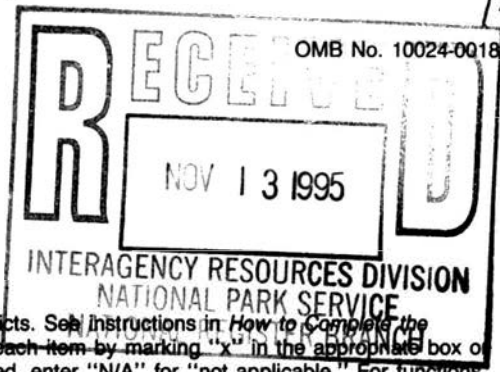


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1458

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ogunquit Playhouse

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number East Side of Route 1, .2 Miles South of Junction with Bourne Road N/A not for publication

city or town Ogunquit N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 03907

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Edward J. Stimpert Signature of certifying official/Title SHPO Date 11/6/95
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

 Signature of the Keeper Edson F. Beall Date of Action 12.14.95

Ogunquit Playhouse
Name of Property

York, Maine
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood/Weatherboard
Synthetic/Vinyl

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

YORK, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

The Ogunquit Playhouse is a large H-shaped wooden frame building that consists of a pair of two-story side gable rectangular blocks joined by a slightly recessed, flat roofed central section.

It is sheathed in German siding and vinyl. Setback from the busy commercial strip along US Route 1, the playhouse is surrounded by carefully manicured lawns and landscaping features (added incrementally after 1951) that partially obscure the paved parking areas nearby.

Facing southwest, the symmetrically composed front elevation features a central ticket window that is flanked on both sides by two wide entrances. One small, round arched window is located near each edge of the facade. The ticket window is a round arched opening set above a bracketed shelf and framed by a broad paneled wall surface capped by a pulvinated frieze and cornice. The two-leaf single panel entry doors located behind wooden screen doors are framed by similar surrounds. Cloth awnings extend over the openings on the first story whereas a sign containing the words OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE in large letters spans the entire width of the facade's second story. Ten flagpoles are mounted above this sign. The facade is sheathed entirely in its original German siding.

The north side elevation features a trio of short windows on the first story of the front block and four on the second story. Attached to the northeast corner of this section of the building (which also retains the original siding) is an exterior stair that rises in two flights to a short shed roofed porch behind which is a single door. The recessed wall of the hyphen (which contains the auditorium) is punctuated by a pair of doors. This wall meets the narrow gabled rear block that contains the stage and fly. A shed roofed ell used for prop storage extends across the first story of this block. It has three small windows on its north side, a door and two windows on the west side, and one window and a door on the rear (east) side. The prop storage shed intersects with another shed roofed addition and loading dock that continues across the rear elevation where it meets two smaller shed roofed ells housing dressing rooms. The south side elevation has a similar profile and fenestration pattern to that of the north side except that the shed ell attached to the stage block features four small windows, a second shed is located in the corresponding position of the north porch, and the front block has two six-over-six windows and a third smaller opening on the first story and two on the second.

The interior of the playhouse is spare in its use of ornamentation. A lobby occupies the first story of the front block, and its most conspicuous features include the series of four posts that support an equal number of boxed beams, the Colonial Revival style paneled auditorium doors, and the surface treatment of the walls that consist of large scored rectangular blocks of homasote. One restroom and an office are located at the south end of the lobby, and a second restroom and concession area are at the north end. This latter space contains an original wood telephone booth, and its walls are decorated with the autographed photographs of dozens of actors and actresses who have performed at the playhouse. The auditorium, which seats 750 persons, uses a similar wall treatment as found in the lobby. It features a curved proscenium arch with a broad stepped surround.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

YORK, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

Standing to the rear of the main building is the gable roofed, wooden framed prop shop. This structure is believed to have been built at the time of the construction of the playhouse, although the north end was enclosed after 1951. A large deck extends from the west end.

