription doctors” (Larsen, “European Health Plans” 19).
Larsen interviewed a Honolulu girl living in Norway, and she believed that the medical system was fine. She received hospital care for herself and her mother for a small monthly stipend. He praised the “Oslo Breakfast,” where ninety percent of the children in Norway received a balanced meal at school before each morning session. To Larsen, this was a better way to improve national health than subsidizing more doctors. The doctor believed the Swedish system of paying independent doctors their full fees was the best. Patients could go to the government and get a two-thirds return. Hospitalization could be bought with small daily payments. His major criticism here was that the physicians could not follow their patients into the hospital, since hospitals were completely separate with their own physicians. Larsen ended this review by urging that rugged individualism be kept going as long as possible in Hawai‘i since it kept quality levels higher (Larsen, “European Health Plans”).

Again in April, 1953, Larsen wrote an article specifically on the “Swedish Health System.” He found most medical facilities there to be spotless. Obvious difference between Sweden and the United States could be found in the Sick Benefit Fund where each mother who was a member received sixty dollars at birth for each child and money each year until the child reached sixteen to offset the cost to raise them. Larsen, who advocated birth control, took an unusual posture in supporting the money allotment for women giving birth in this nation. He supported annual payments to mothers because the Swedish population at this time was at an all-time low and this was incentive to safeguard the nation from extinction. Generally, however, Larsen was against too much government because it led to “appointment by
pull" where nepotism and connections determine who will get jobs rather than qualifications. "It is not how much you know, but who you know" (Larsen, "Swedish Health System" 17).

In a November, 1954, edition of Plantation Health Bulletin, Larsen wrote an eclectic article that dealt with his encounters with visitors to Hawai‘i entitled “Our Crossroads, a Listening Post,” in which he brought together several of his medical interests (population control and quality medical care). In typical Larsen fashion, he wrote about people with different perspectives and inquired about their views on the American system of medicine. On population control, he interviewed a woman from Pakistan and her observations on the American health system. She had come with hopes of finding ways to help the Pakistan sugar industry to have happier, healthier workers. She wanted to learn about what Americans did in their industry and take it back to her country, because she saw two major obstacles in Pakistan: disease and a lack of “family planning.” She did not like the American terminology of “birth control” because it intimated that the fertility of people (mostly of lower income) was being controlled, and she thought “planned parenthood” was better—but it still had the connotation of outside rule. His perception of the visiting Pakistan woman was one of respect in that she embodied the “spirit of the pioneer” (which he identified with), who wanted to learn from other countries in order to find ways that would benefit her own (Larsen, “Our Crossroads” 19).

In the same article, Larsen turned to the topic of racial imbalance and used a wealthy American couple as an example. They embodied Albert Schweitzer’s philosophy of a life of service through giving back to “colored people.” At age thirty
eight the man became a doctor, and the woman, who also had three children to care for, utilized her technical skills. Like Schweitzer, who set up a hospital in South Africa, they moved to Haiti where there were no doctors. Larsen observed that this couple did not seem to go with any preconceived religious fanaticism, motives or persuasion, other than to serve a need. The couple did so because they believed that Caucasians had been particularly unjust to this race of people in their trek across the world. Larsen felt that they were the beginning of a new era in which the idea of the “super race” was waning and being replaced by the realization that there is no superior race. Their motto, “they serve best who give of themselves,” blended well with one of Larsen’s favorite philosophies: “happiness comes in overcoming obstacles” because it is not always easy to provide necessary services, especially in disadvantaged areas; however, it offered great rewards for dedicated people (Larsen, “Our Crossroads” 19).

Diet and Teeth

I now have that sweet taste in my mouth (Jacob Riis).

Another of Larsen’s interests in nutrition carried over into his research on teeth, and the discrepancies he found between races and diet. He made dental health a priority since the tooth decay and cavities, he found in children in Hawai‘i were more than double that found on the mainland. In the July, 1955, edition of Plantation Health Bulletin, Larsen wrote, in “Diet and Tooth Decay:" “It was not unusual to see elementary school children with an entire set of teeth rotted down to the black stumps” (Larsen, “Tooth Decay” 20). An advocate of fluoridated water, a
controversial topic, Larsen was not successful in this area. Nevertheless, because of
the amount of public awareness that Larsen brought out, he has been attributed with
“almost single-handedly turning this picture around in one generation” (Larsen,
“Tooth Decay” 20). Although bad teeth were a symptom of a bad diet, and Larsen
did comparison studies on race to find which had better teeth, his interest in nutrition
was more than its effect on teeth. He saw diet as influencing the person’s total well
being.

In 1939, Larsen chaired the Central Nutrition Committee that put out a
booklet called “Eating Your Way to Health,” with suggestions from the Nutrition
Laboratory at the University of Hāwai‘i. The introduction to this booklet stated that it
was the intent of the committee to help “overcome the first obstacle to the attainment
of better health through food by presenting the best authoritative facts about food in a
form that everyone could understand” (Larsen, “Eating Your Way to Health”). The
drawings in this book by Masuo Ogoshi of The Mellen Associates, Ltd., were over-
sized and simplistic to accommodate all readers. It covered topics like: a child was
what s/he ate (listing the do’s and don’ts of food intake), how the “Food Makes the
Man” (including that of twenty-five-year olds and fifty-year olds), what a healthy
baby needs (counting sleep, food and fresh air), the healthy and unhealthy child’s day,
vitamin families and their sources (what they called the “Mineral Menehunes For
Strength”), and what the whole family needed, as well as frequently asked questions
about diet (Larsen, “Eating Your Way to Health”). The goal of the publication was to
promote healthy diets to the general public in a more accessible format unlike the
Plantation Health Bulletin articles earmarked for professionals in the industry. It was
not unusual for Larsen to publish in many venues, from Paradise of the Pacific to medical journals.

The Plantation Health Bulletin continued publication until 1964. Larsen had reported on important medical, political, cultural and social issues during all of these years. He saw the heyday and waning of the sugar industry, when new technology required fewer workers on plantations. Also, sugar substitutes became popular and less expensive to produce. Ultimately, sugar plantations began to close, and the hospitals and employees shifted into communities where workers took on other jobs throughout Hawai‘i. The sugar industry shifted to other places where labor was cheaper and higher profits could be realized. Hawai‘i medicine pointed into the direction of community-based health care, in which Larsen had also developed better methods of improving conditions. Although plantations would prove not to be the long-range economic future of Hawai‘i, when plantation workers moved into communities they changed the racial mixture of Hawai‘i and an island melting pot emerged.

In 1964, Dr. Marvin A. Brennecke wrote about Larsen and Plantation Health Bulletin:

In the period of time between the two world wars and during the last one, the practice of medicine in Hawai‘i was weighed equally between the practice of medicine on the plantations and the practice of medicine in Honolulu. It was during this time that Paul Larsen organized and guided the force of the group of doctors of the plantations in the betterment of the health of the people by the early
application and by the discovery of new methods of preventative and definitive care in the practice of medicine. This was augmented and facilitated by the publication of Plantation Health. This publication has been of value not only to the doctors in the sugar and pineapple plantations of Hawai‘i, but has provoked original thinking in other parts of the world (Brennecke, “Plantation Health Bulletin Insert”).

It was not surprising that Brennecke saw Plantation Health Bulletin’s value under Larsen’s guidance. Of particular note he, continued:

The outstanding position that Hawai‘i occupies in the field of Public Health today is in a great part attributable to the organized, concerted effort of the plantation physicians under the guidance and suggestions of Paul Larsen who stressed the teaching of proper nutrition, the community wide immunization programs, the well baby clinics, the maternal health clinics, and the projects in health sanitation (Brennecke, “Plantation Health Bulletin” Insert).

The challenge that Brennecke must have realized was how to continue the same level of connection between plantation physicians.

In summary, Larsen used history in order to understand the problems on plantations. He used the philanthropic argument that healthier workers were more productive in order to gain advances for plantation workers. Through the media and through the creation and publication of numerous articles in Plantation Health, communication was open and distributed that connected medicine across the island, nationally and internationally. They varied from topics of how weather in Hawai‘i
affected some individuals; however, found it to be one of the healthiest places to live. Larsen reviewed reasons why the Hawaiian population had declined and why the Filipino community had expanded, how industrial medicine effected plantation workers, and looked at differences among nations in medical care. He found that better nutrition was one explanation for increased population among races; that worker health improved when facilities were improved; and saw other nations that had better health plans in place for their people. Larsen also worried about the abuse of medicine in wartime activities and experiments. He did, however, keep up with the technological pace and was a part of the creation and expansion of clinics and other health care facilities, as he had done with the preventoriums. His rise to Director of Queen’s gave him the power to implement changes there, and his writings for Plantation Health Bulletin increased his sphere of influence in print. In addition to the topics that he specialized in, he took special interest in personal family health concerns and explored unorthodox scientific methods and topics.
CHAPTER 5. SPECIAL INTERESTS

Over the years, Larsen focused on various special medical concerns like those written about above. He took medical interests into the personal realm when he advocated for preventoriums and changed his thoughts on typhus. Other interests he had in medicine were of an unusual nature. They were considered non-traditional, radical, or unscientific. They ranged from artifact collecting to ESP; the scope of these interests merits analysis. An open-minded approach to looking at the world in an unorthodox fashion led Larsen to test the waters of possibilities. His interest of Hawaiian herbal medicine, however, most heavily emphasized his belief in other cultures and desire to incorporate tradition into his life. As a pathologist he used artifacts to base his knowledge of previous human conditions.

Investigating Artifacts

A Honolulu Medicine Man

From out on an Isle in the Western Sea

A doctor roamed with cheerful glee.

With microscope and sharp scalpel

An eye for structure and a nose for smell

To view the arctic far and wide

And comb its barnacles at ebbing tide—

A poor dead fish of floating bones—

A crab shell buried in moss and stones

Each in turn this doctor craved
To tear its skeleton from the waves
And one sharp cut the dorsal fin
The scales came next and then the skin.
Upon the stern a morgue was built
Teeth and skulls and floating kelp
Porpoise hides of shining rubber
Coiling eels and oozing blubber
Every craving a new delight
Guts were strewn from left to right
Then amidst the old dead bones
Appeared a group of curious stones
His face ablaze with a simple smile
He chattered away with professional guile
He cleaned and scraped his pile of junk
And stored it away in his Hawaiian trunk

(Anonymous).

Not only was Larsen a medical adventurer, he often explored sites, and examined artifacts to help him understand early human societies. His medical practice also led him to diverse interests and people who were outside the norm. It was not uncommon for him to take on the role of mentor to young men. One such person was Julius Scammon Rodman who, for a time, was a regular Larsen visitor at the Medical Group. Larsen’s connection with Julius Rodman, a self-professed beachcomber with suspected connections to the drug world, was their exploration of
sites in search of native artifacts around the Hawaiian Islands. According to Rodman’s correspondence with Larsen’s children some time after Larsen’s death, he and Larsen shared a close relationship. While the children and Rodman were kept at bay, Rodman claimed that Larsen gave him personal advice about Rodman’s love life and the people he associated with. The artifacts that Rodman had acquired intrigued Larsen. They appeared to have formed a friendship based on mutual interest outside of the realm of doctor-patient (Rodman).

Larsen and Rodman met in 1935 and, according to Rodman, usually had lunch once a week, spending time discussing their mutual interests. Larsen asked about Rodman’s latest acquisitions and possible future trips to uncover “ancient Hawai‘i.” Rodman obviously held Larsen in great respect. He even dedicated his small book of Hawaiian yarns entitled: Unending Melody: Fragments from the Pen of an Amateur Beachcomber:

Dear Doctor,

Didn’t I once tell you how absurd it would be for everyone to so much as glance within the covers of such an asinine book as mine should be, when there is always Shakespeare and everybody else in English literature to be read? What underserved and inordinate tribute the readers pay us modern hacks by lending eyes to our inane and vacuous drivelings, whilst they ignore the truly profound and noble voices of genius. So many voices singing their golden songs, deeply-hidden in the volumes of our greatest libraries, that we should have need of not just one life, but at least a score of very long lives to
acquaint ourselves with but one small part of them! (Rodman, “Dedication Page”).

Larsen’s son, Jack, and Rodman corresponded years later regarding some of Larsen’s artifacts and had long telephone conversations. In a letter of October 31, 1993, Jack wrote Rodman and called him an “articulate collector and author who I have gotten to know” which added a “dimension to my first image” which was rather mysterious (J. Larsen 1).

In 1993, Rodman wrote Larsen’s daughter, Lila, in response to her request for information from him about his connection with her father:

Dear Lila,

Until your recent letter I hadn’t realized how much a doctor’s practice, his relations with patients and his social interests are outside of the family circle and therefore not shared or known by his children.

During those years when I had free access to your father’s Hospital office as well as at the Medical Group, and had lunch with him almost weekly, I don’t think that he once mentioned anything domestic. I was naturally very curious about you and your brother, but I somehow got the tacit message that you kids were off limits.

The doctor was so engrossed in our discussions of my latest cave explorations, Kahuna-ism, the health and diet of the various levels of Hawaiians, their history, legends, folkways that he barely touched his food (Rodman, 25 Jan 1993 1).
Through numerous searches regarding ancient man Larsen became aware of the Hawaiian cultural belief in taboo practices, such as collecting bones and burial artifacts. In an interview with Morgan, Dr. John Payton recalled a story of when Larsen found a fishhook necklace on one of his excursions. He gave it to the sea when the boat they were traveling on underwent fearsome weather. Taking the advice of Hawaiians on board the vessel that it was the amulet that caused the conditions at sea and after battling the elements to the point of despair, Larsen gave it up. To their relief, the seas calmed and Larsen apparently did not regret the loss (Payton).

Larsen gave credit to the Hawaiian culture and to many of the practices and beliefs that they held. He took notes and recorded many of the things he learned. Dr. Payton’s story supports this contention. On one occasion, when Larsen was out dissecting some livers from puffer fish, a Hawaiian man happened by and ate the liver. Larsen believed that these were poisonous fish; however, the man knew better and simply enjoyed eating it. Larsen was impressed that the Hawaiian outsmarted an educated “Westerner” foreigner such as himself.

On yet another occasion Larsen would not abandon his scientific explanations of an unusual occurrence that happened during a cave exploration on a trip to Molokai. In 1933, Larsen accompanied John Warriner, a patient and fellow artifact investigator on a trip to a burial site on the east side of Kaunakakai. After circumnavigating on a sampan, they hiked to a cave where they found a “fish god wrapped in tapa, a coconut dye cup, a string of beads” taken from around the neck of an elderly lady who had been buried with it on. After taking the “kahuna beads”
Larsen became ill with diarrhea and vomiting to the point where he gave the beads to Warriner. Larsen later admitted that he believed the cause of his sickness was from exposure to a protein poison inhaled from the dust of rotting corpses, especially since he was the one most active in rummaging in the cave. Larsen wrote about the experience and received feedback from other physicians. Responding to a letter dated August 27, 1957, from Dr. H. M. Patterson of San Carlos, California, Larsen thanked him for his communication suggesting that this sudden illness could have been the result of histoplasmosis, spread by fungus and affecting the lungs in a flu-like reaction (Patterson). In the final analysis Larsen called it "pure speculation," however, what made the most medical sense to him was acute poisoning from protein molecules in the air. On this occasion, his scientific mind rejected any supernatural causes (Larsen, "Cave Illness").

In Paradise of the Pacific, Larsen wrote a series of articles that discussed his own adventures and what he gleaned from outer island travel research. One of his articles, "Phallic ‘Temple’ of Molokai," in May, 1945, attempted to commune the difficulties of understanding ancient Hawaiians through modern eyes. He wrote, "We are, unfortunately, incapable of seeing through the colored glasses of our prejudices. Hence the difficulty of knowing what really did take place in the past" (Larsen, "Phallic Temple" 6).

On his excursion to Moloka‘i, Larsen witnessed its beauty and tried to decipher clues about what life used to be like there. At Kalapaupa (the leper colony), he described its beauty as a place that used to be inhabited by 1500 people who were
said to have been, “destroyed through the treachery of two women” (Larsen, “Phallic Temple”). In searching into the crater to find any remnants:

… we found one skeleton and crawled back. Entering a cave high in the hills and finding a Fish God, calabashes and skulls, and there learning of the power of the ancient aumakua; and finally visiting the Phallic Temple of Molokai, the largest in all Polynesia. (Larsen, “Phallic Temple” 6).

Because of the phallic nature of the rock and the reverence that Hawaiians have had for it, early missionaries and others have found it to be a sign of “self-conscious smut.” Larsen adamantly refuted that representation of the ancient Hawai‘i symbol. Hawaiian educator Mary Pukui had informed him that Christian missionaries sought to teach against Hawaiian practices, like the belief in the fertility powers of the rock. Moreover, Western women had counseled her mother not to openly discuss the details of birth and sex with their children. Because of the secrecy of these topics, Larsen speculated that the phallic rock could merely have been a place where Hawaiians would meet to discuss topics of reproduction in an open forum—keeping missionaries at a distance because of their abhorrence of sexual openness. Moreover, Larsen’s belief in sex education led him to regularly lecture high school students at McKinley High School and Kamehameha School on reproduction and matters of human sexuality. Student evaluations left in Larsen’s files show an appreciation for his forthright lectures on these topics (Larsen, “Phallic Temple”).
In this same article for *Paradise of the Pacific*, Larsen again discussed taking issue with the use of the term “heathen” that had been common practice for early Christian missionaries. His understanding of Hawaiian culture was empathetic to the notion that Hawaiians did not believe in hell and that they thought that virtue was, indeed, its own reward. While people would have “spiritual protectors,” these would not look kindly on those who displayed non-virtuous behavior. Although Hawaiians had different opinions on moral issues, they could not be deemed “heathen” by any stretch of the imagination (Larsen, “Phallic Temple”). In fact, Larsen held their practices in such esteem that one of his major research topics was that of herbal medicine—Hawaiian style.

**Hawaiian Herbal Medicine**

Moving to Hawai‘i was a key turning point in Larsen’s life because not only did he start a new career and begin his own family, he lived in a place with a unique heritage quite distant from the East Coast of the United States where he had grown up and been educated. Hawai‘i was culturally and ethnically diverse when Larsen arrived and he was curious about its traditional Hawaiian medical practices. He believed that an understanding of medical practices of a group of people helped to interpret their civilization. Despite the fact that Larsen was not exposed to Hawai‘i until he was in his thirties, he was not closed to delving into its medical heritage to find out about Polynesian practices.

Larsen became even more interested in learning the differences between Anglo and Hawaiian medicine when he read of the aversion that many Hawaiians had
to Anglo medical care. It was noteworthy to him that Hawaiians had many more reasons to be wary of missionary medicine than their own healers. In his “Medical Arts in Ancient Hawai‘i,” written in 1944 for the Hawai‘i Historical Society, Larsen discussed what was known about medicine in Hawai‘i in the mid 1800s. Although the exact numbers of Hawaiian deaths has been disputed by scholars, after seventy-five years of contact, according to Larsen, the Hawaiian population was thought to have spiraled from three million to sixty thousand, and he believed that this number could very well have been higher. The smallpox epidemic of 1853 was one that decimated the Hawaiian population most significantly, because of exposure to foreigners and some suspect, from used clothes sent to Hawai‘i from the San Francisco epidemic. It was no wonder that Hawaiians were not convinced of the superiority of Anglo medicine (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

On the other side, despite the lack of any thorough investigation into Polynesian medicine, Larsen learned that even a hundred years after the introduction of European medicine into Hawai‘i, the 1920s medical community was biased against non-Caucasians. Larsen did not subscribe to this conviction. He preferred to look at the differences between groups, yet never judged any group harshly for whatever medical maladies they may have been prone to, or for their practices. In fact, his search for ancient man stemmed from his desire to validate that all groups came from the same origins. His daughter, likewise, called him “color blind” and said that he never showed any signs of discriminating against or speaking ill of any racial group. It was out of this interest that he looked into the reason why kahunas were considered malevolent from the missionary point of view (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).
Kahunas and Herbal Medicine

Larsen spent time researching comparative and alternative methods in medicine. Figure 6 is an etching Larsen included in “The Story of Etching,” which differs from most of his other works because of its mythological representation. With its Cyclops, mermaid, and oceanic theme, the plants portrayed create a dream-like scene that can be interpreted as either frightening or hallucinogenic. In Larsen’s article on “Medical Arts in Ancient Hawai‘i,” Larsen set forth his belief that Western medical lore had discounted Hawaiian medical practices because of “Anglo-Saxon prejudice and pompousness, the usual trimmings of the superiority complex” (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

Figure 6: Kahuna Tales

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The doctor found that because of this belief there remained only fragments of knowledge about the way things used to be in Hawai‘i that were left from which to piece together a “mosaic” of what approached “the truth.” It was his intent to set the record straight and learn from the earlier Hawaiian culture. He received a great deal of his information from Kua‘ua’u, a book that dealt with kahunas and Hawaiian history, translated from Hawaiian, and through friendships with such prominent individuals and Polynesian activists as Mary Kawena Wiggins Pukui and Sir Peter Buck (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

Larsen not only studied about medicine, but Hawaiian society. He revealed his conviction that after the Anglo-Saxon lifestyle took hold in Hawai‘i, the system of Hawaiian experts or kahunas, who were influential in all aspects of life, had been dismantled. It was especially evident to him that the knowledge of the kahuna was then either ignored by the influx of Anglo-Saxons and their belief system, or derided by newcomers who focused mostly on the ghastly stories about the “low-brow kahuna” who practiced “black magic” according to medical literature. Larsen cited a number of articles including “Idolatry Among Hawaiians” (1888) and “Native Testimony to the Prevalence of Idolatry” (1889) in The Friend as reporting on Hawaiian medical “enchantments” (Larsen, “Medical Arts” 2). Likewise James Bicknell’s “Hawaiian Kahunas and Their Practices,” also listed Hawaiian beliefs that set their practices out to cause “mischief” against missionaries and gain allegiance to the aumakua, or Gods (Larsen, “Medical Arts” 3). Larsen cited these kinds of writings as important in understanding why Hawaiian practices and kahunas involved
in treating maladies were easily discounted--lacking a deeper understanding and holistic view of the society. The devaluing and mystifying of Hawaiian herbal medicine may have been a purposeful omission on the part of missionaries, because slandering kahunas made all Hawaiian medical knowledge seem "primitive" and, therefore, insignificant to "real" medicine or Anglo importance.

