

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII LIBRARY**  
**1941-1961**

David Kittelson  
Associate Library Specialist  
Archives  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Territorial Hawaii's sleepy, oligarchical plantation society was dragged screeching and scratching into the twentieth century by the advent of the Pearl Harbor attack. The changes wrought on the University of Hawaii and its library by the war were no less dramatic. There were even doubts that the University could, or should, function during wartime.<sup>1</sup>

Four days after the December 7, 1941 bombing, Acting University President Arthur Keller tersely informed the Board of Regents that "University grounds have been torn up for trenches."<sup>2</sup> Even more ominous was the plot of land near the present Hamilton Library which was readied as a mass burial site for the casualties from an expected Japanese invasion. U.S. Army Engineers had immediately occupied most of the buildings on campus and constructed 14 temporary ones. Not until February 14, 1942 did Territorial Governor Joseph Poindexter finally convince General Delos Emmons, the Military Governor, that the University should continue to exist.

When the University reopened on February 2, 1942, its student body had been emasculated. Only a third, mostly women, returned for the second semester. Most of the men were in military service or, for those of Japanese ancestry, in the Varsity Victory Volunteers, a labor battalion.<sup>3</sup> The wartime campus population consisted primarily of co-eds, khaki-clad soldiers, and nearly a thousand Punahou teenagers.<sup>4</sup> Since their campus had been taken over by the Army Engineers, the University leased Wist Hall and Castle Memorial Hall to Punahou School for the duration of the war.

The faculty was also decimated. Some were fired because of low enrollment, others enlisted or were drafted, and many were loaned to Territorial and Federal agencies for war-related duties.

The University's administration reflected the turmoil engulfing the campus. Within nine months of Pearl Harbor there had been three different Presidents. David Crawford resigned after a squabble with some Regents and Arthur Keller served in the interim until July 1, 1942 when Gregg Sinclair took over.

There were also major turnovers in the Board of Regents. Within 22 months there had been 20 different Regents.<sup>5</sup> At this critical period in its history the University lacked solid, continuing direction.

At first the library appeared to be the University unit least affected by the war. Its doors had opened for business as usual at 8 a.m. Monday, December 8th. Normal hours were kept except for early closings to allow the staff to get home before blackout regulations went into effect. The library's 145,000 volumes remained in their stacks although 70 rare books were placed in a safe.<sup>6</sup>

There were some inconveniences. A number of librarians were taken for more essential war work, leaving a skeleton

Staff.<sup>7</sup> Alice Alexander, Head of Reference and Circulation, was stranded on the U.S. Mainland because of stringent travel restrictions between the West Coast and Hawaii and eventually was forced to resign. After Punahou had occupied the Teachers College buildings, the education books were removed and squeezed onto the library's top floor.

The library, with the largest collection of scientific books and periodicals in the Territory, supplied the armed forces with materials on the Pacific and the Orient. Army and Navy officers received indefinite loans of maps and books, and the collection of foreign language dictionaries, especially Japanese, was depleted.

The war years brought fundamental changes in the organization and role of the library, transforming it from what was literally a college library into a research-oriented university collection. In response to the recommendations of a special committee of the American Library Association, the entire library was reorganized into clearly defined departments and collections. These were placed under the direct supervision of the Assistant Librarian, Euphie Shields, who "quietly ran a large part of the library for many years."<sup>8</sup> Later, the Librarian was made directly responsible to the President.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Carl Stroven, Assistant Professor of English, and his Faculty Library Committee also surveyed the library needs of the University's instructional departments and suggested areas of collection improvement. In response to this appraisal, the Board of Regents allocated an additional \$20,000 to purchase 6,000 of these suggested volumes.

Librarian Mary Pringle retired on June 30, 1943 after 21 years of University service. Stroven, who had no library training, was appointed Librarian and Associate Professor of English. Prior to taking over, Stroven was relieved of most of his

semester's teaching load so that he could familiarize himself with the library administration.

The wartime library also promoted effective use of its collections. In cooperation with the English Department, the library offered three hours of instruction to acquaint freshmen with bibliographical intricacies. Charlotta Hoskins developed the course and was in charge of its instruction. For some time a column, "Library Notes," appeared in Ka Leo O Hawaii, the student newspaper, publicizing the library's recreational reading materials.<sup>10</sup>

High technology made its appearance in 1944 when a Recordak Model C Microfilm Reader and a Model D Copying Machine were purchased. The reader was housed in the library, but the copying machine went to Hawaii Hall, under the care of the University's photographer, Masao Miyamoto.

In 1943 the Territorial Legislature established two research units — the Hawaii War Records Depository for collecting material relating to civilian efforts during the war and the Legislative Reference Bureau to provide information concerning governmental and legislative problems. They were correlated with, and housed in, the library. On July 1, 1946 the Map Collection was established to house 50,000 maps being deposited by the U. S. Army Map Service. Thirty steel map cases were purchased and Genevieve Correa was hired to look after the Collection.