The playhouse is set amidst four acres of mowed lawns and numerous carefully groomed bushes. A long oval paved driveway leads to the front of the playhouse and the grass parking area to the south, as well as the service and employee parking area to the north. The landscaping plan was developed by John Lane after his acquisition of the property in 1951, and it has been implemented over a period of time since then. When it was originally built, the area between the playhouse and Route 1 was devoted to parking.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Performing Arts
Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance

1937-1945

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wyckoff, Alexander, Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Ogunquit Playhouse

York, Maine

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 4.05

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	370040	4788360
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1995

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetOGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSEYORK, MAINESection number 8 Page 2

Opened in 1933 in a converted garage and relocated to the existing building upon its completion in the summer of 1937, the Ogunquit Playhouse is an important part of Maine's historic twentieth century cultural landscape. It was founded by former Hollywood director and Broadway producer Walter Hartwig and his wife Maude, and its present facility was designed by theater architect Alexander Wyckoff. Located on a spacious lot along US Route 1 in the vicinity of two motor courts, the playhouse is also a significant reminder of the post World War I development of this roadway into the state's most heavily traveled route for the burgeoning summer tourist trade. The Ogunquit Playhouse is eligible for nomination to the Register under Criterion A both for its association with the development of the performing arts in early twentieth century Maine, and as an example of automobile related development along Route 1 in this period.

The history of the playhouse traces its origins to 1927 when Walter Hartwig established the Manhattan Theater Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire with the intent of bringing professional theater outside of New York City. For three years the company performed outdoors in Peterborough, and then spent the next two summers in Bristol, Connecticut. As related in a brief history prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of the Ogunquit Playhouse, during this period Hartwig "...kept returning, in thought and person to the tiny Maine seacoast village of Ogunquit where he had participated in play readings in the Art Center on Hoyt's Lane." The Art Center, also known as the Village Studio, was the first summer playhouse in Ogunquit. Opened in 1914, this facility had been host to many famous artists, actors, and authors. A July 5, 1934, editorial in *the Old York Times* applauding the Ogunquit Playhouse, however, noted that the Village Studio plays "...were commonly more amateur than professional in performance and were a mere indication that in time something more substantial might develop." Already a well established art colony and popular tourist destination, Hartwig was convinced that Ogunquit would be the ideal location for a permanent playhouse. Thus, in 1932 a lease was negotiated to a former automobile garage on the Shore Road and the building was transformed into a theater for the 1933 summer season.

Quoting further from the historical sketch:

By the end of the 1936 season it was obvious that the enormous popularity of both Ogunquit and its playhouse demanded a larger theater. Hartwig eyed the Weare Farm on Route 1, bought a parcel of land and engaged theater architect Alexander Wyckoff to design the building in keeping with New England tradition.

On completion, the new Ogunquit Playhouse had a larger stage than many Broadway houses, a spacious auditorium seating 750 and the most modern technical facilities available at the time. The new playhouse debuted on July 19, 1937, the third week of the season, with *Boy Meets Girl*. Sally Rand followed in *They Knew What They Wanted*. Tickets ranged from \$.75 to \$2.00.

In announcing the opening of the new facility, a *Lewiston Times* article on August 28, 1937, noted that it was Hartwig's "...conception of an ideal summer theater. It is of steel and wood, painted white with green shutters and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSEYORK, MAINESection number 8 Page 3

roof, is simple in line, suggesting the Colonial architecture of New England....”

Walter Hartwig died on January 17, 1941, and his widow Maude took over as the producer for the upcoming season. In 1947 she engaged George Abbott, New York's most distinguished playwright/producer to share in the managerial duties, and in 1950 John Lane arrived as co-producer. Lane acquired the property in the following year, counting among his first tasks the rebuilding of the stage which had been destroyed in a near hurricane the previous November. Additional improvements and modernization of the building were subsequently made, and an extensive landscaping program was implemented that included the removal of the large parking lot in front of the building which is visible in old photographs of the playhouse. Mr. Lane still owns the property.