In "The Highly Developed Art of Medicine in Old Hawai‘i," Larsen cited Bicknell's interpretation of early Hawaiian medical beliefs that supported his belief in the misinterpretation of kahuna practices. Bicknell interpreted Hawaiian culture and said that Hawaiians believed:

1) That sickness is caused either by demoniacal possession or by disease.
2) That the spirits possess people of their own will, or are commissioned to do so by ill-disposed kahunas.
3) That cases of possession are always curable through the use of charms under the direction of kahunas.
4) That in cases of actual disease, being dependent upon the use of medicine, recovery is not always certain (Larsen, "Medical Arts" 29-30).

Larsen wanted to correct his readers to understand that Hawaiian medicine, with the intervention of the missionaries, had been reduced to superstitious beliefs and sensationalized to remember mostly the evil, untrained or pretender kahunas. Because of his code to let both sides of every story be told, Larsen said that while malevolent types of kahunas did exist, theirs were the stories remembered most commonly because of the predisposed recordings of missionaries and Anglo writers.
People, he vied, were often most intrigued by the squalid stories of other cultures and this was no exception (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

Larsen found other examples of how only malicious kahunas were accentuated. The kahuna po'uhane, spiritualist kahuna, or “catcher of the spirits” as described by J. S. Emerson caught the spirit of the body as it slept and brought discomfort or death to the person. The kahuna ho'opuniuni or “pretender” had no training. The kahuna ana’ana, was on the bottom of the list of evil kahunas who prayed another’s enemies to death. In Larsen’s “Medical Lore of Ancient Hawai‘i,” printed in the May, 1946, edition of Paradise of the Pacific, Larsen discussed his views on kahunas and wrote about the misinterpretation of “isolated cultures,” a term that he preferred over the “nose in the air” terms of “primitive” or “heathen,” that his predecessors chose to use. He valued the kahuna from these cultures and capitulated in great detail on a number of their procedures that had been denigrated to seem barbarian. He included a photograph of a kahuna bowl that was used to hold a belonging of the intended victim (like a piece of hair or nail). The bowl was placed on an altar of stone in a dark and isolated place. Then the kahuna would commence a prayer that typically ended with the kahuna falling unconscious. When the targeted victim learned that they had been anaanaed, Larsen said that the “certainty of death descended upon him and he slowly died” (Larsen, “Medical Arts” 10). Larsen equated these types of kahunas with modern mobsters who could, for a price, enlist heavy-handed practices to rid themselves of one of their enemies. Although this may be a stretch from kahuna to mobster, it is clear that Larsen was revealing a distorted interpretation of a traditionally valued position. He was also asserting his belief that
one could be frightened to death. He added “[w]ith our present knowledge of the autonomic nervous system we can scientifically explain and understand such deaths” (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

While base stories can be exciting and appeal to human interest in the more sordid side of life, Larsen found that they neither cover the range of kahunas nor their prevalence in Hawaiian culture. Larsen continued:

However in an age where what we have counts more than what we are, where slickery tends to replace intelligence, where faith is scorned and pleasure replaces happiness, where justice was being replaced by might, death from conviction was probably no longer possible. (Larsen, “Medical Arts” 10).

According to Larsen, in comparison to Hawaiian medical practices, much of what missionary doctors practiced at this time were certainly not considered acceptable medicine today (like blood-letting, calomel, and sulphur), and he fortified Hawaiian medicine in asserting that much of what kahunas did “is still logical” (Larsen, “Medical Arts” 10).

In a 1966 Hawaiian Historical Review article, entitled “Kahuna Lapa‘au,” Larry Kimura drew from Larsen’s 1944 “Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society” and an article on “Medical Art in Ancient Hawai‘i.” Kimura supported Larsen who contended that: “Hawaiians were taught by foreign teachers to look with horror on much of Hawaiian culture” (Kimura 273). In contrast to beliefs about malicious kahunas and other negative portrayals of early Hawaiians, Larsen quoted David Malo, the first Hawaiian credited with translating into the English language.
Malo found that Hawaiian morals were actually closely aligned between Polynesians and Caucasians. His translation of Hawaiian community law in *Hawaiian Antiquities* affirmed:

> The following actions were considered worthy of approbation, to live thriftily, not to be a vagabond, not to keep changing wives, not to be always shifting from one chief to another, not to run in debt—to bring up his children properly, to deal squarely with his neighbors and his landlord, etc. (Malo 252).

Another defense that Larsen used in favor of the superiority of the *kahuna* system was in the selection and dedication to the various fields of *kahuna*. Generally, Hawaiian children were trained as early as five years old to study in certain chosen areas—often those areas toward which they showed a propensity. According to Larsen, the *kahuna lapaʻau* and the *kahuna ha-ha* were the most respected of the *kahunas*, and they sat on the Chief’s council. If they were trained in both fields, they served as expert diagnosticians and therapists, respectively (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

In Larsen’s field of medicine, the *kahuna lapaʻau* was the authority and was qualified to perform the “highest form of healing.” A *kahuna lapaʻau* was raised to learn about medicinal herbs, their value, and effects on the human body. Larsen noted that, of course, there was experimentation in this learning process, just as in all medical knowledge. He also pointed out that there was not a set meeting of the minds between all *kahunas* and each varied their pharmacopoeia according to what worked for them. They were selective about disclosure of their remedies to even their own interns. Interestingly, Larsen learned from Malo that, ”[j]ust before he died, the
kahuna would call in his favorite pupils and give them the choice observations he had kept from the others (Malo 253). Unfortunately, however, the disadvantage of this method of sharing knowledge, occurred if the expert died prematurely, before important medical information could be released.

Being a pathologist and interested in what corpses and bones reveal about people in a society, in “Medical Arts in Ancient Hawai‘i” Larsen evaluated the autopsy practices of kahunas, where bones were placed in burial caves after having been wrapped in tapa. Such was the case for Captain Cook, whose organs upon his death were immediately taken out and examined. The Kahuna Kuni “opened the body in a certain way to remove the liver” (Larsen 5). The body flesh was either burned or buried at sea. The pathologist in Larsen was drawn to understand these things, through cave exploration and artifact study, in order to help uncover the mystery of Hawaiian practices (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

When the doctor learned that a kahuna lapa‘au and kahuna ha-ha had written the medical knowledge of the Kua‘ua‘u, in 1868 upon demand of the King, he realized it to be a breach of oral tradition. He was not above reading the translation in order to open up the knowledge base of Hawaiian medical practices for outsiders as well. Larsen found it to be a prime reference tool to validate the difference in medical practices prior to 1800 (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

Kua‘ua‘u provided Larsen with a case study that confirmed his belief that Hawaiians learned from practical experience. The study concerned a kahuna lapa‘au named Pi‘ipi‘i who, contemplating the fact that he knew that he was about to die of an unknown disease, asked his four sons to determine the cause of the disease and
find its treatment after he died. Again, in “Medical Arts in Ancient Hawai‘i,” Larsen explained the medical procedures they adhered to. In performing his autopsy the sons discovered that he had a hefty accumulation in his stationary bowel. They devised a cure using a long piece of bamboo with a hollow shaft and smaller pieces of bamboo at either end as a kind of syringe. They tested the device by experimenting with constipated dogs using salt water. To this end, when it worked twice, they concluded that they had found a cure for the disease they named *papaki* 'ipi 'ipi 'i. On page fifteen of the medicine book written for the King, not only was a description of the disease provided, there were also illustrations that showed what the device looked like. Over time they were able to prescribe the number of times this device should be used on patients, depending upon the severity of the condition (*Ku‘ua‘u* 15).

An excerpt from the final page of the book endorsed itself: “In this book you will find most of the diseases that kill and a few that can be cured. There you will see the cleverness of the *kahuna-ha-ha* of the old days” (*Kua‘ua‘u*). Larsen found other examples of how Hawaiian medicine could be considered precursors or equivalents to Anglo medical knowledge of missionary times. He contended that the use of green leaves and substances found in vegetables that Hawaiian *kahunas* put on wounds could be compared to later uses Caucasian found for garlic, yeast cell extractions and leaf chlorophyll, as all useful in inhibiting the growth of bacteria. Through his research, Larsen found out that Hawaiian medicine at the point of European contact understood the workings of the human heart, that the head controlled the body, and that diseases responded to herbs and/or healing through the spirit. Hawaiians also were educated on the use of massage and heat (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

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In discussing the specific ways of dispensing medicine, Larsen wrote about the lauhala basket of the kahuna laupa’au in which he carried herbs, scrapings from pumice stone, and earthen powdered roots. Larsen said that in 1922, the Territorial Board of Health published a list of 191 known Hawaiian medicinal herbs and their method of preparation and use. The best known of these included: kukui nuts (a purgative and strong physic), awa (a sedative), taro sap (an astringent and also used to lessen bleeding), noni (applied with hot Epsom salt packs to abscesses and boils to bring them to a head), and uhalaoa (a sore throat remedy that was chewed). Other curative plants were the pahoehoe, otherwise known as beach morning glory, which was used for inflammation of the eye. Fine pia starch mixed with certain smooth clays helped with stomach disorders. The kukui nut flower, and hau tree juices were also used as physics, and saline water was used as a cathartic. Larsen illustrated that the lomi-lomi sticks used for massage relieved many ailing pains. He accounted for the interest in numerous physio-therapeutic methods developed by early Hawaiians because of their participation in strenuous games (Larsen, “Medical Arts”).

The kahuna laupa’au, as the herb specialist, was a healer and therapist who spent his life trying to relieve pain and suffering. Larsen’s “The Highly Developed Art of Medicine in Old Hawai‘i” printed in the winter, 1962, edition of CIBI Journal, gathered more herbal remedies used by the early Hawaiians. The popolo plant was related to deadly nightshade and was the backbone of the kahuna laupa’au’s armamentarium. An infusion was made of the young shoots of the plants growing tips and taken five times a day. He said that the number five had a particular significance in Hawaiian medicine because man and animals have two arms, legs, and
a head. The green shoots of *popolo* plants, rich in B complex and iron, may well have been a useful tonic. *Laukahi*, a broad green leaf, was bruised and put on wounds, which made healing sense to Larsen since it contained chlorophyll with vitamins and minerals and the sun sterilized it. Prior to World War I the Germans imported *awa* for drying up secretions. With the advent of sulpha drugs, Larsen said, the need disappeared. The physician believed that Hawaiians' medicinal knowledge was an evolution towards a scientific medicine that was earmarked by five steps:

1) overcoming superstition;
2) making careful observations;
3) thinking about observations made;
4) experimenting on animals to test whether the conclusions arrived at were correct; and, 
5) trying the remedy on a patient (Larsen, "Medical Arts").

Larsen confirmed these steps in his investigation of *kahunas* who believed in observation, animal testing, autopsy, and practical usage of many herbs and the end result. In the field of Hawaiian medicine, as knowledge was gained, superstitious beliefs were taken over by practical experience and the passing on of knowledge. Because of the Hawaiian tradition of handing down oral knowledge to other experts who were often in the same family, there had been no written account until 1868.

Larsen became so well known for his opinions and advocacy of Hawaiian herbal medicine that, by the 1950s, an assistant physician assigned by Larsen to a Lanai plantation, William Totherow, referred to the doctor as "medicine man of Hawai‘i" (Totherow 17). Totherow also admitted to spending many enjoyable and
profitable hours listening to Larsen discuss the benefits of Hawai‘i herbal medicine “some of which are still recognized as valuable therapeutic agents” (Totherow 18). Larsen emphasized that Hawaiian herbal remedies were effective but only when they were prescribed by the kapuna lapa‘au of the time and that there was now no known person who had that type of training. He said that much of the knowledge had been lost and anyone using them without traditional education was treading on dangerous ground. The kapuna lapa‘au studied herbs for close to fifteen years to gain command of their medicine.

In November, 1951, E. H. Bryan, Jr. of the Honolulu Advertiser wrote an article entitled “Kahunas’ Means for Curing on Exhibition.” It headlined an exhibit at Bishop Museum that featured information on many Hawaiian artifacts and practices that Larsen deemed valuable in his investigation of medicine among Hawaiian and Pacific Island cultures. Larsen’s exhibit was shown at this time in connection with the Fifth Pan-Pacific Surgical Conference in Honolulu. Bryan said that, of the kahunas listed by Larsen in his exhibit on medicinal cures, one-third of them were enlisted in some sort of health field. Because of the complexity of the social structure, in the center of the exhibit was a skeleton diagram suggesting just how early the hierarchy of Hawaiian society was established. Not unlike Caucasian culture, Hawaiians ranked their kahunas toward the top of their social hierarchy (Bryan).

While Larsen was fascinated with Hawaiian medicinal herbs, his interest was more than merely admiring their early insights. In an interview with his daughter, she disclosed one attempt Larsen gave to developing his own Hawaiian vitamin. Because
of his cross-cultural research and his interest in modern medicine, he used a Hawaiian root and developed a vitamin from the Hawaiian staple, taro, but he never put it on the market. Larsen developed it because of his belief that taro was one of the reasons why Hawaiian children had healthy teeth, as opposed to the white rice diet of other cultures found in Hawai‘i. Despite the fact that it was never marketed, Larsen believed in its value enough to give it to his grandchildren, who were very fond of what he named “tarolactin” (Morgan, “Personal Interview”). It was an effort to incorporate traditional Hawaiian diet into modern society. Furthermore, it defends the belief that Larsen was more revisionist than renaissance.

With an early life interest in forestry combined with ideas of scientific inquiry and medical knowledge, it is no wonder that Larsen was drawn to a study of Hawaiian herbs and their relationship to health. Larsen’s curiosity about ancient Hawaiian medicinal herbs was a lifelong interest. Because the modern medical science field at the time looked down on these practices, such knowledge was considered a professional stretch for Larsen. It went against his standing in the medical community as a respected modern physician interested in “progressive” Western techniques. Larsen held onto his belief that the Sandwich Islanders had sound therapeutic knowledge of herbs. It was clear to him that they were closer to scientific methods of medicine than Europeans of their day.

According to Dr. Bruce Bottorff, who conducted preliminary research into Larsen’s life, he found that:

The social and medical role of the Kahuna Lapa‘au figured so prominently in Larsen’s work that one wonders whether he came to
see himself in those terms, a benevolent figure of considerable power and influence, destined forever to be misunderstood. Less ambiguously in his life, Larsen seems to be a kind of transitional medical figure who consciously incorporated both “spiritual” and “scientific” methods into his work. Indeed, he was capable of building bridges between traditional and modern cultures in his work and in his life (Bottorff 6).

Larsen’s immigrant heritage may well have encouraged his interest in ancient Hawaiian ways. That helped to explain why he immersed himself in the study of herbs and became interested in the kahuna who wielded considerable power and authority in Hawaiian society. There is an undeniable contrast between Larsen’s position as a scientist and empiricist, and his capacity to appreciate the influence of nontraditional medical practices. His advocacy allowed him to support Hawaiian medical practices in a highly public and visible manner through writings and exhibits. Furthermore, he became actively involved in a rededication of a Hawaiian medical heiau because of his zeal for its preservation.

**Hawaiian Medical Heiau Rededication**

Come hither, draw nigh

Bring unto me the healing waters of life!

Ah troubled has been the rest of the afflicted at night

The deep night, the long night, the night

Of pain and agony.
(But now through your coming)

It is dawn, it is dawn,

It is light (Larsen, "Heiau Rededication" 2).

Not only did Larsen wish to preserve a better image for Hawaiian herbal medicine and kahunas, he also took an interest in preserving historic sites, in particular Keaiwa Heiau. The passage above came from Larsen’s article on the “Rededication of the Healing Heiau Keaiwa,” which was printed in the 1951 Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society.

According to Clarice Taylor in her October 17, 1953, article for The Saturday Star Bulletin, “Heiau Hunting,” she suggested at a meeting of the Historic Sites Committee of the Conservation Council of Hawai‘i that a newly rediscovered heiau in Keaiwa could be easily preserved because it was such a small ruin. When the committee learned that it was known as a healing center, something none of them had ever been exposed to, they were very excited about the prospect and immediately went to work on the project. After the heiau had been verified by Hawaiian historic experts Mary Kawena Pukui, Anna Peleiohaolani Hall, and Emily Taylor, the committee, chaired by Alice Spalding Bowen, went to work on the idea (Taylor 8). Larsen also independently verified the authenticity of the heiau with Thomas K. McGuire a retired forester who worked and cared for the Aiea forest area. According to Taylor, McGuire confirmed that the abandoned heiau was a medical center that had maintained a large herb garden. A member of the Historic Sites Committee, Larsen took this preservation project and decided to share the rededication ceremony with visiting physicians, to educate them on Hawaiian medical history. In the “Annual
Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society,” Larsen discussed his ideas for publicizing the heiau. The medical community of Honolulu was prepared to host the Pan-Pacific Surgeons Conference in November of 1951, and it was Larsen’s idea to use the rededication for the event. This was another way in which he used his position to gain knowledge and respect for medical practices in Hawai‘i. Larsen took special interest in this historic preservation site and his knowledge of ancient medical Hawaiian practices made him even more passionate about the project.

Taylor discussed the importance of the heiau hoola (meaning “heiau of healing”) in an article for the Saturday Star-Bulletin. Her sources indicated that these heiaus were simple in construction: “A stone wall surrounded an area in which there was a grass house for the medical master who lived there and practiced his art there. The wall also enclosed certain plants grown for their medicinal value” (Taylor). Through interviews with her experts she said that healing centers were dedicated and, thus, a rededication, could be a quasi-reenactment. This heiau was a place to which the ill traveled and from which medical men were sent to attend to those who were too sick to journey. As custom dictated, women were treated outside the heiau, as only men were allowed inside.

In Larsen’s “Rededication of the Healing Heiau Keaiwa” booklet, he described the site:

That the stones of the heiau lay in rows that once were nine feet high, but were now only 3-4 feet and 5-7 feet in width. The tall trees—mango, kukui, ironwood, Norfolk Island pine—stood up out of a jungled mass of hau trees like a close-formation honor guard. The
rectangular enclosure of the shrine measured 168 feet in length and 94 in width. Across one end, and again along the south wall, were stone platforms about one foot high and six feet wide. On these platforms had once stood certain structures, perhaps a tower, perhaps grass huts. The whole inner floor had been paved with flat stones, now showing only here and there ("Rededication Brochure" 3).

According to the July 10, 1953, Star Bulletin article, "Park Rededication Tomorrow," the heiau was in full swing about the time of Captain Cook's arrival in Hawai'i, and that at the time of the rededication, about forty plant varieties used by Hawaiian ancestors were planted. More varieties were planted later, as the land around the heiau was also to include a rustic mountain shelter with barbecue grills and a parking area. Colin G. Lennox, president of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, got involved and had the land set aside as a park and assigned a crew to clean the site. The shelter, constructed by the Aeia Lions Club members for families, came at a time when there was contention between local boys and servicemen as well as a rise in juvenile delinquency. The Outdoor Circle of Ewa and Aiea laid a path of ti leaves from the roadway to the entrance of the heiau for the ceremony ("Park Rededication").

In addition to assisting in preserving the site of the heiau, Larsen used the rededication ceremony to learn and disseminate more information on historic Hawai'i, its inhabitants and their connection to medicine. Larsen conducted a study of the kahuna-lapa'au and looked for new information. After patients entered the gates of the heiau, they met an intern for the kahuna-lapa'au. He took their bundles
of food or clothing as payment. *Olena* or salt water stood in a bowl at the entrance for all to purify themselves with by sprinkling. Green *ti* plants were grounded around the walls of the *heiau* to keep out the contamination of evil spirits. The medical master kept his young intern *kahunas* busy as they gathered plants and herbs and helped the master make medications. Long prayers to the gods were memorized on the occasion of growing herbs or disbursing medicines. Women were permitted to be *kahunas*, too, but they were restricted to remain outside of the walls (Larsen, "Rededication").

In 1951, anthropologist and Polynesian scholar Sir Peter Buck delivered the last address of his life at the rededication ceremony, where he introduced himself as a representative of the Maori councils of the Hawaiians. Serving as orators for the pageant, John R. Desha and George Kahoiwa joined him. The rededication of the ancient *heiau ho‘ola* (healing temple) on Aiea Heights was held on Thursday, November 15, 1951, at 3:00 p.m. According to Larsen's notes direct descendants of the highest chiefs and Hawaiian *kahunas* conducted the ceremony. Kahonoiokala (David K. Bray) was the *kahuna-pule* (priest), *Ali‘i* Kaiheekai (William Bishop Taylor) was the presiding chief, and *Kamakaokolanikapiliokomoku* (Thomas McGuire) was the acting *kahuna-lapa‘au*. Buck said: "The Hawaiians were the only branch of the Polynesians who built special temples of healing—the herb doctors were trained in the use of the herbal remedies of those days and commenced practice with rudiments of primitive science" (qtd. in Larsen, "Rededication" 7).

Honored guests at the rededication ceremony included two representatives from each of the foreign counties who attended the Fifth Pan-Pacific Surgical
Congress and one delegate from each of the states represented at this meeting. Prior to the ceremony, Larsen was made an honorary kahuna lapa‘au. The heiau hoʻola was the place that:

... the kahuna of old dispensed their powers. They prepared herbs with stone pestles and mortars, seen, now, only on the shelves of Bishop Museum or in an occasional family collection. They knew the art of lomi lomi (Hawaiian massage) and how to give effective, fragrant steam baths. There is evidence that some of them performed autopsies to determine the cause of death—and that they kept crude medical records of diagnosis (Larsen, “Rededication” 9).

Hawaiian leaders in the community gave credit and honor to Larsen by saying “we want our friend who has studied medical lore, to come inside the heiau as a Kahuna Lapaʻau” (Larsen, “Rededication Ceremony”). No doubt Larsen must have been in ecstasy over his honorary status since he identified with and advocated Hawaiian medical practices and could participate in such a historically prestigious role.

Larsen’s interest, connections, and position made him a prime candidate for being involved in many different spheres. They also allowed him the opportunity to be eccentric in his choice of projects and concerns. An example of an unusual medical exploration was in his research into a little-known phenomenon called “death by inhibition.” It was one of a number of research projects that again showed his interest in understanding the pathological clues that death leaves behind.
Death by Inhibition

Don’t pray for the soft and easy; only for strength to overcome the hard (Larsen).