The University offered Hawaii - oriented courses as early as 1920 and the library had been collecting Hawaiiana since 1908, setting up the Hawaiian Collection in 1927. But there had been little institutional research on other Pacific islands and no extensive library collecting in this area until the mid-1940's.

In 1943 Regent Herbert Gregory challenged the University

to begin specializing in the Pacific Islands, saying, "I believe the Board...is well on the way toward establishing a sound University destined to make the most of its unique opportunity. Big things are happening in the Pacific and much bigger things are in the offing. My dream is that the University of Hawaii will lead in the cultural development of the Pacific area... . The essential move...is to add to the faculty promptly men of undoubted ability who are interested primarily in the economic, political, geographical, and historical aspects of the Pacific affairs and then as positions are vacated...fill them with Pacific minded scholars in biology and other subjects."<sup>11</sup>

At the end of World War II the former Japanese-mandated islands of Micronesia came under American control. The University quickly readied itself for research, service, and teaching in the Pacific Islands. The Regents expanded the role of its Oriental Institute by changing its name to the School of Pacific and Asian Studies. The Board also encouraged its faculty to become interested in researching the former mandated islands.

In 1945 and 1946 the University, assisted by the U.S. Navy, sent two faculty research expeditions to Micronesia to survey its possibilities for academic research. This reconnaissance enabled the University to participate fully in four large-scale research projects in what was to become the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Coordinated Investigation of Micronesia Anthropology (CIMA), Scientific Investigation of Micronesia (SIM), and the Coral Atoll Project were sponsored by the Pacific Science Board of the National Research Council.<sup>12</sup> The Tri-Institutional Pacific Program (TRIPP) consisted of the University of Hawaii, Bishop Museum, and Yale University and was supported by a \$200,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation. One affiliated project, however, eluded

the University. It had sought to house the School of Naval Administration (SONA) for training naval officers to administer the post-war Pacific Islands. The School ended up at Stanford, where it was directed by Felix Keesing, a pre-war University anthropologist who specialized in the Pacific.

The Regents also established a Pacific Islands Research Program on campus in conjunction with the Federal Fish and Wildlife Division. In 1947 the University began publishing Pacific Science, a quarterly dealing with the natural sciences of the Pacific. That same year the Teachers College began conducting several summer sessions on Guam and made a teacher training study of Micronesia in 1949.<sup>14</sup> A Pacific Islands Studies Faculty Committee was organized in 1948 and began offering interdepartmental seminars on the Pacific Islands in 1953. Its first master's degree was awarded in 1956 to Marion Kelly. The University's Pacific interests were not lost on its students who in 1951 held their first Pan Pacific Festival which featured a campus open house, carnival, and pageant.<sup>15</sup>

The library's response to the institutional and faculty lead in Pacific Islands studies was due largely to the efforts of Librarian Stroven, a meticulous scholar with a deep interest in the Pacific. Stroven began teaching a "Literature of the Pacific" course in 1935. He expanded his class syllabus into five published volumes of selected Pacific Islands literature which he and fellow English Professor A. Grove Day edited from 1949 to 1968.<sup>16</sup> Gregg Sinclair, onetime President of the University and an advocate of Oriental studies, characterized Stroven as "So hippped on the Pacific Islands" that "he felt the University should confine its efforts solely to the Pacific area in literature as well as anthropology and sociology."<sup>17</sup>

Near the end of the war Stroven asked a faculty committee to survey the library's Pacific Islands needs. Orders were

then placed for 300 volumes. The library sponsored several bibliographical projects including a classified checklist of Micronesian materials which was maintained by Joyce Wright and a bibliography of Hawaiian government documents from 1844 to 1900 as well as a bibliography of periodical literature on China by Dr. Cheuk-woon Taam. It also began cooperating in 1945 in the publication of Current Hawaiiana, a quarterly bibliography edited by Janet Bell. In 1952 the University and 16 other institutions subscribed to the Human Relations Area Files, an extensive compilation of cross-filed and indexed materials on many cultures, especially those of Micronesia. These files were maintained by the library.

On February 21, 1957, after two years of campus-wide effort, the University received a \$30,000 Rockefeller Foundation grant for acquiring Pacific Islands research materials.<sup>18</sup> Nine faculty members, including Stroven as Chairman, were named to the Pacific Islands Library Committee to supervise the fund and select materials. At first these purchases were combined with the Hawaii materials, creating a Hawaii and Pacific Collection. Later, in May 1960, Pacific books were catalogued separately, creating the Pacific Collection.<sup>19</sup> In the meantime Stroven was attempting to get a Pacific librarian. After that position was included in the University's 1959 budget, Stroven had another of his recurring battles with the Territorial Civil Service over the upgrading of the librarians. He felt their status should reflect superior qualifications rather than merely internal relations between classifications.<sup>20</sup> Stroven's argument prevailed and the author began providing Pacific reference services.