The Ogunquit Playhouse is one of three such properties in Maine that have been nominated to the Register. The others are the Lakewood Theater in Madison (NR 6/26/75) which was originally built as a spiritualist meeting hall in 1882, but became a summer theater in 1898 and was extensively remodeled in 1926-27; and Deertrees Theater in Harrison (NR 1/5/89) which was built in a rustic form in 1936 from peeled round logs. These theaters, while very diverse in their architectural expression, are closely related in the historical context that they share. Lakewood Theater, for example, is believed to be America's oldest continuously operated summer theater showcasing stars of screen and stage with its resident company (as did the Ogunquit Playhouse). Deertrees Theater, having been founded by opera diva Enrica Clay Dillon, initially concentrated on the production of operatic works, although the offerings became more diverse after it was leased to Bela Blau in 1939. In addition to these three locations, other professional summer theaters operating in Maine during this period included the Surry Playhouse (established in 1929), the Kennebunkport Country Playhouse (established in 1931), and the Boothbay Playhouse (established in 1938). These playhouses continued a tradition of presenting professionally directed and performed drama which, by some accounts, first began on Peaks Island off Portland in 1888. At that time, one Bartley McCullum is said to have staged a play called "The Shaughraun" with a New York theatrical company. McCullum's company apparently performed on Peaks Island during the ensuing twelve summers, but the stock theater continued on the island for many years thereafter. By the mid 1930s Maine had acquired a significant reputation for the quality of its summer theater. In its June 28, 1935, edition the *Old York Times* reprinted portions of an article from the previous Sunday's dramatic section of the *New York Times* which bore the title "As Maine Goes -- So Goes The Summer Theater." Its author stated that: "...in recent years that State, which has erstwhile been famed among its sisters for such useful contributions to society as tall-masted sailing ships, ice, James G. Blaine, wood pulp and a legend for infallibility in calling the turn on national elections, has acquired additional repute as home of three of the finest rural playshops along the Summer-theater-bulging littoral." The Ogunquit Playhouse was one of the three theaters noted in this article, along with the Lakewood Theater and an unnamed one in Bar Harbor.

When Walter Hartwig relocated the playhouse facility in 1937 he moved from the historic commercial district of Ogunquit to a parcel of undeveloped farm land on the outskirts of town along US Route 1. This decision allowed him to achieve two important goals. The first of these was the construction of a large new building specifically designed for its purpose. Secondly, the new site provided the ability to create ample parking space for his audiences,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

YORK, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

a feature highlighted in a 1939 newspaper article which stated that the "...four car ushers nightly receive, park and dismiss anywhere from 180 to 225 cars." The considerable attention paid to accommodating automobiles in planning for the new facility, and indeed the very fact of its location away from concentrated population and mass transit systems, underscores the importance of the Route 1 corridor in this period. Contemporary newspaper articles about the playhouse and its summer schedule frequently mention the fact that its audiences were drawn from a wide area outside of Ogunquit. This was an important factor in 1933 when a *Portland Times* article closed its account of the new theatrical colony in Ogunquit by stating that: "With a splendid highway stretching north and south audiences drive to Ogunquit from as far as Boston on one side and Portland and Lewiston on the other." Six years later it was noted that "The audience that the Playhouse attracts come from as far as a hundred miles away." In this same article, Hartwig was asked what he considered to be the biggest asset in his success, to which he responded that it was the "...splendid cooperation he got from the hotels, lodging houses and cabin colonies in sending people to his Playhouse." All of these points illustrate the underlying importance of convenient automobile access to the success of one's business in the second quarter of twentieth century Maine. Thus, in the broader context of other roadside amenities erected in this period such as motor courts and gas stations, the Ogunquit Playhouse shares a clear relationship to the growing impact of the automobile in shaping the built environment.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

YORK, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

“Fifty Seasons - The Prologue.” Fiftieth Anniversary Playbill. Ogunquit Theatre. 1982.

“Maine’s Newest Theatrical colony Established at Ogunquit.” Portland Transcript. July 2, 1933.

“Mr. Hartwig Serves The State.” Old York Times, June 28, 1935.