As a pathologist, Larsen was interested in alternative cures, medical anomalies, and causes of death. Larsen published several articles on the phenomenon of a medical oddity called “death by inhibition.” As his article in the December 3, 1955, edition of Saturday Evening Post entitled “These Men Died While Dreaming,” onset was quick and typically without apparent reason. The article entitled “Death by Inhibition,” printed in February, 1964, in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, tried to shed light on what it was and how it happened. This was a condition of sudden death brought on by unexplainable causes following light traumas with no signs of pathological lesions to the body. He particularly was interested in the Filipino cases in Hawai‘i; however, he wrote a general article to try and explain the occurrence. He believed that knowledge of its existence could also be helpful to surgeons who had to be extra mindful of shock when working with their patients. He also aimed to warn physicians to be aware of the possibility with their patients, and to be informed in cases of homicide where an autopsy proved negative (Larsen, “Death by Inhibition” 707-713).

Larsen related a few instances of death by inhibition in his article that centered on a theory involving the vagus nerve. This nerve was a reflex center, one that he had had personal experience with. He had had his own vagus nerve severed in an experimental surgery to eliminate pain that he suffered from after his bout with typhus. He said that certain areas of the body, when shocked, could undergo
disequilibria of the vago sympathetic system, and produce a fatal inhibition resulting in death. These areas included the larynx, abdomen, the neck of the uterus, testicle, and pleura. At any rate, he believed that some people were prone to being sensitive in this area and when surprised, it created an excitation of the vagus nerve. The shock would hinder the heart. In the case of Filipino death by inhibition, Dr. Alvin Majoska first reported the occurrence of 120 cases in 1914, where young healthy Filipino men died suddenly of unknown causes. Later in 1955, other cases were reported in Manila, but not only among Filipino men; there were some instances of Chinese men suffering from the same. Dr. Yoshimura reported 130 cases involving young Japanese men in 1956. They called the sudden death “pokkuri” (pop death). In California, there were nineteen autopsies on Mexican workers who had died in their sleep, just like the Filipino cases (Larsen, “Death by Inhibition”).

Larsen explained this phenomenon theoretically with an evolutionary idea that the people who suffered from this onset were people of a different mindset who had extreme shock reactions, different from most people today. Sudden death, Larsen believed, not only happened among men. He cited cases of women who died from inhibition when the neck of their uterus was touched. Documented cases included freak incidents in which women were in the midst of having abortions. Larsen speculated that its onset could be induced by the guilt felt by the woman, in addition to the touch on her uterus that could send her into shock. He went on to say that this would be less likely to happen anymore because women feel less guilty about the procedure in general, and tranquilizers were available to assist in combating these feelings. Other cases of death by inhibition occurred during the war. Statistics in
studying 40,000 post mortem soldiers between the ages of 18 and 45, showed that out of the 1,000 who died suddenly, all were in apparent good health, and 140 revealed no definitive cause of death (Larsen, “Death by Inhibition” 707-713).

Larsen’s continued research into this topic found that sleep, like anesthesia, lowered the venous return and added to the potential for death. This potential could be produced in a waking state by a light trauma in one of the sensitive areas mentioned above. This was exacerbated by overeating and exhaustion. All of these factors set the stage for fatal syncope of death by dream shock. Filipinos had more occurrences of inhibition by death than other people. Larsen believed that diet was a contributing factor, because of their propensity for eating a certain fish extract which had a strong vago-depressor effect which stimulated the pancreas and sensitized the reflex for inhibition (Larsen, “Death by Inhibition” 707-713). Death by inhibition was far from an epidemic; however, it was an unknown and previously unexplained possible type of fatality. Larsen’s explanation brought light on the phenomenon and educated others about its existence. His own personal vagus nerve surgery showed that he was willing to try experimental means in medicine and make connections between different causes and effects in alternative medicine.

Larsen was involved in numerous health advances including areas of medical controversy: population control for the “unfit,” and a belief in the possibility of telepathy and the supernatural were among them. On March 15, 1998, Morgan interviewed John Payton of the Medical Group regarding her father and his involvement in nontraditional medical practices in Hawai‘i. Payton had been brought from the mainland as a pediatrician and polio expert during a major polio epidemic in
1948. He saw Larsen as a firm believer in alternative medicine. Payton was stunned by Larsen's use of electro-convulsive shock treatment (ECT) and it scared him when he would bring his psychiatric patients in for treatment. Payton feared the patients would suffer cardiac arrest; however, his patients survived and Larsen would go about with his other medical services (Payton 15 Mar 1998).

Payton also discussed Larsen's early use of estrogen for women. Larsen was progressive in his treatments and "had a flock of women that he gave estrogen to" when who suffered from menopausal cramps. He did this despite fear in the medical community that it might cause cancer. According to Payton, the group of women that Larsen had treated with estrogen in this manner, "were the youngest looking babes you ever saw. Now it is changed and estrogen absolutely should be given. He was proven to be right." (Payton 15 Mar 1998). Estrogen is still a controversial topic as to its safety, yet Larsen had a good grasp of what would work for his patients and his pioneering spirit drove him to try new things that could help alleviate their ailments. His interest in quality of life allowed him to justify unorthodox treatments that today would not be approved until conclusive positive evidence was documented. During this time in the field, however, physicians were given more leeway in determining alternative approaches. Larsen was not above using the most modern techniques available and had an open mindedness about their use. Albeit Hawai'i had a more liberal view on the topic, it was still a controversial area for a prominent physician to throw himself into.
Birth Control

We are approaching a ‘standing room only’ period of the world’s history. And pay more attention to the survival of the unfit than the fit (Larsen, “1959-60 Scrapbook”).

The above comment was typed and glued to Larsen’s 1959-1969 Scrapbook on top of a Life Magazine cover picture on “Birth Control: A Controversial World Question.” It describes Larsen’s belief in quality of life through birth spacing, sex education, and birth control.

Larsen admitted that he had received no instruction on birth control during his medical school days in New York. He said that it was up to each physician to come up with his or her own advice for women who had bad hearts or tuberculosis on how to avoid pregnancy. Working with plantation workers, Larsen took a strong stand on birth control and believed in it. His research indicated to him that increased birth spacing heightened the quality of life and life expectancy. Newspaper headlines read: “Dr. Larsen Fixes Size of Families for Hawai‘i” and “Dr. Larsen Determines Size Of Family Per Hawai‘i Income.” He saw a problem with overcrowding, population control, and the fact that having too many children per family could lead to economic poverty for lower-income parents. In the 1920s Larsen, along with Drs. Phillip Platt and Muriel Cass, spearheaded the development of birth control clinics in Honolulu.

As a physician, Larsen shared his concerns about the importance of this form of birth control to the welfare and mortality of plantation worker families, both in terms of health and economics. He held that, in order to combat mortality rates, plantation families should be educated on the benefits of spacing their offspring. He
informed plantation workers of the expense of having many children, and more importantly, that childbirth at this time was often dangerous, especially with a population of people who were less inclined to utilize or have access to medical facilities and professionals. He discouraged plantation workers from having too many children (7-9).

Aside from abstinence from sex, Larsen believed that doctors needed to be informed on the various methods of birth control. At this time there were three types of birth control: foam powder, the silver ring, and abortion. The foam powder method was described as simple, easy, and understandable; however, it was considered experimental in the 1930s. The silver ring was inserted into the women’s vagina and found to have a twelve percent failure rate and occurrences of bleeding and other complications. It did work for some women for whom the foam method would not. Abortion was against the law during Larsen’s plantation days. It was only permitted when the life of the mother was endangered and this decision was left up to the physician “in good faith” (7-9).

In 1930, when Larsen became medical adviser to the H.S.P.A., he developed medical and health education programs for the plantation workers and often lectured on proper birth spacing. In fact, free sterilization operations were performed on request by any laborer or his wife who had four or more children. It was in this same year that Larsen first heard Margaret Sanger speak at an annual banquet of the Social Service Association. She said that she was giving a speech that she could not even have finished if she were on the East Coast. Larsen and Sanger met many times after that and he believed that her views were accepted widely across Hawai‘i. Larsen
became Sanger's physician while in Hawai‘i and was aware of her health issues (she suffered from angina pectoris). She traveled quite extensively even though she had received warnings from her medical advisors that she might die suddenly of thrombosis, a blot clot disorder. Larsen provided her with medication, and Morgan suspected and stated in an interview, that Sanger had an addiction to pain medication, although it was never verified for her (Morgan, “Personal Interview”).

In a more extreme area of birth control, an article found in the Honolulu Advertiser dated May 21, 1932, showed that Larsen did have his limits in the use of birth control. The article stated: “Dr. LarsenWarnsScienceClubsofDangersAheadinPropagationofUnfit.” Dr. Roswell Johnson, who arrived in Hawai‘i to help push through legislation making it possible to sterilize the unfit in the state, was concerned about the propagation of those with criminal pasts or lower levels of intelligence. Larsen did not take an active role in this crusade, however, by writing the warning article and not participating in this legislative activity he set his boundaries on how far birth control should go.

On January 24, 1958, Larsen wrote “Project M. S.,” a document that divulged much about his views on birth control. By virtue of the fact that he used initials in the wording of this document, Larsen seemed to be disguising it in some way, or making it more mysterious than his typical frank writings.

In 1934, Sanger went to Japan and while she stopped over in Hawai‘i she had dinner with the Larsens, accompanied by Japanese Baroness Ishimoto. Sanger told Larsen about her difficulties in being accepted officially in Japan. She was denied a visa in San Francisco, but ended up being sponsored by the British Consul and spoke
unofficially to various groups in a series of eight lectures. Her most popular topic there was “Overpopulation is One Cause of War.” According to Larsen, the reason why Sanger went to Japan was to promote women’s rights in marriage, and for that, many Japanese women considered her a heroine (Larsen, “Project M.S.”).

Since population control was one of Larsen’s pet projects, he became president of the Planned Parenthood post in Hawai‘i. Not only did the goals of the association fit in with his ideas of human sexuality education but also with his belief that birth control was a necessity. Morgan revealed in interview that Larsen even wrote to his nephew, David Larsen, who worked in Peru, to try and locate a Peruvian hill tribe who practiced birth control with herbs. The doctor had been told that when food was plentiful these tribes used herbs to increase conception; when food was scarce, they ate certain herbs for contraceptives so there would be fewer mouths to feed. Unfortunately, David Larsen was unsuccessful in finding the herb and Larsen’s attempts to find natural herbal means of birth control went unfulfilled (Morgan, “Untitled Notes” 10 Aug 1998 1). Once again, however, Larsen’s attempt to try alternative methods to find a safe solution to birth control was considered.

Larsen believed that people should take responsibility to ensure a better quality of life for their families. He noted that at a time when:

We are experimenting with explosives that can kill 100,000 people in a split second, to talk about saving life seems a little incongruous, yet, it is hard not to believe that beyond this explosive period of the world’s history we will attain a sounder philosophy of living (Larsen, “Project M.S.” 7-8).
Larsen went on to say that Hawai‘i’s Constitution, written by sixty-four representatives of twelve different national backgrounds, called for equal and inalienable right, including life, liberty, and property. “These rights cannot endure unless the people recognize their corresponding obligations and responsibilities” (Larsen 8). Part of the accountability of couples in their childbearing years was, said Larsen, not to produce more children than they could feed.

An article entitled “Greetings from Hawai‘i to the Third International Conference on Population Control and Planned Parenthood” in Plantation Health Bulletin included an invitation sent by Sanger for participants from Hawai‘i to join her in attending the Tokyo Planned Parenthood Conference in 1955. The invitation mentioned that Hawai‘i’s contribution in the 1952 Bombay, India, conference helped to make it a monumental success and that they had hoped for another. Larsen replied, “We proudly accepted” (Larsen, “Greetings from Hawai‘i” 7). In 1955 Larsen was appointed as a delegate to this conference with Sanger.

Larsen recorded the effects of birth spacing in Hawai‘i as a pilot place for birth spacing and had shown that mortality rates declined with its use. According to Larsen, between 1924 and 1941, infant mortality dropped from three hundred infants to twenty-five per year in the Filipino community. A comparable drop occurred in the live birth rate, with a marked increase in health. This bolstered Larsen’s belief that if birth spacing were practiced in other over-populated places, not only would the quality of life improve for other groups, but death rates would drop as well.

Because Hawai‘i had been successful in reducing death rates in maternal mortality through birth spacing and sterilization, this information was disseminated at
the India conference. In the same article, Larsen cited research on population and poverty that showed that families who spent over eight percent of their income on food were at the poverty/starvation level. The relationship between large families and poverty had been shown. He stated that large families were an economic and social liability and families should avoid producing more offspring than they could feed (Larsen, “Greetings from Hawai‘i”).

Larsen accompanied Sanger to “The Fifth International Conference on Planned Parenthood” in Tokyo as an American delegate. In The Japan Planned Parenthood Quarterly, both a brief history of birth control in Japan and feature article and pictures of the conference revealed much about the nature and scope of the visit. The Japanese government had adopted a positive population policy. They enacted legislation on birth control, abortion, and sterilization and established eugenic clinics throughout Japan. In 1948, legalized abortions and sterilization for medical, social, and economic reasons, when required to protect the life and health of Japanese mothers, was government-sanctioned. The responsibility for dissemination of birth control information was given to local governments. Of the 704 Health Centers, only 247 had marriage consultation offices, due to lack of funds and personnel. The article said, “during the first seven months of legalization that nearly 100,000 cases of abortions took more lives than did the combined atomic explosion of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (Japan Planned Parenthood 7). The Japanese Eugenic Protection law was amended in 1952 to reduce the number of illegal and unreported abortions. A 1951 National Public Opinion Poll reported that seventy-nine percent of the population looked unfavorably on abortion and went on to say that it is a:

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... pitiful situation where mothers become victims of the intense population pressure and can find no alternative to abortion... “it is hoped that the increasing dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and devices will obviate the necessity for performing abortions (Japan Planned Parenthood 7).

At the 1954 conference in Japan, Sanger awarded Dr. K. W. Amano with the Sanger Award for his achievements in expanding birth control usage in Japan. Larsen’s contribution to the conference was merely that he supplied a colorful film about Hawai‘i, dedicated to Dr. Amano. Other than that, his goal was to report back on how the movement was going in Japan.

Larsen recognized Sanger’s instrumental role in having population and birth control studies analyzed in many nations. On one trip to Hawai‘i, during Hurricane Nina when Sanger was trying to recover from a bad cough she had developed in Germany, Sanger dined with Larsen and told him about her travels. In India she had been the guest of Nehru’s sister, Madam Pandit. When Madam Pandit brought Nehru to see Sanger, he said that her work in his country offered a useful plan for combating poverty, as population is a key problem in India. On the other hand, she commented that she did not have the same response from Gandhi, who she said, “was a different person” (Larsen, “Project M.S.”). With his belief in self-discipline, he was not flexible on the topic of birth control. Larsen recognized that India, however, was the first nation to officially endorse the use of birth control to contain its population and improve the overall health there (Larsen, “Project M.S.”).
In a practical vein, Larsen congratulated Sanger on her foresight to realize that modern science had done much to keep the death rate down, but nothing to curb overpopulation and excess birth rates that could lead to poverty and lessen the quality of life for many families. He wrote that China was influenced by the way in which India was taking an interest in population control, and that they sent a delegation to India to review the topic. Larsen said, "China now considers birth control a must for attainment of health and happiness."

In "Project M.S.,” a description of Larsen’s meeting with Sanger showed his obvious admiration for her outspokenness on the topic of birth control. Larsen told of his days in medical school when birth control was an area that the medical profession steered clear of, since it was dangerous territory for any doctor. Among Larsen’s correspondence files was a cover letter form that asked for suggestions in preparing contributions to Project M.S. It was classified as “top secret” and “confidential.” The aim of the project, as stated on the form he kept said that they were putting together a:

...humane history of M.S., birth control, and workers in the movement, we launch this admittedly ambitious PROJECT M.S. with much enthusiasm; but also with earnest hope of, and deep-felt gratitude for the time and thought and effort required of you--all of us--without which PROJECT M.S. cannot succeed--and with which it cannot fail (Larsen, “Project M.S.”).

No matter what Larsen lacked in his education on birth control, he was impressed with Sanger and her strong convictions. Larsen passed on Sanger’s
anecdote of the way in which married couples were counseled on birth control education in New York at this time. The story told of a couple that had five children that the man was barely able to support. He went to his New York doctor for some advice. The doctor gave the standard answer for the times: “sleep on the roof.” Since this was a standard recommendation for the time, it is obvious that Larsen felt alternatives could be provided and supported a progressive choice.

Larsen mentioned Sanger’s ability to put her own health on hold to meet with groups to discuss birth control. She put aside a severe case of sacroiliac strain to discuss birth control with Mrs. Louise Dillingham and friends for several hours (Larsen). He found her to be someone to admire for her convictions—especially since they were in line with his own. While birth control was and still is a controversial topic, it used modern medicine to safeguard against overpopulation, and was not the most controversial of his beliefs. His opinions on challenging professionals in other fields would be another cause for debate on Larsen’s eccentricities. When he decided to question Bishop Museum authorities and open up the discussion for extrasensory perception, his professionalism and credibility were questions.

Honolulu Social Sciences Association

...[t]he various varieties of extrasensory perception remain without explanation, and good subjects to try to prove it are hard to find (Cades).

The quote above, taken from a March 2, 1981, article on “Claims to the Paranormal to Scientific Respectability: A Brief Introduction to ‘The Skeptical
"Inquirer"" by J. Russell Cades, gives insight into one of the most controversial topics that Larsen pursued—that of ESP.

Larsen was invited to become a member of the Honolulu Social Sciences Association in 1924, two years after his arrival in Hawai‘i. The organization was established in 1882 by Dr. C. M. Hyde, who invited nine men he considered to be leaders of opinion in Honolulu to meet at his house on Beretania Street. Over the years they met regularly with the exception of the war years from 1942 to 1944. Topics they embraced ranged from physical, mental, scientific, educational, economic, sanitary regulations, and health to morals. They did not broach topics of local politics or religion. The Honolulu Social Sciences Association included a roster of members who were interested not only in intellectual and social advancement, but in widening the knowledge in the world through their own specializations. The doctor’s name was added to the Honolulu Social Sciences Association with other prominent men such as Sir Peter Buck, a senior medical officer with the New Zealanders at Gallipoli, commandant of the Maori Battalion in France, director of the Bishop Museum, professor of anthropology at Yale, and leading authority on Polynesian culture; Herbert Gregory, geologist and director of the Bishop Museum; W. D. Alexander, Hawai‘i historian; Thomas Jaggar, world-renowned volcano expert; Romanzo Adams, sociologist; Kenneth Emory; and Alexander Spoehr, Sugar Planter’s Experiment Station (H.P. Agee and L. D. Baver), and five presidents of the University of Hawai‘i (A. L. Dean, D. L. Crawford, Gregg M. Sinclair, Paul Bachman, and Laurence Snyder, famous geneticist).
Larsen presented a number of topics before the Honolulu Social Sciences Association, including ones on medicine, population, diseases, and evolution. His interest in evolution and ancient man was evident in his work on "On the Trail of Early Man." This interest seemed to stem from his own Viking roots and studies in his travels on pre-history around the globe. He claimed in this writing that tools and implements of the Stone Age were found in different deposit levels. In his place of birth, Sweden, which he used as an example, he said that the Nomadic hunting Stone Age ended about 3,700 years ago. The Bronze Age followed with stationary living, agriculture, and domestication of animals. In England they had just discovered the Bronze Age; in Crete, metal had replaced stone and Egypt probably followed suit shortly thereafter. By the end of the Stone Age in Sweden, the Egyptian pyramids already existed and they were well past the copper, bronze, gold and iron levels. Through the study of ancient tools and artifacts, theories had been developed about the evolution of man that intrigued Larsen. He said that in 1846, when a Frenchman reported in a paper that early tools discovered were used by an earlier race of men, the tools were much ridiculed. This theory was later found sound and a British museum wrote:

Towards the end of the Pliocene period (1 to 2 million years ago) certain apes, possibly comparable with Australopithecus, appear to have developed sufficient intelligence to chip stones for use in cutting up animals, which they killed and ate. These primitive men apparently originated out of Africa. When the Pleistocene period began (one million years ago) they had spread widely over the Old World, for
humanly worked stones (palaeoliths) are found in the early Pleistocene deposits of many localities in Africa, Asia and Europe. In these regions, early men developed into several distinct types: Java, Peking, Piltdown, Swanscombe, Heidelberg, and Neanderthal man. The cave men of late Pleistocene times (Cro-Magnon and related races) were of the modern type (Larsen, “On the Trail”).

Larsen said that when Darwin wrote his “Origin of the Species” in 1859, there was laughter about it because few fossils were then known. Before writing on the “monkey theory,” Larsen also said, it was little known that Dr. John Gulick of Hawai’i published a study on shells found on land. After Darwin’s book came out, Gulick wrote a treatise that stated that he believed in the theory of evolution but that the land shells of Hawai’i disproved the theory of “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest.” It did so because it could not explain the numerous species of land shells found on ‘Oahu where climate and environment were similar. This force that created the difference among shells, Larsen said, we now call “mutation” and he claimed that the missionaries from Hawai’i took their information on shells to Europe and gave lectures on it “to refute or enlarge on some of Darwin’s ideas” (Larsen, “On the Trail”).

Dr. D. P. Quiring found that mechanisms of evolution through mutation came through such environment occurrences as cosmic radiation, x-radiation, heat or cold, and chemical agents. When new characteristics happen spontaneously in nature, they gave animals an advantage over other species and survival was more likely. Those with fewer advantages tended to die out. Dr. Larsen said that geneticists had little
trouble in producing mutations in laboratory experiments, and he had evidence of a rabbit's skull in which they developed teeth that were a real hindrance to survival.

In a very different vein, on November 7, 1960, Larsen unveiled his article on "Mental Telepathy--Is it Real?" for the Honolulu Social Sciences Association. His article dealt with the idea of the paranormal and he discussed his curiosity about it. His training (or lack of it in this area) made him consider an interest in extrasensory perception as "no man's land between the lunatic fringe on the one hand and the academically orthodox on the other" (Larsen, "Mental Telepathy"). He compared his curiosity about the phenomenon with the skepticism of people who made fun of the Ouiji board mentality. Larsen had never before publicly disclosed any involvement in this interest in his profession for fear of being ostracized by the medical community.