The greatest need facing the postwar library was a structure which could serve increasing numbers of students and house burgeoning collections. The library (now George Hall) was

unable to accommodate all of the students wanting to study. The building seated 368 readers, or one seat for every 13 students . The accepted ratio was one for every five students.

The library's capacity was 210,000 volumes, but by 1949 that figure had been exceeded. Collections were growing by approximately 10,000 volumes yearly despite the library's budget having dropped from 6.8% to 3.9% in seven years.

The library was also used heavily. In 1951/52 it circulated almost as many books — 224,573 — as it held — 228,463. The collections were undersized, however. The national standard for a library of the University of Hawaii's size was 300,000.

To relieve the overcrowding, Stroven sought to purchase a surplus barracks for use as a 200-seat reserve book room. He also wanted a concrete-floored, corrugated iron storage building with movable steel shelves capable of holding 10,000 little-used books. Unfortunately, some crippling strikes had depleted the Territory's finances and Governor Ingram Stainback vetoed the 1949 legislative appropriation for these buildings.

But the student body came to the rescue! The Associated Students of the University of Hawaii (ASUH) assessed each student 50 cents per semester to raise the \$9,000 necessary to convert a wartime Kunia hospital building into a 198-seat auxiliary reading room and site it just 'ewa of the library. The flimsy shack was not without its peculiar charms. Students walking down the aisle and springing the floor caused study tables to rock and heave as if at sea!<sup>21</sup>

In 1951 the University received \$84,000 from the Federal Housing and Home Agency to design a new library building. After two years of cooperative planning by Stroven, the architectural firm of Lemmon, Freeth and Haines, the library staff and the Faculty Library Committee, plans were developed for a structure housing one million volumes and 1,200 readers. Then

things began going awry. The prime location, near the present Webster Hall, was rejected in favor of a showcase setting on University Avenue.<sup>22</sup> Whereupon the Legislature forbade the moving or destruction of the old gym, near today's Visitor Parking Lot, to accommodate the new library. As a result the site was moved up nearer the Metcalf Street intersection.

The \$1,400,000 appropriated by the 1953 Legislature for the library's construction did not allow for as much space as had been planned. Two stories were lopped off and the capacity cut to 600,000 volumes and 900 readers. The Attorney General also ruled that the appropriation could not be used to equip or furnish the new facility. The old furniture consequently was insufficient for the functions planned for the new library.

At the July 5, 1954 groundbreaking ceremonies kahuna David Bray chanted as members of the AFL carpenters union picketed in protest of contractor Ben Hayashi's use of 100 non-union carpenters.<sup>23</sup> The following day construction began on the 385-space Hemenway Parking Lot--the site of the original Cooke Field. Work was immediately slowed by uneven subterranean conditions which had not showed up in preliminary ground tests (a similar condition a quarter of a century later led to the demolition of the nearby Business Administration F-Tower building). Steel pilings were driven to firm rock in order to support the library's weight.

The structure was to have been completed by August of 1955. In the Spring of 1955 the AFL Carpenters Union Local 745 struck Hayashi and delayed construction for six weeks. The glass louvers which covered most of the buildings were delayed in arriving. Finally, during Christmas vacation while construction workers were still laying floor tiles and setting up stacks, most of the 264,747 books and furniture were moved into the new library by the library staff and two crews of student

workers. A month-and-a-half later Hayden Phillips began a \$250,000 conversion of the old library into classrooms and offices. The library and its unique glass-floored stack tower were out and George Hall was in.

The library was dedicated on Friday afternoon, May 4, 1956 in a ceremony on the main floor's central area. Participants were seated on the stairwell landing. J. E. Wallace Sterling, President of Stanford University and a former library director and football coach, was the main speaker. Sterling commemorated the event by planting an Indian rubber tree on the front lawn.<sup>24</sup> Former University of Hawaii President Gregg Sinclair, in addition to having the library named after him, received an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree. A cornerstone, containing contemporary publications, was laid.

The very features that made Sinclair Library noteworthy — its open stacks, uncluttered and inviting interiors, and accessibility — led to student difficulties in adjusting to the building. The lanais, which were adjacent to the open book stacks, tempted students to drop or lower books -- and type-writers -- to the ground. Over 1,000 books were stolen yearly. The polished aluminum hand rails that divided the stairwells from the third to the first floors were used by students for bannister sliding races. Students were also unfamiliar with glass sliding doors. A basketball player walked into one, shattering it and sustaining a two-inch gash in his right knee. Another "openness" problem had to do with the library's exterior, which was faced with highly porous red bricks from Honolulu Mayor Johnny Wilson's Wilsonite Brick Company. Manoa rains freely penetrated the interior.