National Register Nominations for the Lakewood and Deertrees Theatres, Somerset and Cumberland Counties, respectively. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

YORK, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property of 4.05 acres occupies the town of Ogunquit Tax Map 5, Lot 43.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary embraces the entire Route 1 lot historically associated with the playhouse.

A black and white photograph of a large, single-story building with a dark roof and a light-colored facade. The building features a prominent sign across its front that reads "LOGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE" in large, bold, capital letters. The sign is flanked by vertical bars. Above the sign, a row of flags is mounted on poles along the roofline. The building has several arched doorways, some with dark awnings. A central entrance is covered by a larger, striped awning. In the foreground, a row of ten large, cylindrical, textured planters sits on a grassy lawn. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

LOGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

OGUNQUIT, MAINE

KIRK F. MOHNEY

6/22/95

MHPC

VIEW FROM SW

1 OF 4



OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

OGUNQUIT, ME

KIRK F. MOHNEY

6/22/95

MHPC

VIEW FROM S

2 of 4



OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

OGUNQUIT, ME

KIRK F. MOHNEY

6/22/95

MHPC

VIEW OF LOBBY

3 of 4



PROP SHOP, OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

OGUNQUIT, ME

KIRK F. MOHNEY

6/22/95

MHPC

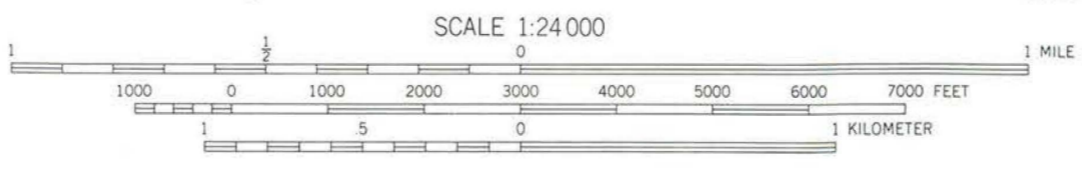
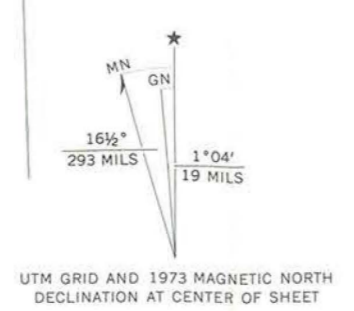
VIEW FROM SW

4 OF 4

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE
OGUNQUIT, YORK CO.,
MAINE
UTM: 19/370040/
4788360

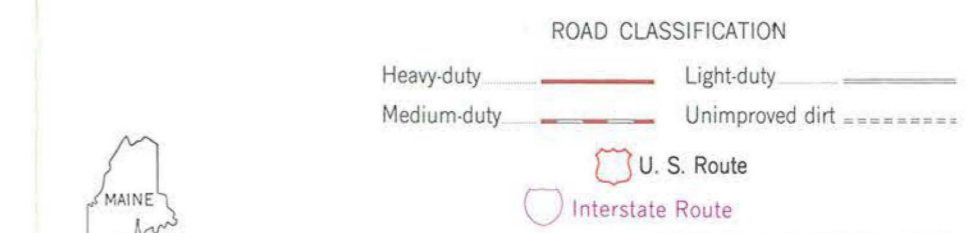


Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planimetric surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1956
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS charts 228 (1955)
and 1205 (1954)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maine coordinate system,
west zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 8.6 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



YORK BEACH, ME.
NE/4 YORK 18' QUADRANGLE
N4307.5—W7030/7.5

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked

1956
PHOTOREVISED 1973
AMS 6870 II NE—SERIES V811

National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2014

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Ogunquit Playhouse Additional Documentation

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 10 Main Street not for publication

city or town Ogunquit vicinity

state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 03907

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national statewide X local

Jane S. Thompson
Signature of certifying official

8/22/14
Date

SHPB - Maine
Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Lucretia
Signature of the Keeper

10/15/14
Date of Action

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

PERFORMING ARTS

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION (NEW)

ARCHITECTURE (NEW)

Period of Significance

1937 - 1965

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Hartwig, Walter (1880 - 1941)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

When first nominated in 1995 the period of significance ended in 1945, reflecting the fifty year buffer required by the National Register. The period of significance has been revised to 1965, reflecting the end date of the formal performing arts educational program associated with the Ogunquit Playhouse..