Larsen relayed that he once took a comparative religion course from a professor with experience in mental telepathy. The professor said that he finally abandoned his use of telepathy because it led to uncovering morbid and dangerous thoughts in friends and acquaintances. It was Larsen's reading and understanding of the experience of an eighteenth century mystic that made him curious about the existence of mental telepathy. Swedenborg claimed he had an acute experience that led him to understand and convey the hidden meanings of the Bible. Honing these mental skills, he was able to predict two separate fires that burned down buildings. Larsen took an interest in the evidence of strong telepathic ties between identical twins as well. Dr. Wolfson, a psychiatrist in San Francisco, said Larsen, knew of seventeen cases of identical twins with telepathic connections. In one case, the twins
committed suicide by hanging at the exact same time at different jails five hundred miles apart from each other.

In his association with a patient with a self-imposed title, “Dr.” Langsner, Larsen did his own investigation into extra-sensory perception, or ESP, in the 1920s. Langsner offered Larsen the opportunity to test his telepathic skills in exchange for treating him for exhaustion. It seemed that while he was on tour in Asia, Dr. Langsner felt on the verge of a nervous breakdown and was in need of treatment. Larsen and Langsner made an agreement to discuss the topic and test it out, provided Langsner not disclose this to others. During lunch hours the doctor and some of his interns would spend time testing to see if the man could locate objects—and he invariably did (Larsen, “Mental Telepathy”).

Langsner was invited to the Larsen home in Diamond Head where he experimented with Larsen’s wife, Sally, as she was open to a belief in ESP. He was also invited back to test his telepathic abilities in front of several skeptical social scientists (one of whom had just written a book on The Matrix of the Mind). At first Langsner was unable to retrieve objects for the skeptics. He said that because of their intense mental resistance he was unable to do so. Eventually he demonstrated his abilities with someone who did not block out their thoughts. Afterwards, the group opened up to the possibility that Langsner could read their minds when he found a pin in the yard that they had hidden in a bed of flowers (Larsen, “Mental Telepathy”).

Later, Larsen disassociated himself with Langsner when a group of doctors at Queen’s who had found out about the alliance between the doctor and the psychic complained to the trustees that his association could discredit the hospital if it became
common knowledge. Interestingly, Langsner soon left for Edmonton, Canada, where three days prior to his arrival, there had been a hideous triple murder and the police were baffled about the murderer and the whereabouts of the murder weapon. According to Langsner, he visited the accused boy in his jail cell and found the murder weapon after only a five-minute conversation. Langsner claimed that he would know if the boy was guilty of the crime because he would be thinking about where the murder weapon was. "The denouement--with Langsner walking 350 yards through a dense thicket to lead the investigators to a revolver hidden at the base of a tree, followed by a complete confession on the part of the boy" (Larsen, "Mental Telepathy"). Larsen verified this story to his own satisfaction through the newspaper accounting of the matter and the confirmation from another doctor he knew in Edmonton on the matter.

Larsen endorsed the work of Professor Rhine at Duke University and the CIBA foundation of Switzerland in their research in the area of ESP. He said that many world experts in the field got together to discuss its existence at the Symposium on ESP and found that it is very rare and happens most commonly with "primitive, unsophisticated people... and may be a hold-over of an archaic form of communication" (Larsen, "Mental Telepathy"). The results of the symposium that came out in 1956 agreed that good subjects were both hard to find and that as a phenomenon ESP was hard to prove. Even so, Larsen did not discount its possibility—he simply could not validate it empirically, and so did not pursue its existence, much like his views on God.
In 1953, Kenneth Emory, Director of Bishop Museum, and Larsen engaged in a series of heated correspondence over anthropology. Larsen had been involved in a discussion at a Honolulu Social Sciences Association meeting in April of 1953 about new anthropological findings that Larsen claimed to have found. On April 8, 1953, Emory wrote and disputed Larsen’s qualifications to substantiate his hypothesis based on the fact that Larsen was not an expert anthropologist. Emory gave Larsen credit for his pioneering spirit, but said that anthropology experts “are thoroughly alert and will not cast out anything (Emory). Emory contended that: “In the past this may not have been true, but if it is not true at present, science is in a bad way” (Emory).

On April 10, 1953, Larsen responded to Emory’s derogatory remarks about amateur anthropologists. He wrote:

I felt quite sure that you didn’t mean your comments to sound as if you wanted to belittle all amateurs and all enthusiasts…. Remember how long the thunderstones were accepted as facts. When Mallory presents an iron casting that weighs 62 lbs. That was made according to the method of the 14th Century, I believe we should give him credit for having discovered a very interesting fact and when he makes a microanalysis of a so-called meteorite Indian artifact and shows it not to be a meteorite, I believe he still deserves credit (Larsen, 10 Apr 1953).

Larsen continued by saying that when it was first proven that poi could prevent tooth decay in plantation workers, he was confronted by doctors and dentists alike who did not believe that nutrition had anything to do with tooth decay, but
rather regular brushing and cleaning made for healthy teeth. Very few scientists did not accept nutrition as a factor any more. The doctor contended that every field of study should allow for the validity of the findings of others outside of their field. He wrote:

I am not so optimistic about the fact that trained professional men 'will not cast out anything good.' Schlieman died partly from frustration and disappointment at the abuse at the hands of the recognized scholars who wouldn't believe his findings. Pasteur, if he had less fortitude would certainly have stopped his work after the abuse and ridicule given him by the doctors and perhaps his stroke at 45 was partly caused by the terrific opposition he received at the hands of the 'scientists'. The Wright brothers certainly got their share of abuse and I think almost every new step in science has had to fight against smugness, apathy and the acceptance of the status quo. I believe we should accept criticism as well as enthusiasm and encourage it (Larsen, 10 Apr 1953).

In response to this letter Emory wrote back and mentioned that "the well trained anthropologist and archeologist of today knows so well that he can be mistaken" and that "one line of scientific investigation must square with another line, or something is wrong" (Larsen). He also referred Larsen to Sally Nye Harris of the University of Hawai'i for the work that she was doing on blood types from pre-Cook time in Hawai'i, since Larsen was in the midst of trying to uncover new evidence about ancient man. Emory ended this letter: "Yours for good amateurs, good
enthusiasts, and good professionals, like yourself" (Emory). While Emory and Larsen may have ended their communication on a positive note, it was clear that Emory would have preferred Larsen to stick to medicine. Larsen, however, wanted to open up his horizons to many other fields and believed that outsiders could develop ideas that were fresh. They could see the individual trees within the forest.

It was earlier made clear that Larsen’s ability to initiate and implement programs, campaigns, pageants, bulletins, and new facilities was strong. He had demonstrated his genuine interest in history and tradition, but his interest in the peculiar and unorthodox was now demonstrated. An interest in collecting artifacts based on his studies of “ancient man” as well as his career as a pathologist and enjoyment of keeping records, made kahunaism and ancient Hawaiian medical practices a natural area for him to gravitate to. It was not a surprise that he defended Hawaiian medical practices and viewed the Kua'ua'u as a viable medical book of its time. Similarly, his enjoyment of showmanship made the rededication of the heiau one of the highlights of his life, especially since he earned a new title. Other interests, such as death by inhibition fit in with his career as a plantation physician in search of finding answers for unusual causes of death, and birth control—not only put him in the forefront of medical science in population control—but in an international arena—where he was headed. His coding of his notes on “Project M.S.,” however, indicates that he knew the controversy involved in this work. He used electroconvulsive shock therapy an option at a time when it was very experimental in the field of psychiatry and medicine as his use of estrogen therapy for women was not a proven treatment. Although Larsen dabbled in extrasensory perception, he was not
willing to lose his reputation over defending its existence. He would, however, stand up for being able to cross fields, debate the possibilities of both traditional and unproven sciences, and be taken seriously.

To add to his list of creative endeavors, his interest and training in art began to flourish. His perspectives showed the process of learning the basics with an eye bent towards world events as World War II came into the forefront. The Story of Etching is his comprehensive journey through etching and art in his late forties.
CHAPTER 6. ART AND POLITICS

The Story of Etching and the Honolulu Print Makers Association

Figure 8: Nils P. Larsen: As Artist

The evolvement of art from the early cave drawings to a Madge Tennent “Adiposis Gigantum” is an unbroken series of expressions of an inner urge within man trying to understand and explain himself, his environment, his world, and his possible future worlds (Larsen, “The Story of Etching”).

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Larsen took photographs to document his research, from poisonous scorpions to the decayed teeth he found in many malnourished children. Additionally, his appreciation for the Hawaiian environment was depicted in a number of prized scenic photographs of the various islands, including shots of the windward shore of Molokai; Kula, Maui; the Hilo Plant of Hawaiian Cane Products Company, Ltd.; and
the Hamakua Coast. Beyond scientific and scenic photography Larsen was involved in the development and use of the first protective camera case for taking pictorial shots under water.

In an article for LEICA Photography in October, 1935, entitled “Leica-ing on the Ocean Floor” Larsen said that in the fall and winter of 1934, he and a young man named Whitney Boardman of San Francisco purchased a diving helmet together, and they “had no sooner managed the little difficulties of submarine-like hikes than Boardman began the construction of a box to hold the Leica” (Larsen, “Leica-ing”). Boardman’s parents had sent him to Larsen for treatment of a severe skin problem and he stayed at the Halekoa Hotel, although he spent many hours at the Larsens’ for the larger part of a year. Larsen attributed the construction of the waterproof box to Boardman’s ingenuity and mechanical competence. Larsen was pleased to be part of taking pictures on a clear day at ten to fifteen feet below: f:9 at 1/40th or 1/60 exposure with supersensitive film. In a 1995 article for Honolulu Print Makers, “Nils Paul Larsen: His Short Print Career,” Morgan described the means by which her father would take his photographs:

He had a helmet that was crude to say the least, a rubber air hose attached. My brother and I would sit in the boat and pump air to him walking around on the ocean floor taking pictures of coral and fish. We would often forget to pump, until we felt a hug tug on the air hose. His many etchings of fish must stem from those days (Morgan, “His Short Print Career” 2).
Larsen also took visitors, including the Swedish royalty that he sometimes entertained, out into the waters near his Diamond Head home on his little rowboat to share his enthusiasm for his underwater hobby. Dr. Howard Liljestrand often accompanied him and remembers how they would have medical records meetings before taking a dive. In talking with Morgan, he said that not everyone appreciated his passion for putting on the diving helmet and taking a stroll down under the water. On one occasion, he took along a physician well known for his pioneering research on the correlation between cigarettes and cancer. Alton Oxner (who founded the Oxner clinic) ended up with a large, self-imposed gash on his forehead after the claustrophobia he experienced from being in the helmet under water made him panic and injure himself while frantically removing the headgear. Oxner had to give a talk the next day with bandages and an explanation for his injury (Liljestrand).

In 1938, Larsen took an interest in etching, a much less strenuous hobby, after an attack of severe angina while diving off the waters of Haunama Bay. Perhaps touched by his own mortality, Larsen became infatuated with this new venue of communication. He converted the children's playhouse into a studio and, said Morgan, “[H]is printmaking was a small talent that he threw himself into with vigor” (Morgan). Lorna Arlen wrote an article for the March 1944 edition of Paradise of the Pacific entitled “Dr. Nils P. Larsen, Physician-Artist: Local Medico Wins National Recognition as an Etcher.” She found that at a time when “most men would have been satisfied with the rich and full life of a successful physician and popular ‘man-about-town,’ Dr. Nils P. Larsen began a serious study of art” (Arlen 7). A patient of
his, the celebrated Hawai‘i artist John Kelly, nurtured this interest and he began to study print making in his forties under Kelly’s mentorship.

The art pieces showcased in this chapter were included in Larsen’s tapa-covered portfolio entitled The Story of Etching. Like a self-guided tour, the etching book showed the learning process of etching as Larsen progressed as an art student of Kelly’s. While the book indexed forty-four works, it had been disassembled and showed evidence of age, some of the works were not identifiably labeled, and others from his list were missing. It had, however, survived a fire at his home. The etching book addressed different artistic techniques, numerous quotes on art and philosophy, newspaper clippings, photographs, and a dedication to Larsen’s instructor, John M. Kelly—“the master” (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 1). He included a few works of other artists, including Kelly’s. The art of print making that he experimented with was encapsulated throughout. Larsen wrote criticisms and notes on such techniques as: very fine lines, rub in, dirty wipe, clean wipe, wiping edges, heat, color etchings, and aquatint.

The pieces of art used for this chapter are predominantly those that had explanations provided by the artist in his etching book. Among them are a number of works that illustrate Larsen’s artistic views on the natural environment and the politics of his time. His work included natural images of the beauty of Hawai‘i, those that represent the world turmoil brought on by World War II, and others that documented his personal journeys. He often used the theme of the “little man” in relationship to his environment and fish or plants as metaphors for people and ideas.
Larsen's fascination with the use of the underwater camera was utilized in his new hobby. He enjoyed the experience of shooting film under the sea, and bringing back images of what he had seen. The beauty and curiousness of that world were the first etchings that Larsen had chosen to recreate in his book of etchings.

On the Bottom or Other Worlds is the first in the series of etchings in Larsen's The Story of Etching. It simplistically documents a fish coming in contact with moorage of a boat as he captured it with the underwater box camera (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 2).

Figure 10: Davey Jones' Locker (1938)

Larsen had taken a friend's boat out about a mile or so off the Niu coast. This print was based on a Leica snap shot taken under water. Larsen sat with his helmet in sparkling water as myriad fish swam by. Later, he described this image in narrative in his etching book along with the finished etching. He admitted there that the photograph failed to get the brilliance of the fish and in most of the etching attempts,
the fish appeared stiff. His pencil sketch of the photograph was expressed as “fish on parade marching in column and line and moving in unison as if by a single command” (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 9). Since he was not satisfied with his original renderings of the scene, he started over from scratch. The resulting Davey Jones’ Locker showed the silhouette head of notable Davey Jones (found in the background rocks) that, said Larsen, came by happenstance and was not even seen until after the plate was made. Davey Jones’ Locker was shown at the Honolulu Academy of Art in 1938, New York World’s Fair in 1940, Physicians’ Art Association, San Francisco, in 1940 and featured in Paradise of the Pacific in 1944.

Figure 11: Foraging (circa 1939)
In his second year of print making, Foraging was yet another etching that Larsen sketched from an underwater snapshot. The snap shot of Ted Narramore “The Cowboy of Hilo” was taken in Kona Bay. This time, instead of simply etching underwater life, an underwater explorer was depicted with the intent of taking something from the environment--foraging. Larsen’s etching book included several versions of this scene--in the first aquatint Larsen wiped the fish and made no further corrections. He made more copies as he experimented with blacks and blues and a new plate printed on copperplate where he only included the man, the fish and the coral (Larsen, “The Story of Etching 12).

Figure 12: Minus to Plus (circa 1940)
The inspiration for *Minus to Plus* came from a paper that Larsen’s daughter wrote. In *The Story of Etching*, Larsen wrote that his daughter about what separates a human from other life forms. The topic was man’s evolution insofar as he surpassed many of the abilities of most animals in development of brain, hand skills and use of instruments. To cope with his environment, Morgan contended that man rose from the minus of a fish brain to the plus of the skill and power that today places the man so far above the beast. The tool that he is using is evidence of his ability to think about what could place him in a position of advantage over his prey. The fish in this representation do not look menacing at all and it seems very apparent who will win out (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 21).

In his various stages of experimental etchings, Larsen included five versions of this in his etching book that illustrated the various uses of color that the artist explored. Ultimately he decided that the man should be brown, the water should be blue, and the fish should be red. His assessment was that the etching had about as much imagination as “the designer of a Tomato can. And the use of colors was about the same. What was a fairly good dry point becomes a juvenile color print” (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 25). He continued with heavy inking and repeated prints to make art out of the can. He decided to make it less obvious, added an element of mystery and redeemed the etching with some variations in light. Mostly, he admitted that he had no masterpiece but had learned a great deal through this experiment.

As Larsen honed his etching skills, the emergence of World War II in Europe arose. In 1939, Larsen’s etchings began to evolve into political statements. Larsen claimed that his art was “pure recreation and secondary to his medical profession;”
however, his art took on the worldview of someone anticipating a fight (Morgan, “His Short Print Career” 1). Larsen had lived in Hawai‘i for very close to twenty years at this time, when his art took a distinct look at war through the underwater scenes, creatures, and technology. The challenging, almost grinning shark, represents the threatening forces of Nazis Germany. The sole, unarmed sea creature seems just as likely to win out in their battle as the underwater hunter, a techno-suited warrior representing America.

Figure 13: Ich oder Du (1939)

Copied photograph of the original by Meade and Company in New York City.
Next to his *Ich oder Du* etching in *The Story of Etching* Larsen reminisced:

During the last war, while I was in a trench in France, a German threw over from his neighboring trench a piece of chalk--for the trenches of that stalemate war ran through the chalk fields of Flanders. I found that on one side of this piece of chalk was carved the iron cross, on the other side the wooden cross which each dead man received on burial. Above the wooden cross was carved, "Ich oder Du." This was the spirit of the fighting men. They were caught by an irresistible force. They either killed or were killed. How better could this spirit of war be shown than by the diver caught on the bottom in that peculiar ocean swirl from which he cannot quickly remove himself although he is connected by a small lifeline to the surface. In this swirl he is attacked by a killing beast, brainless but endowed with tremendous powers of destruction. He must either kill or be killed. Hence *Ich Oder Du*--the spirit of the fighting men in all wars (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 27).

This piece of art portrayed man’s use of underwater equipment that may or may not save him. It is not clear who the victor would be in this swirl of water even though the diver’s stance appears confident and willing to kill the shark. In thinking about Larsen’s conflict with technology and tradition, this etching suggested that the diver was at an advantage with his modern tools; however, one quick bite by the shark to the cord could reverse the situation. The questions became: Was modern man better off than the shark for his adventuresome spirit and inventiveness? Would
he not be safer if he had only swum the distance his lungs would allow him to dive a
close distance to shore without other devices? If he did not have the equipment
would he still be facing this dangerous situation? Who will be the victor? That was
for time to tell.

Ich oder Du was part of a series of etchings that Larsen dubbed “The War
Series” in his etching book. In an early stage it appeared with less contrast and
Larsen typed the following:

This grew closely and perhaps it is as Zarathustra said: ‘Every picture
I paint is a sort of blossom thrown off by my maturing life.’ He also
commented: ‘Between the disintegration of the soul of America and
the birth of the true soul of Russia, Japan will be...the strange
interlude.’ We disbelieve this, whether it is art of mechanization, and
we believe that from the ashes of the disintegration of Russia and
Japan will rise a greater America. This interlude, or possibly the cause
of the destruction, will be the Nazi (Larsen, “The Story of Etching”
29).

Ich Oder Du was shown at the Honolulu Academy of Art in 1939, the Physicians Art
Association in New York in 1940, and by request as a previous prizewinner in
Cleveland, Ohio in 1941. This piece won the Siren Bronze Plaque Award in the
annual show of the American Physicians Art Association in June of 1940. The depth
and precariousness of the armed diver are worrisome indications of the possible
outcome of the situation under water and at war.
In the fall of 1940, Larsen worked on two etchings that told another story about the times in which he lived. Along with his etching in the art diary, the entry for October 20th discussed the process of his art:

Last night I scratched off two plates--pure dry point. I tried using a razor knife to get fine lines like the Spaniard M--. The fewer the strokes to show the most--the better the skill--or was it art he said? Rosenwald who collected a great deal said he never took an etching unless 3/4 of it was good clear paper. So I got the idea from close-up shots of crabs-then sketched a few from life—then—scratch—entirely with fine razor edge. John said—swell. Learned how to sketch name-write first of tissue paper--turn and copy. Lines running off paper are always good--show that a world exists beyond your own small horizon. Names may have any deviations. If you wish to clear a heavy line wipe with soft rag (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 56).

As Larsen learned more about etching technique he used a two-part story, showed a before/after view of humans, and their reactions to war. His use of shellfish as a
representation of man and universal ideas of survival showed a different thought process involved in the choice of subject matter. Larsen discussed his political agenda for this piece of art in his book of etchings:

These crabs indicate how humans are returning to the very primitive--again humans have gone into holes to protect themselves from deprecations of the enemy--with Air Alarm all shoot into holes--All Clear--happiness and sunshine appear with the smile "well, I'm still alive. That is "kulur" to dominate or be dominated—to be static and keep others static—everything in life evolves by trial and error—evolve constantly toward something better—constantly trying to express and explore life beyond what has yet been done—that is life—that is art that is culture—but our present clash seems to be back to the rat hole. Evolution in the reverse. Sell their soul for 3 square meals a day—an overcoat—a house—and then to be regimented. With their leaders jailed, their religion belittled, their ministers in concentration camps, their best scientist banished, some of their best literature burned and their best paintings torn down, their reading and their listening (radio) prescribed, their children brought up on hatred and lies—their state religion changed from a kindly 'God and Fury teutonics—their self-appointed goose stepping Caesar's boasting of cold blooded murder of friends—in one of their air operations killing 637 children.... —and there are some who say "Hitler has helped G." God forbid that we sell
our souls in such a bargain. Art must stay alive (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 56).

As most, Larsen was appalled by the atrocities of Hitler and what he had done to Germany including the desecration of Jewish art and culture. He rendered his opinion that man was headed backwards in the course of evolution and called for artistic memory.

![The Great Dictator](image)

**Figure 16: The Great Dictator (1941)**

This subject must also be in the mind of every sane adult. The Great Dictator brings recognition that life is extremely limited, that in death merchant prince, prelate and pauper are the same. The pompous over lording and the agonizing of other humans during life means little when in so few years the dictator shall look no different from the millions of others who have gone through the cycle of life throughout
the ages. The dictator spirit is undoubtedly an egomaniac reaction of a small mind trying to compete with the Gods. But whatever commotion such a man produces, eventually we know he will be merely the Great Dictator of the print. But then Man himself has always been the Great Dictator, and although religions have tried to modify this spirit, it seems to be perennial in its return. Even Buddha four hundred years before Christ, was stopped in his pompous career by a glance at the dead beggar. He recognized the uselessness of merely seeking power and materialism in a search for happiness in life. He found happiness, as other happy humans have found it, in the spiritual qualities rather than in the material. (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 36).