The library's most serious problem became evident as soon as its doors opened. It affected nearly everyone on campus — students, librarians, faculty, and various levels of

administrators, including the President. Noise was the curse of Sinclair Library. Stroven "tried various ways to improve, but succeeded only temporarily if at all."<sup>25</sup> The attractive library had become the campus social center. More students frequented it for social purposes than the adjoining Hemenway Hall which was designed for recreational use. "Fraternities, such as Peng Hui or Tu Chiang Cheh, and sororities Gamma Chi Sigma and Ke Anuenue, have their members meet informally, but regularly in the Reserve Book Room."<sup>26</sup> A related problem was fraternity initiates, in various stages of dress, who paraded near the building. Noise generated by the library staff, office machines, and general library traffic bounced off interior walls and contributed to the problem.

The noise elicited comments such as, "The unholy cackle of noises that permeate the Gregg M. Sinclair Library day and night," "Growing numbers of girl-gazers and man-hunters who frequent the library reference section,"<sup>27</sup> and "Going to the library is an ordeal — comparable only to that faced by the early Christians."<sup>28</sup> At first the ASUH mounted a publicity campaign to convince offending students to cultivate a more cooperative attitude toward fellow students. After that failed the library eventually hired student monitors to supervise reading areas and enforce library policy by asking noisy students to leave. The Campus Committee on Discipline was empowered to suspend or dismiss noisy students.<sup>29</sup>

There was one day, however, on which library noise was condoned — even encouraged. On March 12, 1959, when news of Congressional approval of Hawaiian statehood reached the Islands, "Sinclair Library became a playground as students sang, yelled and ran about WHILE THE BUZZERS SOUNDED."<sup>30</sup> The advent of statehood introduced the University and its library to a decade of unprecedented growth and prestige. In July 1959

Congress established the East-West Center and appropriated \$10 million for it. The Tenth Pacific Science Congress was held on campus during the summer of 1961. And the library, which then held 317,980 volumes, saw its budget jump to \$641,724 from the previous year's \$373,653 -- an increase of 72%!

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Allen, Gwenfread. Hawaii's War Years, 1941-1945. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1950. p. 362.
2. Minutes of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, Dec. 11, 1941. Hereafter cited as Minutes.
3. Report of the President of the University of Hawaii, 1942/ 43. p. 10. Hereafter cited as Report.
4. Potter, Norris. The Punahou Story. Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, 1969. p. 78.
5. Potter, Robert. The University of Hawaii Board of Regents, 1907-1982. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Department of Educational Foundations, 1983. p. 152-153.
6. Annual Report of the Library, 1941/42. p. 1.
7. Yee, Wai Chee. "The Library in Wartime." Unpublished manuscript. June 13, 1942. p. 3. Hereafter cited as Yee.
8. "Reminiscences of Dr. Gregg M. Sinclair," 1966. Transcript of tape No. 5, p. 21. Hereafter cited as "Reminiscences."
9. Faculty Senate Minutes, Jan. 30, 1943.
10. Ka Leo O Hawaii, Oct. 13, 1943. Hereafter cited as Ka Leo. 11. Minutes, Sept. 16, 1943.
12. Gale, Roger. The Americanization of Micronesia. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979. p. 76.
13. Marshall, Mac and James Nason. Micronesia 1944-1974, a Bibliography of Anthropological and Related Source Materials.

New Haven, Conn.: HRAF Press, 1975. p. 25-26; Minutes, Dec. 16, 1952.

14. "Outreach," In: Ka 'Imi Na'auao O Na Kumua, The Education of Teachers, Vol. 1. No. 1. May 1982. p. 17.

15. Alumni News, Feb. 1953. p. 7.

16. Conversation with A. Grove Day, Jan. 12, 1984.

17. "Reminiscences," p. 27.

18. Paine to Wilson, Feb. 21, 1957.

19. Cataloging Department Annual Report, 1960/61. p. 1.

20. Stroven to Akina, Aug. 21, 1959.

21. Ka Leo, Nov. 22, 1950.

22. "Report On a Site for the Proposed University Library," Jan. 14, 1952. p. 4.

23. Honolulu Star-Bulletin, July 6, 1954. Hereafter cited as Star-Bulletin.

24. "Memorial and Namesake Trees — UHM," 1977. p. 2.

25. Stroven to Smith, April 17, 1964.

26. Omicron Delta Kappa. "Report of the Committee on Library Silence," n.d. p. 1.

27. Star-Bulletin, April 29, 1963.

28. Marder to Stroven, April 2, 1959.

29. Snyder memo, Jan. 4, 1960.

30. Ka Leo, March 19, 1959.