Larsen here expressed his spiritual side and again the opinion that one does not typically recognize man’s miniscule and temporary nature in the universe. This art piece was a reminder about “ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Along with the three pencil etchings, one color copy and a photograph of this work, Larsen included a hand-written thank you letter from Nico Cawara regarding his work. Cawara said:

… the ‘psychopathology’ you mentioned. To me it is a lucid depiction of the ephemeral nature of autocracy, which, thank heavens, crumbles together with the person of the autocrat. The bust like rock that forms the entrance to the cave, with its cold, hard…air, depicts the qualities of the dictator; wherever the skull, the loneliness and desolation of the
cave clearly show the result of that power. This fish, it seems to rise,
adds a wonderful touch of eeriness to the picture.

Thanks again and best regard from Nico (Cawara).

The Great Dictator was shown at the Physicians’ Art Association convention in Cleveland, Ohio in 1941.

Figure 17: Regimentation (1941)

Color soft ground etchings 6 3/8” x 8 7/16,” photo taken in Cleveland

Larsen studied Chinese painting technique for this etching. In the side notes of his etching book he wrote some technical terms of Chinese painting as related by Benjamin March in a 1935 article in Weekly Press. To paraphrase, March instructed that those who use Chinese painting methods emphasize harmony and composition. Chinese painters were skilled as men of culture and learning, poets who could read and write used the intricate Chinese characters. They studied principals of function and structure and an
artist of great skill in composition could produce a work of art with just three strokes that could not be attained by others no matter how many strokes they made (March). Larsen's *The Story of Etching* said:

The spirit of the conqueror. Or is it the spirit of the New Order? Or is it the place that we must accept? Or is it possible that democracy is a pipedream and a failure, and that the great mass of humans cannot regulate their own affairs, but must live in a regimented manner in a definite place and corner, and move in a definite specified direction at the command of authority? Isn’t this spirit brought out by the parade of fish? How many times I have gone beneath the water and watched these regiments of fish during their passing hours. They go by in an amazingly even stream, at amazingly regular distances one from another, and at what seems like invisible commands suddenly they all turn and start in a new direction. They are regimented, but perhaps they couldn’t exist unless they were. (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 34).

The above quote was taken from Van Loon. Larsen believed that “it took us hundreds of years to learn that Chinese painting is in every way as sound and interesting as our own, if not a great deal better” (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 34). He wrote about his etching that in “our development of this type of color etching we have caught somewhat the feeling of the Chinese painters” (Larsen, "The Story of Etching"). This etching was probably printed from one plate inked simultaneously with the two colors, light cool gray for the water background and warm black for the
fish. Larsen made clever use of a Japanese-like paper material to make the soft wavy water texture. He drew the swimming fish with soft ground using a broad crayon-like line. In addition some of the scale patterns look as if he had drawn them with a toulette—an etching tool that has rows of lines of dots.

Larsen won Second Honorable Mention for the Henry B. Shope Prize in the Society of American Etchers' 26th Annual Exhibit for Regimentation in 1942. It was included at the Southern Art Association show of 1942, Massachusetts State College, and made a part of the permanent collection of the American Etcher's Society. His comment regarding the fact that the fish needed to stay together as a safeguard from predators could also be considered a political message at this time. While Chinese etching techniques were useful and productive to learn, Larsen’s images still expressed a kind of frenzy in the water. These were not the docile fish he started etching earlier on. In the next sample from The Story of Etching, Larsen once again shows man in a environment over which he is not in command, as he lurks near underwater caverns, protected only by a spear and rocky, dark crevices. Larsen sees this etching as a contrast to Reglementation. He describes it in such as way as one would think that he would like to be this explorer.
Along with the etching, Larsen’s *The Story of Etching*, gives the following description of this piece of art.

This is the question that probably flits through the mind of everyone in all countries. What does it all mean? Man, with his great desire to explore and conquer every corner of the world, has attempted the sky, and here we see him exploring the depths. What a fascination life might be if this spirit were developed. This would be the opposite of regimentation. But with our present destructive war, when a few ruthless masterminds remain after the destruction is complete, is it possible that man will again, as we see him here, stripped of
everything, crawl back into a deep hole or the cave of oblivion?

(Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 42).

In his etching book Larsen included several prints and photographs of his completed works, along with notes on his progress as he developed his skill as an artist. He commented that he had gotten the idea for Little Man--What Now? while on the Kona coast watching Hawaiian boys dive off the point where magnificent lava flowed into the water. He tried to indicate the puniness of the man as he was engulfed by volcanic rock and headed for “a deep dark cave of oblivion” (Larsen, “The Story of Etching”). Again he drew a man surrounded in the depths of the water. Man was out of his element. It was left unclear if he was up to the task of survival. One cannot help but think, however, how long the man will need before his oxygen is gone and he needs to take a breath. Larsen experimented again with color in Little Man--What Now? He noted changes, such as: “water not dark enough.” The piece was shown at the Physicians’ Art Association in Cleveland in 1941 and was featured in Paragon.

Along with the progressive etchings in his book and explanations of the finished pieces, Larsen added two thank you letters in his art diary, one from Jane Howe dated March 1, 1941, and one from A. Graeme Mitchell, M.D., dated February 3, 1941. The hand written three-page note from Howe, aside from thanking him for the pleasure of owning one of his etchings, detailed her interpretation of the work on two different levels. First she saw a man who was “eternally searching.” She described him as one looking for the “unpossessed” and who was willing to go to any lengths to do this, no matter what his limitations. The other one, she believed was
closer to the artist's intent to represent a piece that showed the times where man faced the dark cave rather than followed the light. She said that anyone who came and stood in front of her etching “may see his own face reflected back from the glass just above the inscription Little Man--What Now? (Howe).

The second thank you note from Mitchell, was typed on letterhead from the Children's Hospital Research Foundation in Cincinnati, Ohio. He wrote that he so appreciated the print that it made him want to renew his old appeal for creating etchings of his own. A hand-written blurb on this thank you letter, in Larsen's print read: “died suddenly of heart failure in June--1941” (Larsen, “The Story of Etching”).

Figure 19: Heil! (1941)

On June 22, 1941, Larsen wrote that he had a fine day and did a dry-print aquatint on the work. Politically he commented on how the Germans began their attack on the Russians and as he sat in front of a fishbowl, his ideas had evolved and crystallized and "last nite it jelled" (Larsen, "The Story of Etching” 48). He wrote
that he chose the Dragon Fish because he had watched it many times and it was a "supreme egotist" (Larsen, "The Story of Etching"). On July 6th, he tried the print in color and revealed that he was quite happy with its results. Heil! won first prize at the Physicians' Art Show in Atlantic City in 1942.

Figure 20: America!! Hail!! (Bomber's Away) (circa 1942)

In his etching book, Larsen wrote about the meaning behind the patriotic war image:

This is supposed to show America flying high in ideals, in ability, in power for justice, in mechanization, in desire to crush the spirit of Heil! When this mechanization, and this spirit for justice and freedom behind the mechanization has developed enough of these flying fortresses, then truly the spirit of Heil will be replaced by the dream of America, an opportunity for everyone, big or small, to the limits of their capacity and an opportunity for every nation, big or small, to have at their disposal any of the world's resources that they need for
their development--a recognition that the spirit of cooperation for the benefit of all must eventually produce a lasting peace and the possibility of the development of culture and progress toward a happier world. Hence, America!! Hail!! (Larsen, “The Story of Etching” 39).

Again, Larsen used broken color in his work, and a patriot’s vision. This time, though, he made no reference to nature and sea, only the technology that would help conquer the enemy.
Another new method adopted by the fighting forces is the use of a smoke screen. But as with all things that we think we have discovered, we find Nature has already used it, and that man’s brain is repeating rather than inventing (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 52).

Hence, in Figure 21 we see the squid in his dash for cover. The enemy is pursuing him. He ejects a great cloud of black smoke and he and his direction and his place of hiding
are immediately hidden from the attacker. As in *America!! Hail!*, Larsen showed in *Smoke Screen* the world through a clouded haze. He once again turned to sea creatures to portray their proximity to human nature.

In the same years that Larsen's art pieces concerned itself with war, he also had his own health issues to take care of. He took a whimsical look at fellow physicians on the East Coast when he returned there for a hopeful, yet experimental, surgery. A self-portrait of himself surrounded by physicians discussing his medical condition is accompanied by a derogatory writing on colleagues in his profession. Not only to have been back in the New England area and away from Hawaiian influence, but also to be on the receiving end of his profession, heightened his sense of humanity and humor.

Figure 22: Weekly Staff Conference:
Grand Round--Etherdome--Boston (1942)

Doctors!! Doctors!!

Pompous--Smug--Egotistical
But--This is really American Medicine's cradle. GMH
Massachusetts General Hospital

Harvard--

Snoot--

Boston--

Propriety--

The Lowell Brow--

The Cabot mind--

Old--run down--

Conventional family--

Tradition--Pilgrims--

The only really (really) bad people are the good people (Darrow).

But in this very amphitheatre, same windows, chairs, floors, etc., was held the public demonstration of the use of ether (1846) the door to major modern surgery was opened. It was demonstrated as a result of nerve surgery--1942. Hence the memorial sketch (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 64).

In an interview with Morgan on April 27, 2001, she talked about her father's health problem. On December 5, 1941, she said that Larsen boarded the luxury liner with his wife on a trip to the East Coast to help cure his severe angina. His ultimate
destination was Boston, where he was to have an experimental surgery called a vagotomy and to have the vagus nerve cut on his back so that he would no longer have heart pain. He was not beyond placing himself as human guinea pig in the name of medicine, especially to alleviate his hurt. This operation did not aim to resolve the source of his pain, only the sensation of it. While his ship was in route to the Mainland, Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. His ship zigzagged its way to San Francisco, California. His two children were also away at college when the bombs hit Hawai‘i.

In the course of healing from his surgery, Larsen sketched his reaction to his experience as patient and presented a snide view of the role reversal from physician to patient. This etching of the medical amphitheatre showed Larsen in his fifties surrounded by a group of doctors. He was on exhibit for his part in the experimental vega nerve surgery. Larsen poked fun at the world of medicine and characterized doctors as less than Godly. He uses them as ostentatious people gawking at their comrade doctor. Larsen described his rendering of the scene in his etching book “as a cross section of the medical profession from keen interest to complacent unconsciousness” (Larsen). Weekly Staff Conference: Grand Rounds--Etherdome--Boston was published in Esculapious in 1943. By virtue of this experimental surgery Larsen extended his interest in alternative and progressive medicine into his own life. He saw more of the East Coast and found other images to etch as well.
Figure 23: Evening Sky--Manhattan (circa 1942)

To New York City--1942

With 10 weeks at NY Hospital--15th Floor

The skyline was amazing--the Color--the feeling--the clarity varied from day to day and from hour to hour.

Here was the great pyramid built to the glory of the Twentieth century--This is the monument to rugged individualism--now passed. The age of capitalistic individualism. After this age--swept away by the great revolution culminating in the war of survival what will come?

? Socialite capitalism as now tried in Russia.

? A managerial state as Burnham.

? Totalitarian slavery as per Germany and Japan.

? Co-operative capitalism as per Sweden.
? A controlled democracy as per England at war.

? A cooperative sphere of influence as per the Western hemisphere.

? A world order—confederation on the basis of Atlantic charter (with no strings to the past).

? A hundred year war of attrition, slavery vs. freedom.

What?? But whatever; the past is gone—here we see the world’s greatest monument to that interesting even though hard and exploitive period. Man evolved toward undreamed of heights. The restless fingers of these great towers reach ever heavenward below there were slums of hell—But it was ever so, the great building of every period rose on the broken backs of the downtrodden slaves. Freemen—the truly cultured—the happy or the enthusiastically joyful were always the few. Heaven is always a place that is sparsely populated. Can human nature be changed? Can brother love be attained? Can Christianity really be lived? The answer—lies buried in the bloody whirlpools of the present war (Larsen, "The Story of Etching" 70).

Larsen took the opportunity to become the beneficiary of medical progress, however, though not without repercussions. He and Sally stayed in Boston for several weeks and when Larsen developed an infection and a huge carbuncle set in, he went to New York Hospital for recovery. He created several etchings in both places that illustrated this period of his life, besides his patient experiences. The famous skyline of Manhattan brought to light his questions about American capitalism in the state where he was raised. This etching was created as a monument
to "our highest material civilization," wrote Larsen, in his etching book. It was entered in the Massachusetts State College Family show, featured on the front cover of the April 1942 edition of The Alumni Bulletin and hung at Amherst (Larsen).

Interestingly, another print Evening Skyline--Angkor Wat, in which Angkor Wat was superimposed upon the New York skyline, seemed to suggest ambivalence towards modernity, progress, and the Western drive toward technology and development. During Larsen's residence in Hawaii, the state experienced rapid development, particularly following the introduction of air transportation. His trip to New York, however, contrasted with the progress made in the Territory of Hawai‘i. This dry point (7 7/8 x 12 inches) used the blur of closely hatched lines to fill in some of the building shapes. He did several dry points using the New York skyline—some are composed of fragile, scratchy, vertical lines. In the sky and middle section he selectively wiped the plate drawing out effective contrasts with the dark buildings (Larsen, "The Story of Etching").
Figure 24: War and Peace (1943 Gift Print)

The artists accepted into the Honolulu Print Makers were artists who lived in Hawai'i or had resided and created their art in Hawai'i. Each year since its 1933 origins, they chose artists to submit prints for their annual art show. One of the select active members was chosen by the executive committee to present a “gift print” for active and associate members. Only members were given these prints and their plates or blocks were destroyed to maintain their limited edition status. The yearly gift print artist was kept a secret until the annual show when it was announced. The first four Honolulu Print Makers gift prints were: Charles W. Bartlett, Java, a color etching; 1934, John Kelly, Kamalii, drypoint; 1935, A. S. MacLeod, Spear Fisherman, lithograph; and 1936, Hue M. Luquiens, Morning, Kualoa, drypoint. Morgan’s article, “Nils P. Larsen: His Short Print Career,” for The Honolulu Printmakers Newsletter discussed one of the two gift prints Larsen created. This excerpt
emphasizes the strong political views that can be seen in Larsen’s print, War and Peace:

That subtle claim of fragile beauty raised triumphant against the entanglement and barbed bitterness of war. In years to come the Associate Members will be glad to have this reminder that ‘The meek shall inherit the earth’ (Morgan, “His Short Print Career” 2).

For this color print he won the Honolulu Arts Show prize, an award at the American Etcher’s Show in New York City, and was featured in Paradise of the Pacific in 1944. It was used on the front cover of Onipaa, for the class of 1946 Queen’s Hospital Nursing School. The 7 7/8 x 9 15/16 inches print reflected the troubles of the 1940s brought on by the war. It also suggests the theme of nature and technology, the rose and the barbed wire that can intermingle in a human environment. The Honolulu Print Makers Newsletter also found that:

The rough rosin aquatint surface and deeply etched lines of the barbed wire contrast effectively with the fragile, thin lines and smooth aquatint of the morning glory. He made good use of a favorite technique: selective wiping. The large flower and the small buds are starkly wiped, while the barbed wire is dark with heavy plate tone (4).

Larsen was doctor for many of the prominent Honolulu print makers including John Kelly, Madge Tennent, and Joe Feher. In fact Feher had planned a retrospective of Larsen’s art, but Feher died before it materialized. His art career involved him in the American Physicians’ Art Association (1940, 1941, 1942); he had
a print chosen for the Library of Congress Pennell show of 1942; he won honorary mention at the Society of American Etchers' show of 1941, and had two prints accepted for the national show. Elected as a member of the American Etchers in 1942, one of Larsen's prints was used for the cover design for the Alumni Bulletin of Massachusetts State College in 1942 and one appeared on the Harvard yearbook of 1962. He regularly utilized his etchings as covers for the monthly Plantation Health Bulletin.

Larsen was involved in other art media such as oil paintings. Combining both his medical interests and artistic inclinations, in 1945 Larsen designed a flag for Queen's Hospital. In "A Flag for the Queen's," written for the June, 1945, edition of The Queen's Messenger, Larsen said that he had a keen desire to be "the Betsy Ross of the 'Queen's Hospital'" and wrote about the symbolism of flags" (Larsen, "A Flag for Queen's" 6). To him, flags signified the idea of rising above the physical and the material. They provided a visible way of rallying and could be understood by people of all races. The flag he devised consisted of a red cross, which he described as the universal icon for the care of the distressed. Larsen added a Hawaiian crown and Queen Emma's monogram to stand for the two royalties who started the hospital. The colors of red- orange and deep blue stood for warm soil and the blue ocean and were also the recommended state colors for Hawai'i. The white background symbolized purity of thought and action. The blue ribbon with "Queen's Hospital" and its 1859 date of inception commemorated the uniqueness of the hospital (Larsen, "A Flag for Queen's").
Larsen's work has been shown with the American Physicians' Art Association with over 1200 members and received prizes in 1940, 1942 and 1944. In December, 1945, he was recognized in headlines as "Dr. Nils P. Larsen Physician and Artist Designs Bulletin Masthead" which was featured on the first page of the 'Oahu Health Council Bulletin and Hawai'i Farm and Home in December, 1945, ('Oahu Health).

Figure 25: 'Oahu Health Council Bulletin, December 1945

The write-up on the cover etching said:
Sugar--the all-important agricultural product in the Territory of Hawai‘i--comes in for its full share of recognition in this the annual Sugar Edition of Hawai‘i Farm and Home. Proof of the emphasis being put on the human side of plantation work and life are the articles included in this issue of the magazine. Plantation homes and plantation health care receive special consideration. Technological improvements rate their share of attention, too. The story of advances made in plantation transportation is a rare story of remarkable progress--and a fascinating one at that (Larsen, “The Story of Etching”).

These kinds of etchings appeared on Plantation Health Bulletins as well. They were simple and personalized the editions, with an emphasis on the purpose of plantations.

In an exhibit with John Kelly at The Gallery at the Hawaiian Village Hotel, Larsen wrote a blurb on each of the pieces he had exhibited. For this exhibit he told viewers in his lighthearted comment that “One picture says more than a thousand words, so maybe a few extra words can make the picture tell still more” (Larsen). He made provocative clarifications on his various works, which served as enlightening criticisms.

Larsen’s enthusiasm for art led him to become an art sponsor for a special person in his life. Because of Larsen’s financial ability, humanism, empathy for other cultures, and ethical beliefs, he was drawn to add (albeit in an absentee yet economic capacity) to his sense of family. Sometime around 1948 the Larsens took on the “moral adoption” of Midori Yoshida after the Reverend Kikyoshi Tanimoto, a famous
Methodist pastor and a hero in John Hersey’s book “Hiroshima,” visited Honolulu. Tanimoto was in Hiroshima on a hill about a mile away on his bicycle when the bomb hit in 1945 and suffered seriously from the atomic bomb radiation. Tanimoto was drawn to think and worry about the long-lasting effects on the children who survived the bombing, and about the bitter hatred that could reside in them against Americans for leaving them injured and orphaned. He decided to generate understanding for their plight when he established the Hiroshima Peace Center Foundation. Tanimoto traveled and lectured around the United States and encouraged Americans to put the notion of “the Golden Rule” into effect, appealing to a sense of national guilt over the effects of the bomb on innocent youth. Because of Tanimoto’s passionate persuasion, the Larsens “adopted” Midori when she was four years old. Although she continued to grow up in a Hiroshima orphanage as a youth, the Larsens were her economic foster parents (through a philanthropic financial arrangement) and they corresponded with her during these years.

In 1959, his “Hiroshima Orphan” Midori Yoshida sent him a collage-appliqué. It consisted of paintings that pasted tiny pieces of multi-colored scrap cloth into pictorial designs. After having received a gift of one, he inquired if she could send more. When she delivered to him a dozen that she and her school classmates had made, he showed them to Takeo Gima, an artist and art dealer in Hawai‘i. He had never seen anything like them and was impressed. One piece, in particular View of Hiroshima Today aimed to approximate for viewers the extent of healing that had occurred for some of the six thousand Hiroshima orphans. In “Hiroshima Orphans Wow Local Critics with Art,” a newspaper clipping found in Larsen’s scrapbook
"The Story of One Year (1959-1960)," it talks about the special exhibit. The orphans' collages were put on display at the Gima Art Gallery as well as in an exhibit at Ala Moana Center. That year, Larsen donated one of Midori's works along with one of his oils to the Punahou Carnival and made arrangements for any profits from the exhibits to go to the girls at the orphanage, towards their education.

Figure 26: Progress--Auwe! (1960)
Newspaper clipping of gift print

Unlike most of the other etchings that Larsen put on exhibit, Progress--Auwe! received little explanation except for a verse written by Harry Lucas, his brother-in-
law. Larsen felt that his pictorial comment on the changing local scene was best explained by his 1960 poem:

**Ode to a Coconut Tree**

And stars through fronds  
Bright glimpses won  
Of happy folks whose lives with me  
Knew song and work in harmony  
As nature planned for them to be  
Auwe*! The changing times are nigh;  
Broad shafts of rock and steel now view  
In hiding lovely hills and sky.  
Before ...I gazed toward all the sea  
And rainbows often arched o’er me.  
But now these alien buildings tall  
Deeply sadden and dwarf all  
Of me—a king—who used to be.  

(*Hawaiian for Alas!) (Lucas).

Larsen was a member of the Honolulu Print Maker’s Association, established in the mid 1920s. In 1955, he was elected President of the Honolulu Print Maker’s and was a member of the Board of Directors for many years. During this time he took courses under Wilson Stamper and Joe Feher at the Academy of Arts. In 1960, Larsen was honored at the “Art in Hawai’i” show at Fort De Russy, and Progress—Auwe! was the annual Gift Print selection at a time when he was vice president of the
Honolulu Print Makers. David G. Asherman’s article in the Honolulu Advertiser on this exhibit said that this was the “largest jury-selected exhibit of work by local artists ever held in the islands” and was exhibited at the U.S. Army’s Maluhia Service Club, free of charge (Asherman). He described the exhibit as a cross-section of every conceivable type of fine art being created in Hawai‘i. There were 297 pieces selected from close to 700 entries. Of the Honolulu Print Makers, the portion of the pieces displayed represent forty-one prints from their 32nd Annual Exhibition that included media from etching, lithography, intaglio, aquatint, serigraph, and linoleum. Larsen’s work was printed in the paper, and reported that it represented the new skyline of Waikiki. Rather than comment on Progress--Auwe!, Marvell A. Hart and Edward A. Stasack, the Secretary and President, respectively, of the Honolulu Print Makers, wrote a paper for distribution with the exhibit. They placed the etching in the “social anecdotal, symbolic tradition” and said, “there is a bite to this etching, both from acid on copper and in content, that is complemented by the nostalgia of the verse” (Hart and Stasack).

At the time of Progress--Auwe!, Larsen was Vice-President of the Honolulu Print Makers and, in 1962 he was again elected President. Larsen created numerous etchings and the ones discussed here seem most representative of the man and his ideas on humanity, the environment, and politics.

As was the case in all aspects of Larsen’s life, he was grappling with the changing face of modernity and a sense of loss and appreciation for traditional ways. His art sea creatures sometimes threatened humans and also were threatened, just as his way of life was being threatened. War heightened this menacing feeling. He had
been to war and was apprehensive about its results. The war art gave technology the edge should America win, however, his comments about man’s evolutionary regression was a real concern. Larsen’s artistic vision was confirmed through several world trips that helped him form his political views and his conviction for world unity. The volumes of letters he wrote to family and friends were indicative of what he learned along the way.

Travel and International Opinions

Figure 27: Larsen and Sara in Venice (1958)
It has been said, 'the joy of the collector lies not in the accumulation of articles but in the collecting.' The joy of travel lies not in arriving at a destination but in the events of the journey. I recommend travel as part of the joy of living (Larsen).

The above excerpt from a vacation letter to Wally Bortz relates Larsen's sentiments on his journeying. Travel sometimes took the Larsen couple away from their children. In an April, 2002, interview with Morgan, she said that her father seemed to always have the questionable purpose of educating his children when he traveled. He went around the world twice, once in the 1930s and again in the 1950s on the trans-Siberian railroad. Of the latter, she said, it was a wonder that Sally ever accompanied him again since the poverty, masses of refugees and starvation they saw
at the stations in Russia previously were so horrific. Larsen always brought his Leica camera and had slides to show upon his return. When he left, Jack and Lila stayed with their grandmother. Ritually, their servants hung a huge white sheet on a long bamboo pole for their parents to see when they passed their Diamond Head house by ocean liner at a time prior to airplane travel. The remaining family all went out and waved the flag as the Larsen couple departed from view. In his travel writings, he always made it a point to mention to his children that they saw the farewell sheet (Morgan).

Major travels of his life included medical meetings all over Europe, where Larsen gave talks and presented research findings on numerous topics. Before he went on a trip he always studied the language. He was fluent in Swedish and would lecture in the native tongue when he was there. He was also well-versed in French and German. His interest in new technology inspired him to buy a linguaphone—a machine that aided in speaking other languages. He seemed to appreciate this machine so much that in December, 1957, he clipped out the advertisement on the linguaphone. He sent a clipping of it to his colleague, Dr. Bortz, and recommended it because he was having lots of fun with it. Along with being interested in understanding and translating the languages of other people, whenever he traveled he took numerous photographs and slides, and made sketches to share with family and colleagues upon his return. Larsen also wrote extensive journal-type letters to inform all at home of their adventures as well as the serious side of his travel. His comments generally included observations of what impressed him and what bothered him along the way.
Many of the writings for Plantation Health Bulletin were inspired by trips Larsen took to various medical conferences. In July, 1947, Larsen covered the "1947 Atlantic City AMA Conference Report" and discussed with enthusiasm the grand Atlantic City conference with all the newest and best advances in medicine made over time. Larsen called it a grand bazaar of medicine:

Instead of hawkers, professors explained their exhibits; instead of dancing girls, beautiful models lay on couches with electrocardiograph leads attached, demonstrating new EKGs, or armless, legless or paralyzed men showed how with the technical advances, they could be made self supporting.... In place of the sideshow were all types of specimens and beautifully colored slides, but showing pellagra, scurvy, cancer and all kinds of human ills. All manner of tongues and even a row of cadaver heads illustrating each step in the fenestration operation glared from the walls. In lieu of fortunetellers were charts showing the things to come as indicated by present experiments.... Even a sheep and a goat, survivors of Bikini, with charts of their blood counts over a period of months were on display.

In place of merry-go-rounds was a labyrinth of brilliant exhibits from all the scientific instrument makers and drug houses. Occasionally the well-known voice of Phillip Morris echoed through the hall, and as a crowd gathered, the familiar voice in person, complete with red uniform, scattered packs of cigarettes. Dole pineapple from a colorful booth distributed free pineapple juice. Hot
Sanka was also served gratis to sustain one's scientific enthusiasm when “exhibitionitis” began to weary the knees and the soul (Larsen, “Atlantic City Conference” 19-25).

Larsen was obviously awed with the unusual presentations of the conference. He wrote about the distinguished group of foreigners who attended the conference, advances made in tuberculosis and the art show, in which he won a prize for one of his etchings. Larsen said that the exhibit was hung badly, but that the doctors’ “Objects d’art” were weird, wonderful and at least worth viewing. There were some six hundred doctors that contributed to the exhibition. He wrote that when the body got old, art kept you young and fresh. Three Honolulu doctors won star red awards at this conference exhibit. Larsen said that the message inscribed on the walls of Rockefeller Center in New York City was “Man’s ultimate destiny depends not on whether he can learn new lessons or make new discoveries and conquests, but on his acceptance of the lessons taught him close upon 2000 years ago (Rockefeller Center Wall).

Larsen and his wife took two around-the-world trips (one in the 1930s and the other in the 1950s) in addition to their other travels. An itinerary from their last trip to Europe in 1958 included Holland, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland between May 1 and June 27. The letters he wrote back to his children were his customary extensive coverage of the places that he visited and the things they did and saw. He wrote a travel diary because one of his plantation doctors asked him to do so, but he proclaimed that he would write no more than 350 words a week. He took as many slides as he could to share upon his return to Hawai‘i.
As a precursor to the around-the-world trip, Larsen had scheduled visits on the mainland, mostly medically oriented. Typed copies of Larsen's letters retold his travels and began with a letter that arrived in Honolulu on April 28, 1958, in which he discussed his visit to San Francisco, where he had received the Gold-Headed Cane Award from the University of California Medical School. This was a very prestigious award received for the accomplishments of his career. Upon his departure from California, he described the thrill of flying over the nation's capitol and seeing the landmarks of the Capitol building, Lincoln's Memorial, and the Washington Monument, and added his own commentary on the depth of freedom and how the site seemed like a fairyland.

The main objective of a Philadelphia travel stop was to learn more about the state of preventative health in medicine, rather than "how to plaster up disease." Larsen had the opportunity to meet with doctors from around the world on this issue. When the Larsens arrived in Philadelphia, it was foggy and raining, and lightning streaked the sky, but after finding a hotel he was whisked away to the Lankenau Hospital to go over research projects, address the relationship of diet to atherosclerosis to medical colleagues and to attend a staff conference. Larsen presented his work with Dr. Walter "Wally" Bortz, a long-standing colleague. He had met Bortz through his father, Dr. Edward Bortz, and Lankenau Hospital. After the younger Dr. Bortz inquired about a position at Queen's Medical and Larsen got him involved in mold research there, Wally thought so highly of Larsen that after only a short time he made Larsen godfather to his son. Additionally, they began a correspondence that lasted many years and did a tremendous amount of research on
atherosclerosis. Their goal was to show in tests little correlation of fat to inducing or worsening the condition of atherosclerosis in patients. They claimed this contention because they recorded, analyzed, and compared the effects of a low-fat Japanese diet and a high-fat Caucasian diet. Both groups came out with relatively the same numbers, but both showed atheromatous plaque in their arteries. The concept Larsen presented at the Philadelphia hospital was an increased amount of arterial deposits from diet for those who had any tendency towards atherosclerosis to begin with. Age, cholesterol and exercise were also factors considered. While his contribution established some medical information to atherosclerosis sufferers in the way of offering dietary suggestions—it did not offer prevention. So, Larsen gathered information as he went to the International Medical Society by day and attended impressive dinners (such as the Union League), symphony performances and other events by night (Larsen).

On April 26, 1958, Larsen wrote from Atlantic City that he had attended the first meeting of the Governors of American College of Physicians. The doctors received information on the college “so we could return to our various states and preach the gospel of better medicine” (Larsen). The physician’s meeting registered some six thousand doctors from thirty different countries and the exhibits were wonderful in his testimony. Each night there was a cocktail party (Governors, Crile Clinic, New Fellows, friends) and dinners. Highlights for Dr. Larsen included an hour and a half panel discussion and a dinner given by the Swedes where he spent two-and-a-half hours speaking Swedish. Dr. H. Sjovall from Lund University of
Sweden, Larsen found, believed that diet did have a relationship to atherosclerosis as a real factor in the pathology (Larsen).

The final convocation for the Atlanta event included a pageant with Miss America and women from each of the states and territories. Larsen marched representing Hawai‘i. At this conference, since he had served his maximum tenure, he handed over his nine-year leadership role as Governor of the American College of Physicians from Hawai‘i to Dr. Hastings Walker of Leahi Hospital. The next day he had lunch at Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. While in the area, he also got to do a little touring. On May 10, 1958, Larsen wrote about a road trip through Philadelphia and Independence Square, planned in order to breathe in the atmosphere of the Birth of a Nation. In his patriotic writing, he said how the trip had “convinced him freedom of the mind--and soul--are essential to progress and must be cherished as our priceless heirloom” (Larsen, 10 May 1958).

Although described as an around the world trip, Europe and the Middle East were the focus of this journey. Larsen as Swedish Consul had been to Sweden, but upon arrival in Denmark, a letter dated May 10, 1958, told about visits to the marvelous Rjks Museum in Amsterdam, as well as Copenhagen, the magnificent town hall and his meeting with Dr. Pen Hansen, a medical professor at the University of Copenhagen who had read his article on “Diet and Atheriosclerosis.” He had discussions about how medicine was practiced in Denmark and later had dinner at a beautiful garden restaurant with chamber music. Larsen described the history of Denmark as an industrial nation with only fifteen percent of the population left on farms. And unlike the days of Larsen’s ancestors, there was no longer obvious
animosity between the Scandinavian countries. The Larsens visited castles and museums brimming with works by Manet, Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet, Rodin, and Dega, and he expressed his amazement in his writings back to Hawai‘i.

The search for ancient man was incorporated into Larsen’s travels. He tried to make medical and cultural connections between ancient ways and how that had led humans to where they were in his era. He was especially interested in ancient skulls because the teeth showed evidence of dietary differences in earlier humans. They invariably showed him that better levels of nutrition existed before his era. A highlight of the Denmark stop took place when he photographed a four thousand-year-old human skull with a bone spear piercing the nose and skull, which was still in place. He said that this exhibit beat the Swedish collection and made human history come to life. “It makes one realize one’s evolution and how recent it was” (Larsen).

The Larsens continued their tour of the city, including the Tivoli Gardens, a band concert, roller coasters, gambling machines, and an acrobatic show. The weather was cold so they went back for daiquiris to warm up. In Denmark, if one was caught with even a breath of alcohol, they lost their license for a year. In one trip to the castle of Frederick IV, Larsen learned that the king had three passions: wine, women and war. The king was involved in three wars and spawned thirty-six offspring. His bay window was fashioned to look like a hogshead of wine. With the proper American “prudery” of the time, Larsen was shocked at how casually pictures of nude women appeared in storefront windows. After the Denmark tour they went to Berlin where Larsen practiced his German.
Also in Germany, Larsen saw Hamburg, a city that lost millions during the war and had been completely rebuilt. On May 13 Larsen viewed the Hamburg slums, harbor and bombed areas. He was impressed with the Berlin Eiffel Tower. While it was eight percent destroyed by bombs at the time of Larsen’s visit, it had been called “The City of Tomorrow.” The visit included going to their largest shopping center and an exhibit of the German cartoonist, Fritz Behrendt. On the May 15 he wrote that they were instructed not to take pictures of soldiers, and they were everywhere. Beyond the red flag of destruction where formerly great hotels, museums, and churches, once stood, were now “stark, dark, gutted skeletons. Great piles of debris filled vacant lots…. Silence reigned” (Larsen 15 May 1958). The Larsens took off for Dusseldorf the next day.

On May 21, 1958, Larsen began his letter with the exclamation that “I am frightened!” (Larsen). He wrote that the terror of Communism had become plain as he witnessed the Russian exhibits at the $70 million World’s Fair put on in Brussels. He continued that it became harder to see behind the glorious red curtain because of the gigantic building put up at the fair. It was like a huge oblong warehouse built of glass. The whole three-story building was covered on the far end with a painting of the Moscow tower in red. He commented, “It reminds me of the golden calf of the Israelites” (Larsen, 21 May 1958). He described the physical immensity of the exhibit accompanied by larger than life displays of their “superman accomplishments” (Larsen, 21 May 1958).

The Russian exhibits boasted a population increase, large degree of mechanization, and no illiteracy in Russia. There were reproductions of the “dear
worker’s” home furnishings and a map and model of the new city, “the most beautiful city in the world.” and the same for Leningrad and Moscow” (Larsen, 21 May 1958). There were pictures of laughing women and children and the caption: “Every woman must be allowed to be happy” (Larsen, 21 May 1958). He saw a huge reproduction of the Black Sea resort “where the dear workers were given vacations” (Larsen, 21 May 1958). Larsen revealed that he found out that only one out of a hundred people really ever got to go there and that was only if they went accomplished some prodigious production. “Also, of course,” he added, “no mention was made of how the Hungarian workers were mowed down with machine guns when they dared to differ and ask for freedom” (Larsen, 21 May 1958).

Larsen had a sharp eye for contrast between the Russian and the American exhibits. For example, Lincoln’s portrait was only twelve inches by ten inches in one case, and a significantly larger case showed an American football player—suggesting a cultural emphasis on violent sports over national figures. In comparison, the Lenin exhibit contained a two-story high statue, numerous busts and his guiding philosophy blazed in large letters. There were many more contrasts, he claimed, such as the over-sized captions that made the Russian building scream out: “we rule the world.” Larsen concluded this letter by saying “The American way of life is threatened as it has never been threatened before” (Larsen, 21 May 1958).

At the International Conference on the Prevention of Accidents in Brussels, Larsen presented a paper. He enjoyed the meeting because many different countries were represented, even as far away as Iceland, Cyprus and Liberia. Larsen found that Europeans had been working on protection of their workers since 1907. At the
organization of the Industrial Accident Association in 1916, Grace Hamilton’s work on lead poisoning in 1914 had made physicians aware of the necessity of such work. At this conference, all of the papers submitted were published in six different languages and attendees in the auditorium were able to hook up earphones and pick the language of their choice to hear the reading of the papers. Although Larsen found this appealing, the criticism he voiced was that there was no panel discussion or platform to debate issues and compare ideas (Larsen).

The conference agenda traveled to Liege one day with Larsen and members of Congress to view the various European machines and safety devices of different countries. Everything from a demonstration of a safety belt, complete with worker jumping off a high platform and being caught “distress free” in mid air, to displays of camping equipment was provided. This part of the conference was an eye-opener for Larsen, who had believed that the United States was on the cutting-edge of the industry, only to see that they had miles to go.

Again, Larsen took issue with the Russian propaganda. Despite the East Berlin revolt, the Hungarian massacre and the millions in slave camps, it appalled Larsen that their presentation only very carefully discussed the great concern of the government for safety. During their presentation, Larsen said that attendees clapped “in an attempt to shut up the Russian” (Larsen). It was clear that Larsen did not like the Russian style, since he cited three occasions where they “displayed their grandiose propaganda without any regard to facts or by the clever use of half truths (Larsen). He found this distaste also to be true at the 50-Year Review of Modern Art
in the World, The Brussels World’s Fair, and The Bi-Annual International Art Exhibit in Venice, Italy.

In Germany, Larsen was driven along the Rhine and visited Cologne and Bonn. Larsen’s physician friend informed him of the deterioration of the profession here because of the present government-controlled medicine that existed. He was disturbed about the quality of medicine and the type of person being drawn to the profession. And he was anxious to get a paper from his friend on “German Medicine.” This revelation led Larsen to an even stronger conviction that we must “keep earnestly trying to give the best possible service to every patient” (Larsen).

On May 25, 1958, Larsen wrote from Turkey, overlooking the Dardanelles, right after visiting Brussels where they had toured dungeons, churches, and castles, many from the time of the Crusades. In Bruges, they visited the church of the Holyblood. Here was a four-inch cloth stained purportedly with the blood of Christ, encased in a glass case with gold ends that Catholics kissed and got the blessing of the priest, and Heathens lined up to look at. While Sally was having her hair done, Larsen went to the Fair and could not resist a shot up to the top of the Atomium (Larsen, 25 May 1958).

Larsen described the rest of his 1958 trip as devoted to his vacation, and his lifelong interest, “On the Trail of Ancient Man.” He looked for evidence of man’s evolution throughout the countries he visited. He saw the remnants of the 3500 B.C. Amazon culture (near Izmir, Asia Minor). Here were stone-age implements, followed by bronze, gold, and iron. He wrote that each civilization left its own type of fortifications all over Europe and throughout Asia Minor, and many structures remain
to show the power of each. At different times the Greeks, Romans, Huns, Venetians, Byzantines, Crusaders, Turks, Germans and others reigned. When the organization of the European nations combined as entities for mutual protection, Larsen believed it was trying to organize into even larger groups. It was Larsen’s belief that European nations “are quivering for fear that history will repeat itself with the hordes of unscrupulous, murdering, raping, thieving, masses of men over-running their countries in order to put an iron heel of absolute power on the necks of all others.” Out of this experience, Larsen said that the greatest hope was in recognizing the power of cooperation for the world, a belief that made him believe in a World Federalist or global vision. In this scenario, the whole world would allow the various groups to develop their own brand of culture, and in no way decry that of any of the others. The alternative, said Larsen, would have to be “another great smash and another climbing from the ruins of our present civilization with remnant marks of what we once were” (Larsen, 25 May 1958). His trip very clearly worried him about the state of humanity and how far it could fall.
Larsen’s ideas on ancient man were often written into essays for discussion with the Honolulu Social Sciences Association. Several of his research writings were cited in the book entitled *A Century of Social Thinking in Hawai‘i* by Stanley Porteus. Of particular interest to Larsen was the study of ancient man, and in “Our Ancestral Primitive Culture,” Porteus extracts from Larsen’s insights on man’s expression in “cave writings.” In traveling in the Vezere Valley of France, Larsen was excited about his trip to Lascaux cave. He received a personally conducted tour there by the discoverer of “a primitive art gallery.” In it, “the walls covered by huge sparkling animals,” Larsen found the ancient etchings had withstood “the ravages of years” because they were covered by a thin layer of calcite crystals that preserved them. He described rows of reindeer, rhinoceroses, mammoths, running horses, and
bulls. In Porteus’ writing of this adventure in “Eugenics and Evolution,” he emphasized a point that Larsen often stressed, that man’s anxiety and fear of the world was a good thing because without it, man most likely would have lapsed into despondency” (Porteus 223).

Despite all of his travels and adventures, it was evident that Larsen truly appreciated Hawai‘i. He wrote an article for *Life Magazine* that featured the Hawai‘i Islands. It was entitled “Hawai‘i—Prescription for Happy Living.” In this article, Larsen wrote:

> Much has been written lately about ‘wonder’ drugs and cures. Like all medicine a good deal of debate, pro and con, and the argument will go
on until the claims made for them are proved or disproved. There’s one cure, however, about which there can be little controversy. In my opinion it’s the best medicine you can buy for some of the world’s most prevalent ailments today—nervous tension, anxiety and general frustration.

It’s called Hawai‘i (Larsen, "Prescription for Happy Living").

As well as promoting the environment in connection with health and mental health, the article also featured an island beach scene and four other pictures of recreational attractions. Although it was easy to become complacent in such a beautiful environment, it was not in Larsen’s nature. He decided to get involved in the world of politics.

Politics and World Unity

... I am for those means which will give the greatest good to the greatest number (Abraham Lincoln).

There was a political side to the life of Larsen. He felt ideological ties to two political heroes, Abraham Lincoln and Dwight Eisenhower. On February 12, 1944, Larsen gave a speech at the dedication ceremony for a statue of Lincoln placed in the courtyard of an Ewa school. In a September, 1946, article he wrote for Paradise of the Pacific entitled “Lincoln ... in the Pacific,” Larsen reported about the event. It was the wish of Katherine McIntosh Burke for Avard T. Fairbanks to create a nine-foot bronze statue of Lincoln in her memory, fashioned as a symbol of “tolerance and
justice.” At the dedication ceremony, the Governor of the Territory spoke about his perceptions of Lincoln’s life philosophies. He said:

No matter how difficult the conditions confronting him, no matter how heavy his burdens, he kept on striving, always facing forward. This is a priceless heritage to the youth of the United States (Larsen, “Lincoln” 4).

Larsen, too, was not one to quit, and worked to give Hawai‘i’s citizens a better quality of life.

The principles of Dwight Eisenhower were discussed in Larsen’s travel trip writing in 1958. He concurred with Eisenhower’s belief that “our prime need is peace, our greatest threat is dictatorship.” Commemorated in Larsen’s 1959-1960 scrapbook were other inspirational doctrines, preserved below from Eisenhower’s beliefs:

1) To stay free, we must stay strong.
2) Under God, we espouse the cause of Freedom and Justice and Peace for all people
3) The individual is of supreme importance
4) The spirit of our people is in the strength of our nation
5) America does not prosper unless all America prospers
6) Government must have a heart as well as a head
7) Courage and principle, cooperation and practice make freedom possible
8) The purpose of government is to serve, never to dominate (Dwight Eisenhower).

Larsen believed in tolerance, justice, strength and service. These ideas meshed with the ideas of these two important presidential figures. He stood by their convictions and they guided him throughout his work in Hawai‘i.

Hawai‘i was annexed when Larsen was only eight years old and lived in New York. Since 1893, the Hawaiian monarchy had been ousted and a provisional government run by its President, Sanford B. Dole, had taken charge. It was a United States Territory when Larsen arrived in Hawai‘i in 1922. Since Larsen did not believe in government by force, he endorsed and tried to encourage unity through cooperation. He especially promoted the ideas of a political movement known as the United World Federalists. The United World Federalists was formed when a group of seven men came together to discuss how wars could be prevented. Each came from a different war experience. One was involved in the Bataan Death March and another had been imprisoned for three years in a Burma prison camp. Along with these two men was a man who had survived three years in a Japanese prison camp, a Japanese survivor of an Italian prison camp and two others who had been in the last war. In 1949, there were seventeen states that had voted to take part in the movement, and fifty nations were represented. Larsen was the founder of the local chapter of the United World Federalists and had many dinner parties that his family attended; after the meal, Morgan said that he would insist: “My son-in-law will start the round table discussion on the United World Federalists” (Morgan, “Personal Interview”). Lila’s husband, Bud, would gulp and say something on the spur of the moment. United
World Federalists were an important political ideal for Larsen. He believed that the world’s salvation lay in some form of federation. In 1948, he said, “The only feasible way to stop worldwide chaos is through the federalist movement. It will mean giving up some sovereignty, ‘giving up the right to murder our next-door neighbor’” (Larsen). It was a call for world harmony.

One of the ways in which Larsen thought the movement for world unity could be successfully piloted was through women’s groups. He spoke to the Maui’s Women’s Club in January of 1949. He held that individuals had to talk to individuals before nations could come together. Larsen compared the original thirteen colonies as an example of what can happen when regions band together. Larsen suggested that the United Nations could be an entity for bringing about world unity, because it was a league and not a government, it could not truly “police” such matters. By the end of the meeting, most of the clubwomen joined the United World Federalists by paying three dollars to the New York-based movement. Despite his efforts the movement never got off the ground in Hawai‘i.

Although Larsen did not succeed in an effort to unite the world, he did participate in working for Hawai‘i statehood. In 1950, Larsen became a member of the statehood delegation to the Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention after he ran against Kam Tai Lee for office and won. According to Hastert’s Mamiya Medical Heritage Center web site, Larsen was an active member of the Hawaiian Group for World Government, a movement he firmly believed to “be the answer to the world’s problems” (Hastert 1). He submitted an emblem designed for the State of Hawai‘i. Governor Burns acknowledged his design, although it was not chosen. The vote
turned out to be two to one in favor of Hawai‘i becoming a state, and Larsen served in a delegate position from the Fourth District to assist in writing the Constitution.

On April 28, 1950, he wrote a Preamble to the Constitution, including an important message from the Hawaiian Magna Carta. His rationale was based on his fervent belief in passing on a valuable lesson that King Kamehameha experienced, known as the story of the splintered paddle. It was the well-known anecdote that prompted the Magna Carta (or Mamalahoa), and Larsen’s retelling of the story. He used this story in a broadcast called “Off the Cuff Report from the Constitutional Convention”:

Two young fishermen went fishing off the coast of Puna on the Big Island of Hawai‘i and accidentally came upon King Kamehameha. It was the common belief that death and destruction befell all who saw the King and they quickly fled to shore with the King following them. One of the fishermen kept hold of a paddle as he dashed and, just as the King was about to overtake them, he got his foot caught in a deep lava crack that halted him. The fisherman with the paddle turned around and hit the King with the canoe paddle so hard that it broke, leaving the King unconscious. When the King recovered he ordered that they be brought to his Hilo court; their penalty was death by hot imu. Mass hysteria overtook the crowd at court. They wanted the fishermen to pay the price, however, Kamehameha decided to question them as to why they wished him harm. The two related their fear of certain death simply by coming in contact with the King and acted out
of fear. In the interest of justice Kamehameha reconsidered the harsh sentence and he let them go free. He called instead for a celebration to announce to the people that from that moment on they would be spared from the tactics of a merciless despot. He promised a new era of peace where his people need not live in trepidation of him, but think of him as a just ruler (Larsen, “Off the Cuff” 1-2).

The significance of the story, according to Larsen, was in the fact that:

This is probably the only time in history that a dictator, having attained the height of conquest and while drunken with power, was able to sit down, even after an attempt on his life and calmly analyze his reign of fear and come to the conclusion that his fear tactics were wrong, that justice and not fear must be the law of any successful, happy land (Larsen, “Off the Cuff” 2).

The actual writing of the Hawai‘i Constitution was a collaborative effort involving sixty-four Hawai‘i representatives, coming from twelve different nationalities. Larsen’s May 19, 1950, broadcast of the Convention over KGMB discussed the heated debates over the wording of the constitution. Larsen argued for the spirit of Kamehameha to be incorporated and the inclusion of the broken paddle story. He said the first few lines of Mamalahoe Kanawai were one of “the most basic laws of justice ever pronounced and for a dictator at the height of his power to do that, is an event, the likes of which history does not record” (Larsen “Off the Cuff” 2). Since this was Hawai‘i’s Magna Carta he felt that it was important to retain the former
King’s sentiment in the preamble. As an amendment to Committee Proposal No. 20, Larsen submitted:

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Hawai‘i, grateful for divine guidance, reaffirm our belief in a government of the people, the aged man, the woman and the children who may ever walk the highways. In a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. And do express, in the words of Kamehameha, our respect for the big man, the small man, hereby ordain and establish who may ever walk the highways or sleep by the wayside, without molestation, we, therefore with an understanding heart toward all the people of this earth do hereby ordain and establish

THIS CONSTITUTION FOR THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I (Larsen).

Larsen’s incorporation of King Kamehameha showed his need to validate his ideas by using the voice of a key Hawaiian politician. Like his art and travel, politics was more of a sideline for Larsen, but one that he participated in as much as possible. He did not gain as much notoriety for it as medicine and art either. His quest for world unity was not to happen.

As is apparent from this chapter, however, Larsen submerged himself in many areas and had ideas and opinions on all that he took in. He was fortunate that he missed the bombing of Peal Harbor, but his war etchings had a Hawaiian and military flavor based on his previous experiences in World War II and years as a physician in Hawai‘i. His art was not as showy as his pageants, he learned simpler techniques that made bigger statements. He incorporated his experiences into every aspect of his life.
He used his art on the cover of medical bulletins, especially etchings of plantation agricultural produces. He used medicine as topics for art, even humorously etching himself on exhibit for his experimental vagus nerve surgery. Larsen knew how to generalize from his environment and generate opinions. His research years taught him pattern recognition and his open-mindedness allowed him to take risks and conduct untested experiments.

Figure 31: Dr. Nils Paul Larsen

Our greatest challenge is not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall (Larsen).
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

In the course of a life as prestigious as it was productive, Nils Paul Larsen blazed new trails in public health against the backdrop of changing plantation life in Hawai‘i. As Director of Queen’s, Larsen was the driving force that generated continuous innovations and brought internationally recognition to its “Thursday morning clinics.” From 1949 to 1958, he was among the earliest Fellows of the American College of Physicians, for which he served as Governor of the College for Hawai‘i. Other of his citations and accomplishments relating to medicine included: Medical Advisor for the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association; the William S. Knudsen award for community service in the field of industrial medicine on plantations (1954) an honorary degree of Doctor of Science from the University of Massachusetts, and a Doctor of Medicine degree from the venerable University of Lund in Sweden.

When Larsen moved to Hawai‘i as a thirty-one-year-old man it was a new frontier for him. He brought his genteel East Coast demeanor with him and aspired to make a name for himself despite the challenge of working in an unfamiliar and ethnically diverse community. A significant transitional figure in Hawai‘i as it was moring from the plantation era to that of a modern Pacific community, Larsen came to be especially acknowledged for his instrumental role in advancing plantation medicine and elevating public health in Hawai‘i as a pathologist and Director of the Queen’s Hospital. He used his professional influence unremittingly to raise public awareness through a steady flow of publications and reports in the health sciences.
Looking Back

On the occasion of Hawai‘i’s Medical Centennial at Queen’s in 1956, Larsen commented that there had been more than a few battles won in the medical profession since his arrival, including the fact that there have been no great plagues, epidemics, or influenza outbreaks in his time in the islands. He noted that cases of exanthemata were lower here than on the mainland and that Hansen’s disease was on the wane, pointing with pride to the fact that Honolulu was then one of the healthiest cities in all America and indeed ranked high in the world. In “A Twenty-Six Year Study of Appendectomies,” which Larsen conducted, he demonstrated that appendectomies had dramatically dropped because of improved antibiotics and better medical diagnosis (Larsen, “Study of Appendectomies”).

At forty years of age, on January 22, 1932, Larsen wrote to his colleagues at Cornell Medical School. He recalled, in a diary format, many of the accomplishments that he had thought about. His ambition at that time was for the next forty years was for them to be as happy and fruitful as the forty that had already passed. And then he concluded with this salutation: “Yours--with the hope that you all will be as frank and have as little modesty as I have (Larsen, 22 Jan 1932 5).

In “Looking Back,” a lecture written in June, 1957, for the Gold-Headed Cane Award of the University of California Medical School, Larsen reminisced about the last stage of his life and “wished to report” what he found memorable during his time “on the stage.” He had been inspired by a number of famous people in his life, he said, from local Hawaiian artist John Kelly to internationally-known birth control guru Margaret Sanger. He went on to say that the goal of his “Looking Back” lecture
was to acknowledge those who had inspired him, but also especially to incite his audience to similar social and cultural ideals.

Larsen, as we have seen, implemented many medical changes to the hospital that was once described as “a U.S. outpost.” Since he was the second pathologist employed there at Queen’s, with its institutional history of only a single autopsy performed in the six months prior to his arrival, he felt proud to be part of the burgeoning progress and upgrading of medical facilities and practices. The medical teams now documented medical statistics and learned how to apply their research. There was no longer the feeling that doctors were there simply to make an extra buck. Physicians held weekly meetings that turned into dialogues with outstanding visitors and provided a “truly postgraduate education.” The personnel now consulted with each other regularly and kept in touch through bulletins and meetings.

Larsen particularly congratulated himself on his role in the upgrading of the milk supply to decrease infant mortality. The personal characteristics that he found important for medical progress included curiosity, lack of prejudice, lack of resistance to preformed opinion, and good observation! Larsen himself did many novel and improbable things, and found it important not to follow routine in his daily life. He cited his own inquiries into the poisonous *lactrodectus mactans*, the Los Angeles spider, to have been among his most unusual research projects. Other productive research studies on the effects of diet upon teeth, birth spacing, and control of atheromatous deposits in the arteries were other areas in which he felt professionally accomplished. And surely his interest in alternative medicine and Hawaiian medical
practices demonstrated an inclusive spirit and an open mind—both humanly and scientifically.

In the same article, “Looking Back,” Larsen wrote that he still held the same enthusiasm and beliefs as in his Boy Scout days. He argued for the importance of a man’s life work being conducted in the trenches. Larsen genuinely wished to be an active agent instilling positive values in young minds. He never forsook his involvement with the Boy Scouts in Hawai‘i, receiving in return an accolade in the form of their highest “Silver Beagle” award.

Nor did Larsen limit himself to addressing the needs of adolescent boys; his work with youth also extended to studying the influence of diet in the very young and providing sex education for youths, especially females. A booklet of his, “Facing Life,” was directed to high school boys and girls. Mid-Pacifican Press published this pamphlet in 1943; in it he discussed frankly issues concerning puberty, sex organs, masturbation, intercourse, and sexually transmitted diseases. He went regularly to McKinley High School assemblies to discuss such topics (for a fee of a dollar a year).

The director of Palama Settlement, Phillip Platt, wrote to Dr. Roswell Johnson, the new Director of the social hygiene activities, regarding Larsen’s talks:

On Tuesday (October of 1934), I heard Larsen, whom I consider not only an outstanding socially minded physician in the community, but a citizen of extraordinary influence, and the warmest champion for social hygiene, speak to 1200 McKinley High School girls in the first of a series of three talks, in which he covered in a most effective way the challenge that life makes to youth, the need of understanding and
controlling their sex natures in order that successful life may be theirs, and giving in brief the fundamentals of the biological approach to the subject. This morning I shall hear him talk on venereal diseases. He has been doing this for ten years at McKinley High School, which has a unique health organization and of which he is the adviser. From all that he or we can learn from, the talks have been of extraordinary value to many, although I suppose they do harm to some. He had thousands of questions which have been addressed in writing to him as the result of these talks. The teachers are particularly enthusiastic about them (Platt 1960).

Larsen believed that one of the biggest problems the world had to overcome was overpopulation. His inspirational talks all had to do with praying for challenges and struggles that would also strengthen character. The Queen's Hospital had been created to help both the people of Hawai‘i and foreigners. Larsen carried on in this spirit and contributed more than his share of dramatic breakthroughs in Hawai‘i's medical and history. He was prepared to concede that many of the opinions he had expressed over 20 years of writing “may have been discarded but that the process of writing makes the researcher more alert, observant, and careful (Larsen, “Looking Back”). Others in the profession shared his view.

Dr. John Payton said in an interview that one of Larsen's major contributions to medicine in Hawai‘i was his convergence of laboratory and clinical practice (Morgan). Prior to Larsen's time, clinical medicine was said to have been strong, but there was no laboratory medicine. A copy of his portrait appeared on the front cover.
of *Modern Medicine* on December 1, 1960, along with a feature article discussing his accomplishments and the improvements he set in motion for plantation health and medicine.

In 1952, Jack Hall, the local head of the International Longshore-man Workers' Union, accused Larsen of being "fascist" with regard to the prevailing medical practices of the plantations. The ILWU had been brought into the issue by Dr. Weinerman, a medical economics specialist, who was in the state for seven weeks and recommended doing away with the plantation medical system and replacing it with a centrally-run health system with appointments from Honolulu. In response to the accusations against Larsen, Dr. Morton E. Berk defended his work in a letter to the newspaper editor:

> For over 20 years Dr. Larsen has been interested in the welfare of the working people on the plantations, and his record is a monument to the contributions he has made in this field. No other agricultural group in the world has made the forward progress in health that the Hawaiian workers have due to the persistent efforts of Dr. Larsen and the staff of physician on the plantation.
The Larsens continued living at their Diamond Head address for over forty years with renovations and expansions along the way. It was where they chose to remain even after an accidental fire destroyed a substantial wing that housed a number of their treasured momentos. The cause of the fire was a suspected electrical short in an insect control device used in the home. Nonetheless, the Larsens rebuilt their damaged home at that point and continued living in it until Dr. Larsen’s passing in 1964, when Sally moved to the Pohai Nani condominium complex on the Kaneohe side of the island where she herself died in 1974. On one of the last pages of his 1960 scrapbook, Larsen included a characterization of himself and Sally with a simple caption—"We were married September 1, 1921." It appeared alongside other photographs of the couple followed by the familiar closing line: “And they lived happily ever after.”
Aging

In January, 1941, Larsen wrote:

The world has come into a realization that we are in the midst of a great change. 'The wave of the future' as Ann Lindbergh calls it, is a mighty force which is engulfing us. When it has passed, it will leave a washed and different world. To fight that wave and try to keep everything as it is, is like trying to deceive ourselves as individuals into believing that we are not growing old (Larsen, Jan 1941).

Throughout his professional life, Larsen nourished an interest in the study of aging; he wrote and lectured widely on this topic, especially with regard to atheriosclerosis. At a time when cholesterol was virtually unheard of, Larsen used it so often that his daughter thought he had invented the word. In November, 1956, Larsen wrote an article for a Meeting of the Honolulu Social Sciences Association entitled "On Deferring Old Age." The doctor told of his "first angina symptom at thirty-nine and severe angina until fifty-one when a coronary thrombosis floored me for a while" (Larsen, "On Deferring Old Age").

Larsen had been invited to a symposium the previous year in Philadelphia regarding aging, where he declared that despite all the negatives, there had been some positive medical advances toward improving the quality of life in its later years. The problem he now recognized was how "to keep the step firm, and creative effort active until one is about to disappear into the golden sunset of an active, happy life" (Larsen, "On Deferring Old Age"). He was ahead of his time in discovering ways to remain healthy into old age; they included a low fat, low salt diet, no smoking, daily exercise,
and moderate alcohol consumption which lessened the chance for a hardening of the arteries—a condition in which “all the blood vessels, all the tissues, all the cells, will, of course, continue to slowly run down and pursue their destined course, until a short time before finality, one will suddenly, like Moses, collapse and disappear into the sunset (Larsen, “On Deferring Old Age”).

Larsen was to remain as the Medical Director at Queen’s for twenty years. Thereafter he retained his partnership in the Medical Group he had helped to form, up to the moment in 1955 when he retired and continued to treat only a select number of patients in his diminutive office in Kahala. He frequently discussed the difficulties of growing old, describing the cramps in his calves, the tightening of the chest, pains in the jaw—all, of which, he said, were evidence of hardening and stiffening of the blood vessels. He believed, however, that it was better, to accept these existential conditions than to whine and wish for something else. He insisted that by sixty-nine years of age the idea of death had “lost all its terrors.” Life was still full of fun, but for him there was longer any fear for him connected with the “step beyond” (Larsen 1 Aug 1959).

Despite his own best efforts, however, on March 19, 1964, Larsen suffered a heart attack and died at the age of seventy-three years. In the 1964 issue of Plantation Health Bulletin, Dr. Marvin A. Brennecke spoke for many of his associates in memorializing Larsen’s legacy:

You can see him—and this he did—sitting in the waiting room (of the Medical Group office in Waialae-Kahala), two hours before his death, holding an oxygen mask over his face and reading a current lay
magazine. He was waiting to receive the report on his EKG that a colleague had just taken. He had just finished writing a note to Dr. Paul White of Boston describing his symptoms, believing that this may be of value in the study of heart diseases in the future. He was endowed with a great mind. Hawai‘i was blessed when he gave it to her. Paul is not gone. He will be with us and he will walk among us for a long time to come (Brennecke).

It was appropriate that Larsen was at work not only on his own needs, but also in pressing new research for those who had yet to face the aging process. Even though his medical knowledge could not save his own life, he wished to enhance the wisdom that might later save others. He could be likened to the Hawaiian kahuna lapua‘a Pi‘ipi‘i who directed that his sons determine the cause of the disease that was about to kill him, and then find its treatment. Larsen took the same practical and ageless medical approach as did his venerable Hawaiian counterpart.

World’s Beyond Medicine

In a 1995 Hawai‘i Medical Journal, in an article on the “History of Medicine in Hawai‘i,” Goodell wrote about “Plantation Medicine in Hawai‘i, 1940 to 1964: A Patient’s Perspective.” Referring to Larsen, she wrote:

...[I]t would be hard to exaggerate the influence and leadership of Dr. Nils P. Larsen (1890-1964).... On his death the next issue of Plantation Health was dedicated to his memory and achievements. Significantly that was to be the last issue. Sometime later a writer
observed that the idealism and leadership seemed to have died with him (Goodell 788).

In the final edition of Plantation Health Bulletin, Dr. T. David Woo said of Larsen:

Undoubtedly Larsen has carved for himself a niche in the history of Hawai‘i. His varied interests as author, scientist, artist, historian, traveler, lecturer and physician par excellence are unexcelled. The information he has assembled in a lifetime devoted to the health and activities of this community, especially in the field of Plantation Medicine, of diet in relation to cardiovascular diseases, caries, and his special interest in the old Hawaiian Herbs and Folklore have gained for him international recognition (Woo).

Larsen never left a stone unturned—his knowledge in many areas gave him the power to analyze his environment and make original contributions. It is clear that he was never less than a serious scholar and student of life. (A list of the many professional associations that Larsen belonged to is included as Appendix 6.)

His immigrant status molded Larsen into a disciplined yet open-minded observer of the scene. Perhaps his upbringing as a preacher’s son drove him to feel the urge to teach others, crusade for causes, and become a leader of men. On April 17, 1959, Larsen received a certificate from the University of Hawai‘i for having completed a non-credit course in “Religions of the East II: Shinto, Chinese Religions and Islam.” His scrapbook from that same year also contained a picture of him with a typed note detailing his public address at the 25th anniversary of Swe-Nor-Den. This
group (that Larsen himself organized) was a tri-cultural mix of Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish people in Hawai‘i. The scrapbook pages of this anniversary celebration showed pictures of him surrounded by the sacred texts of many religions, among them Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Confucianism. It is evident that Larsen was not intent on dismissing religious wisdom but instead of cultivating a respect for what William James called “the varieties of religious experience.”

In the course of his many-sided career Larsen variously championed the cause of social justice. Among his interests were traditional Hawaiian herbal and medicinal practices which he concluded to be superior to those of the early missionaries. His immersion in this line of study led him to the status of an honorary kahuna. There is ultimately a compelling contrast between Larsen’s role as a scientist and empiricist and his capacity to appreciate the influence of nontraditional medical practices.

His work impacted Hawai‘i, especially as he broadened his horizons and transcended his professional status. His shrewd perspective on life and the times in which he lived allowed him to cross over into other fields. Larsen became nationally recognized for his original etchings; his artistic sensibilities centered on local scenery, nature themes, and then political statements about the war. The etchings often reflected a social and cultural sensitivity that suggested ambivalence toward modernity and the Western impulse toward technology and development.

Larsen’s political idealism led him to accept an appointment as Swedish Consul. He advocated the change from Territorial status to statehood for Hawai‘i and, in 1960, took an active role as a delegate in the Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention to assist in the writing of the Constitution. His devotion to world unity led him to
attempt to launch the Hawai‘i chapter of the World Federation, a group hoping to unite the nations of the globe in a “more perfect union.”

What was it about Larsen’s life that set him apart from others of his time? First of all he took chances and was able to rise above conventional thinking, not only about his own life, but also what came before and what was yet to be. His writings reveal that he appreciated the era in history into which he was born because as he wrote to his children, 1890 “was five years before Pasteur died (he brought science into medicine) and Lister was still going strong (he brought science into surgery)” (Larsen, 1 Aug 1959). He associated his own generation with those creative spirits who were still alive and active, contributing, and influential in the fields of science. Science and medicine were to become his primary career interests and provide the fields for him to carry on the pioneering work of his role models. It became clear that Larsen possessed the ambition and skill to make his own life’s work no less valuable than that of his illustrious mentors in their own day.

As a self-styled “fighting Viking,” Larsen constructed a philosophy of life centered on persistent striving for progress. Clearly, Larsen collected and composed aphorisms as a means of inspiration to others and to exemplify his personal credo. It is evident that Larsen valued the wisdom of the ancient Vikings, but his life also suggests that he took a deeper interest in learning about universal commonalities and continuities that could unite the past with the present.

Because of his commitment to furthering global knowledge, Larsen was a meticulous recorder of information on history, art, travel, and “world’s beyond
medicine." It is only fitting, therefore, that his own life and labors should receive the attention of scholars and find their proper niche in the annals of American Studies.

Figure 35: Untitled (Larsen, "The Story of Etching")

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APPENDIX 1. LARSEN CHRONOLOGY

1890  Born in Sweden
1893  Family moved to New York
1910  Entered Mass Agee (Massachusetts)
1913  Graduated from Mass Agee
1913  Mother, Maria Larsen, died
1916  Entered Cornell (New York)
1916  Graduated from Cornell
1917  Columbia Biological Chemistry graduate work
1917  Marine Corps 106 Infantry First Lieutenant
1918  New York Hospital, assistant pathologist/First Lieutenant
1918  Sister died at age 28 of tuberculosis
1919  Larsen first visited Hawai‘i on vacation
1919  Worked at Bellevue Hospital and Cornell Medical School
1919  New York Commanding Officer
1919  First Field Hospital of the New York National Guard
1921  Married Sara “Sally” Lucas
1922  Moved to Hawai‘i/Queen’s Medical Center pathologist
1923  Lila Elizabeth Larsen born
1923  Queen’s Hospital Directorship
1924  Member, Honolulu Social Sciences Association
1924  Jack Larsen born

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1925  Director of Health Program, McKinley High School
1927  President, Honolulu Medical Society
1929  Chairman, First Pan-Pacific Surgical Conference
1930  Advisor, Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association
1930  Advisory Committee, Preventorium/Palama
1934  Joined the Medical Group
1936  Medical Advisor H.S.P.A./Began Plantation Health Bulletin
1939  Contracted typhus at 49 years old
1941  Honolulu Preparedness Committee
1942  Surgery to cut nerve on East Coast
1944  Post War Planning Committee
1945  President, Honolulu Medical Society again
1949  Governor, Hawai‘i Chapter of American College of Physicians
1950  Delegate to Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention
1950  Vice-President of ‘Oahu Health Council
1953  Honorary President, Pan Pacific Surgical Association
1955  President, Honolulu Print Makers Association
1955  Third International Conference on Planned Parenthood-Tokyo
1958  World Trip
1959  Vice President, Honolulu Print Makers Association
1961  President, Hawai‘i Academy of Science
1962  President, Honolulu Print Makers Association
1964  Larsen died at 73 years of age
APPENDIX 2. LARSEN POEM TO HIS MOTHER, 1913

Oh! Mother's dead!

My dear kind mother!

You old sweet mother—gone!

Oh! What a pang-pierced thru my heart

When the sudden message came

That mother had died

And was no more

Upon this earthly sphere.

I hardly could believe the wire

And couldn't grasp it's words.

Ah! What is life?

And—What is death?

It all seems but a dream.

For long I stood beside the bier

And looked on "dear old ma."

She lay so calm, in quiet peace

As if in happy sleep

And sadness crept into my mind,

And sadly did I think--Great well of love--

Wide ocean of love--No longer you'll pour forth

The endless love for all."

The wrinkles on your brow—now still,
The wrinkles on your cheek,
Your mouth—stayed in a gentle smile,
The eyes in slumber closed.
They all bespeak you life of love.
Oh, Mother-how beautiful you are.
Oh, Death—how could and grim,
For sixty years you traveled on—
You dear sweet mother o’ mine?
To seven children you gave birth
And fought so for their weal.
In war, in peace, in worry and pain
In riches and in need
A lot, quite hard war death to you,
But thru it all-what calm.
You never whined ‘bout hours long
Of work, being much too hard,
From early morn till late at night,
You worked so cheerfully.
Your faith, oh mother—was so great,
God’s hand you saw in all.
In sickness, need, in health, in joy
You found—God gave it all.
An unseen power you were sure
Lay behind whatever came,
And therefore on a quiet peace
You lived with thankful heart.
About your faith—an incident
I'd like to record here.
For hero's of such modesty
But seldom come to light.
Far back in eighteen ninety three
She crossed the ocean strange.
A year before her spouse had gone
To find an place and home
In the Elysian U.S.A.
Alone she took her band of six
Across that fearful deep
One night when blackness hid
The giant rolling waves—
A cry—a piercing cry—
When shivering thru the ship
"Fire—Fire—all hands on deck"
This death's cry rent each hear
A moment-stillness reigned over al.
Then—rushing, tearing, pushing, wild,
The crowd ran toward the deck.
And fathers yelled and mothers cried,
As all thronged in a mob,
All thots (sic) were on a shivering grave
That opened cold and bleak
In the darkness of the night
And mother looked on six small heads
As they lay in slumber calm.
Then on her knees she calmly fell
And prayed and prayed to God.
With peaceful heart she soon arose
And looked upon her brood.
She knew for sure—if death must come
It also came from God.
Soon all returned again below, for the cruel cry was false.
But mother’s heart had found a peace
When other’s shook in fear.
And now an everlasting rest you’ve found,
In calm you lie there—dead.
But death’s grim hand—seems not to mar
The peace in which you lived.
Goodbye—goodbye—my mother dear!
Your life is over now.
In peace you lived—in peace you died—
You sowed but love on earth.

And tho' my world seems now half gone

When mother is no more

Yet courage must I summon up

To face life's onward march

With calm and gratefulness I'll try

To "carry on" as she would have me do.
APPENDIX 3. LARSEN’S “A CONFESSION,” 1914

I was brought up on this narrow religion. It was don’t this and don’t that or you will go to Hell. This life was merely a cold desolate waiting chamber to Heaven. All one was supposed to do here was to sit and sigh for the day when one should flit into Heaven and in waiting be very careful not to contaminate oneself with this worldly dross. Wherever or whenever a crowd met one should always take out the Bible, read, then sign and pray and go home. As long as one knew about religion, that was all and sufficient for this life. I don’t mean to say it was nonsense to have a little Bible reading and contemplation, for there is a lot of satisfaction in that, but feed merely on that and one grows lopsided. Furthermore the Devil got into my muscles, and I couldn’t refrain from contact with this worldly dross. I raised cane when the boys raised cane; I played on their teams and all the other things a boy is supposed to do. Then on Sunday afternoons we would get the crowd up to the yard and play basketball or go into the woods for a stroll. In this way I came to make friends with the dreadful sinners, for if a man wasn’t a Christian he was pictured as a vile wretch. Now a Christian wasn’t supposed to do such things, surely the only reason why I liked them was because the Devil had gotten into me. And so I was in doubt, I was always afraid I wasn’t a Christian and that some strange minister should nail me after meeting and ask if
he hadn't better pray for me. Finally I left for college and I was
tickled to death for I felt that I could not change my views on religion
as long as I was with the old crowd. Well, two years passed in rapid
succession. I came into contact with this evolution theory. I had heard
before that some Devils of Professors had said the Bible was a myth
and that man had come from the monkey. But just why one monkey
should change into a man and not some more. At first I tried to
neutralize the theory, thinking perhaps God created the stones in layers
and put impressions in then; then I thought perhaps the seven days
were long periods of time. Thus I kept neutralizing and neutralizing
until finally I cut the ropes. I thought, now Moses was a great leader,
the people must have been full of questions and Moses must have been
hampered for a solution. Perhaps he prayed and prayed for a clearing
of his doubt. Also there must have been many old traditions about
origin and floods and about the Jews’ ancestors, Moses being a
thinking man, putting all these things together, compiled his great
work. If he thought about his creation, how could he, a God-fearing
man, but suppose that God inspired him to think thus? We must admit
it is a great work but how can we of the twentieth century believe that
God came to Moses away back there and told him certain things that
are directly contradictory to the great history written in the rocks,
under the great mountains and everywhere in nature. Shall we suppose
that God came to Moses and the Devil to Darwin? Surely if we
reason, there is but one outcome. We cannot blame Moses, he wrote
what he believed was an inspiration of God. Having come thus far, I
was no longer afraid to go ahead with my thoughts even though they
went against the Bible, I believed the Bible was a great book but I no
longer believed it infallible.

But there are many things which I could not understand, those
Old Testament prophecies among others. And there was the New
Testament; I could not doubt the reality of it because of the correct
correspondence of facts by the several writers telling of it. When one
compares the accounts and realizes that the trip mentioned in the New
Testament have been gone over in modern times to see if the number
of miles given corresponded with reality and that the modern
researchers found them to correspond, how can we help but believe
that these many wonderful things happened. Of course we must allow
something for the enthusiasm of the writers and their training and
environment. Christ was far beyond them and they didn’t understand
just what he said and so put their own interpretation to the things they
heard.

Then in my own experience, I have seen a brother of mine so
sick he could not turn in bed, and a missionary, Fransen by name (a
man of great faith who had traveled all over the world and never asked
a cent from anyone but always believed that God would supply him
and he always seemed to get it from some source), well, this man
prayed, first asking those present if they really believed God could
cure the boy and he prayed and in a little while my brother came
walking down as well as ever. On the other hand we see hypnotists and
men like work faith cures Dowie work faith cures and other wonders,
we hear mediums and tell about the past. There are so many fakes in
this line that most people have lost faith, but enough cases have been
recorded to prove there is something to it. Again we stop and
think—would God work wonders in order to pull hundreds away from
him unto false prophets. Again science comes to our aid and says
’Psychology’ the power of the mind. We read of philosophies back
4,000 years who believed in the power of the mind over all things
material. Ah, we say, ‘solved’. Religion is a myth. All this talk about
God doing wonders is tommyrot. But we go a little deeper and we ask
the psychologist what is this power of the mind, is it a force or what is
it. The answer comes, ‘We don’t know, there seems to be a
subconscious mind. There seems to be strange powers lodged in the
mind but we don’t know what it is.’ Perhaps psychology is God; but
then is God caring for each one separately. We go into the slums and
we see misery beyond description, little innocent children and women
suffering the torments of Hell; we go into heathen lands and see people
living as animals and worse, we see Christians suffer and we see
dishonestly apparently living in wealth and at ease; we see thousands
groping in the dark and not believing because they have many enough
reasons for their doubts. Then we come to the old stand-by question, "If God is so good and merciful, if there is a personal God who looks after his children, why doesn't he alleviate the suffering, why does he place in nature all these reasons for doubts? God course they explain by saying a loving father does not always tell his child directly but lets him learn by lessons. But surely we have grownup enough to understand a little more than we have had given us. Does it seem reasonable that a personal guiding father would leave room for all this doubt? But yet there is something behind it all, the scientists can go back to a nebular mist and behind that is a just cause which is a "don't know," they can go back to the first living cell but that also came from a "don't know." But the truths of evolution are written far more beautifully than the truths of creation. We cut down through strata of rock and far down we find a layer where are left impressions only of small shell animals, the next layer we find amore advanced type and so on, near the surface we find the impression of vertebrates. On the face of it, it is hard to see how an elephant could possibly have evolved from a protozoan; but is it not going on every day inside the mother? Did you ever stop and think of the wonder of birth, how every animal starts from a minute cell and by the dividing and dividing of cells the process of formation goes through various stages including the fish stage until finally we have the hard boned animal. When we see the wonderful laws and the mathematical exactness of everything we
wonder some more. But when we think that (as scientists do) that the little molecules are revolving in fixed orbits and governed by laws like the great heavenly bodies and that this whole universe of ours is perhaps only one body in another vast system, then our minds cannot follow. Now if we try to explain we must put something behind, we must have some reason for it all and we must admit that this evolution is swinging on toward some end or purpose. And this something we call god. Our minds are not capable of imagining just what it is, but each one develops a conception to suit himself and one man’s conception is surely just as good as another’s.

My conception came from an old philosophy which was talked over before the Bible was written and which to me was fully satisfying and left no room for doubt. As to this personal God theory did you ever stop to think where God got the souls? Did you ever stop to think that every molecule in your body, every molecule, sometime or other, was in a plant or an animal or in a stone or in the earth? Then where did the soul come from, does God sit and create each soul individually and put it into this collection of molecules, just think what a vast supply of them have gone before. Wouldn’t it be more reasonable to suppose that this God, this thing behind was infinite yet not all knowing, was all-powerful yet not fully understanding itself? Wouldn’t it seem possible (this comes from the old philosophy) that this thing behind was involved in this state we call material and being
all powerful, all these laws of evolution were started and once started kept on up through the animal stage until a complicated organism called man was produced? Perhaps this reasoning mind, or thought or soul, or a reasoning part of this infinite, whatever it is, perhaps when the cells of the body become worn out and we die, perhaps this goes on reasoning and evolving. And the ultimation of the old Philosopher said was when all these parts had evolved to that state of oneness where God realized himself and all was absorbed into a blissful everlasting state of existence. But how can we strive toward this ultimation, surely not by sitting down and reasoning? No. In this chain of evolution we have an ideal, Christ. The laws of this great evoluting machine always produces in each chain a type different from the embers about it but the picture of what the chain is coming to. Thus we have a God-sent Christ, who seemed to understand what was behind but was an ideal to strive for. And perhaps when man has reached that state of perfection of love service and complete brotherhood or oneness, then doesn't it seem reasonable that this God having realized itself through love all is absorbed as mentioned above?

Isn't that enough inducement to strive for? Do we need a Hell flaring in our face to keep us straight? Isn't the worship of a God far more beautiful if we feel that by pure love and striving toward the ideal we can perhaps sometime attain perfection, isn't that nobler than to have a God who if we do not frame our words just to suit will place
us in that everlasting condition of suffering. We suffer enough anyway when we deviate from an ideal so as to take all satisfaction out of it. And still in our state of minds we almost have to feel that there is this something behind us which lifts when we call. Take the atheist who all his life has argued and proved the nonexistence of God place him in a position where he sees some dear one sinking before his eyes and he has no power to help and perhaps sinking himself. Then he drops his proofs and cries out for a God. And what matters it whether it be psychology or what not, it is satisfying and gives strength. Can you go to the bum on the street and tell him by a certain process in his mind if he really believes he can become a better man? I think no one will doubt the bum will remain in the gutter. But come to him and tell him Christ loves him, that a God is willing to lift him if he believes, then he is able to use this power of the mind, this ideal of purity and love before him lifts him from the mire. And to that man Christ is a Saviour. Though he died two thousand years ago, still that spirit of love and brotherhood still exists and is advancing in mankind. It was that spirit which colonized and civilized so much of the world. Why do we scoff at it when it has done so much for us? If a man wishes to think of it as something personal and still existing, and this thought can keep him living a life that makes for happiness to others, surely that advances the world nearer an ideal than the man who goes along scoffing and scorning and is neither loved nor loves. We can easily
see that by striving toward our ideal we can approach that enough to
strive and fight for. What difference does it make about the future
when there is so much to do in the present? To think that in you lies
the possibility to push the great wheel one cog head, surely it makes
life worthwhile. And if a man is in a state where he can only grasp the
personal idea, the limited 2” by 4’ idea of God if that is going to help
him ahead and produce a little happiness and no misery, then why not
let him leave it until he outgrows it? So, no matter what our captions
of God are, no matter what our conception of religion, what difference
does it make? We have a life to live and a mind or character to form.
We know what the highest ideal of life is, we know what will bring
happiness to the world, we know that by renunciation and service we
can gain lasting satisfaction in this world and die in peace. Then,
instead of squabbling about what we believe, wouldn’t it be better to
go out and practice the best kind of a life we know and if possible help
another fellow up a notch nearer the ideal and the great wheel one cog
ahead toward the great realization of God.

‘Oh, but its great to be where the fight is strong,
To be where the heaviest troops belong,
In the fight for man and God.’

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APPENDIX 4. CORNEL MEDICAL SCHOOL ANNUAL UPDATE

“Cornell Hell-O’ Yearly Sketch By Class of 1916”

These were a collection of yearly updates of doctors with whom Larsen was classmates with at Cornell. It was set up in play format with an introduction stating the whereabouts of the doctors five years later (1921). The characters were described as “The Heroes: They who have but one mistress. Hausman, Healey, Kraetzer, Larsen, Meister, Meyer, Olcott.” The other characters were described as “The Mistress: Medicine. The unfortunate ones in captivity. The married ones. The Villains: Those who rose so high or fell so low they no longer respond. Altschul, Benner, Kleegman, McQuillan, Milici, Reed.” Last were listed those “Lost, Strayed or Stolen: Those who were “spurlos versenkt” in the whirlpool of life. Townsend-Timmel.”

This writing says that the setting is a “sad” and “solemn” scene in which the heroes and captives are around the graves of the “villains” and music tinkles and they plant dandelions upon their resting place. As the sunsets and the music fades they “seat themselves upon the soft gluteus and each in turn rises and chants midst the warbling of birds, “The Epic of the Year.” In turn the doctors tell their annual report. Some of the doctors note some measure of success five years after graduation, but many report the struggles of getting started. R. S. Cleaver reports that he is in
Middleton, New York practicing on the “natives” and working in the County Hospital that handles over 1300 cases, along with his private practice. His greatest joy in showing the “apple knockers” how fast he can make his car go and striving to drive a Ford. William V. Healy, works at Chief of the Reconstruction Hospital on Central Park West. H. J. Meister opened a Morgue Parlor in Warren, Ohio and doesn’t do more than five major operations a week. He sees the picture show on the second Tuesday of each month and only has a Dodge Coupe and Stutz sports car—awaiting the Rolls. Larsen reported from Bellevue.

Another year. The scientists still clamor about the stupidity of the practitioners. The Pathologists still assert that most surgeons should be in jail. The practitioners cut each others throats but pay the highest income tax—and seem happy. The interns are certain that no breed of animal is as dumb as ‘this last batch of students.’ I sit and listen—sometimes I laugh. But life was never sweeter than this past year, with a Bacteriological laboratory to play in, an autopsy room a floor below to rest in, a ward full of ‘what ails you’ to keep the gray from stagnation, and a whole hospital full of Pneumonia to work in—and what with pleasant associates, helpful an stimulating co-operation—boys and girls—not Heaven, but Bellevue. Don’t be too hard on Mother Cornell Dutsch—she didn’t mean to teach you how to make money like the Chiropractor or how to fuss that old Lady into saying
“what a wonderful doctor”—lesser schools do that better. Her aim (right or wrong) is to teach ‘the knowledge of disease’ so the few things that are known may be recognized and that the eyes be kept open to learn something (maybe) about the unknown. I asked Eggleston about the cats—he said, the breed doesn’t make any difference but you should give them Mag. Suph. First. Dr. DuBois is now working on a pocket calorimeter, I will send you one as soon as ready.
APPENDIX 5. LARSEN’S ETCHING BOOK CONTENTS

1) **Other Worlds**, Shown at Honolulu Academy, 1938.
2) **On the Bottom**, 1938; colorized 1945.
4) **Foraging**, 1938.
5) **Shangri-La**, shown at New York World’s Fair, 1940, West Coast Art Association, printed by *Paradise of Pacific*, 1941.
6) **Holokahana**, shown at Honolulu Academy, 1938; Physicians’ Art Association, New York, 1940, Southern Art Association, 1941.
7) **Ich oder Du**, shown at Physicians’ Art Association, New York, 1940; Honolulu Academy, 1939; Physicians Art Association, by request as previous prizewinner, Cleveland, 1941.
8) **Caught**, shown at Physicians’ Art Association, New York, 1940; Honolulu Academy, 1939; Physicians Art Association by request, Cleveland, 1941.
9) **Flash**
10) **From Minus to Plus**
11) **Air Alarm**, Honolulu Academy, Southern Art Association, 1941.
12) **All Clear**, Honolulu Academy, Southern Art Association, 1941.

14) Beautiful--But Dumb, Shown at Southern Art Association, 1941.

15) The Great Dictator, shown at Physicians’ Art Association, Cleveland, 1941.

16) Spring Time, done in color, shown at Physicians’ Art Association, Cleveland, 1941.


18) Heil! Special showing at Academy, First prize Physician’s Show Atlantic City, 1942.

19) America!! Heil!! Bombers Away.

20) Smoke Screen.


24) Navy Eye-It Keeps the Aggressor Controlled.

25) Heil Hitler! Amen as His Soaring Career Zooms in Flames, Academy show 1941.
26) Reflections – Maybe we Better – Before it is Too Late.
27) Hawaiian Reef sheer color joy” Paradise of the Pacific 1945.
28) Evening Sky-Manhattan.
29) East River-Western Civilization from soup to nuts as seen from 15th floor, New York Hospital.
30) Twilight Manhattan-the mist often falls and bathes the city in a shadow mystery.
31) Sunrise-New Angkor.
32) Weekly Staff Conference.
33) Stuyvesant Ave-Rye?
34) Defense.
35) What Price-Fuehrer?
37) Waimea Canyon, Pele’s seat, 1943.
38) Napali Cliff.
40) Danger is my Play-Johnny, in Hawai‘i Magazine 1944.
43) H?burg Harres?
44) Kahuna Tales The Story of Etching.
APPENDIX 6. LARSEN’S LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS

American Association of Bacteriologists

American Association of Immunologists

American College of Physicians, Fellow, Governor of Hawai‘i Chapter

American Diabetic Association

American Medical Association, Fellow

American Physicians Association

American Society of Tropical Medicine

The Association for the Study of Allergy

Clinical Research Society

Far Eastern Tropical Association, Vice-President

Governor’s Hospital Study Committee, 1945-46

Hanahauoli School, Director

Harvey Society, Honorary member 1955 after 35 years membership

Hawai‘i Academy of Science, President, 1961

Honolulu Preparedness Committee, 1941-46

Honolulu Printmakers, President in 1955, Vice President 1959 and 1960

Honolulu Planing Mill, Director

Hawaiian Foods, Inc., Director

Honolulu Chamber of Commerce

Honolulu Rotary Club, Honorary Member

Honolulu Social Sciences Association, President

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Industrial Medical Association

Member of Territorial Association of Plantations

‘Oahu Health Council, Vice-President, 1950

Pan Pacific Surgical Association, Honorary President (circa 1953)

Physicians and Medical Advise to H.S.P.A. fellow, since 1930

Post War Planning Committee 1944

Society for Advancement of Science

Society of American Etchers

Society of Immunology

Society for the Study of Asthma and Allied Conditions

Territorial Medical Association

Tripler Hospital, Consultant (circa 1937)

Trustee and Director – Palama Settlement

United World Federalists, Chairman 1949-50
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