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Ogunquit Playhouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 14, 1995 in recognition of its local historic significance within the context of performing arts and community planning and development. Since that time, additional scholarship has been undertaken on the history of summer theater thus enabling the subject property to be evaluated within a broader context. Based on this research, the Ogunquit Playhouse merits listing at the national level of significance, under Criterion A, in the area of Education, specifically within the Performing Arts. This assessment is based upon the important, influential, and unique role within the seasonal theater community that the educational wing of the Ogunquit Playhouse had in providing a performing arts curriculum during the summer season. The research also revealed that the Playhouse founder, Walter J. Hartwig, was a nationally significant figure within both Broadway and summer theater circles, and is best known for founding the "Little Theater Tournament" in the 1920s. As such, the property achieves national significance under Criterion B. Finally, comparative analysis of similar types of venues has revealed the architectural significance of the Ogunquit Playhouse as a purpose-built summer stock theater designed to rival Broadway houses of the 1930s. This additional documentation is offered in order to raise the level of significance for this resource to the national level of significance under Criterion A and B in recognition of the importance of the Ogunquit Playhouse and the contributions associated with it within the context of American theater.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The Ogunquit Playhouse is an enduring and outstanding example of a popular, and often ephemeral, component of American cultural history: summer theater. Its national significance rests on its association with Walter Hartwig, and its school, called the Manhattan Theatre Colony, and is bolstered by its unusual status as a purpose-built summer theater. Walter Hartwig, who was a figure prominent in the theater world, and in the Little Theatre Movement in particular, founded the Ogunquit Playhouse in 1933. In so doing he created a pioneering and long-lived summer theater. The school attached to it trained generations of theater professionals while the Playhouse itself anchored the summer circuit in the Northeast. In contrast to other summer theaters of the era, it was housed within a building explicitly designed to be a theater and has remained relatively unchanged since its original construction.¹ Together, all of these features have made the Ogunquit Playhouse a unique cultural force in the history of the United States.

The question regarding the national significance of the Ogunquit Playhouse can, to a certain extent, be understood through the figure of Walter Hartwig and the level of fame and influence he achieved. In both cases tracing a direct line of influence is difficult, however the evidence that exists suggests that both the man and the institution had a wide impact. Hartwig, by current standards, is not and was not famous. That does not, however, mean that he was unknown, nor does it follow that the lack of knowledge regarding Hartwig on the part of the general public constitutes a lack of influence on his part. The scattered evidence indicates that Hartwig was a man who worked behind the scenes and had a long-term influence over hundreds of Little Theatres and their local communities across the country; it is likely that because the evidence concerning Hartwig is scattered, that it has often been overlooked in archives across the nation. The Ogunquit Playhouse should be viewed in a similar fashion. The theater has directly and indirectly influenced countless professionals in the world of entertainment from, and through, actors—such as Lee Remick—to playwrights—such as Joanna H. Kraus—to set designers—such as Charles Elson, who was at the Playhouse from 1939-1945, moved to Broadway in 1945, and in the 1970s was cultural attaché for the US State Department in Southeast Asia—who engaged with students and aspiring professionals both while at the Ogunquit Playhouse and afterwards ("In Memoriam: Charles Elson"). Its cultural influence might not be widely appreciated by the general public, and the theater building may be quaint rather than impressive, but the innovative Manhattan Theatre Colony and the permanent nature of the Ogunquit Playhouse, which has continuously functioned as a highly regarded, self-producing, professional summer theater in its original 1937 building and setting, makes the Playhouse an outstanding example of a national American phenomenon. The Ogunquit Playhouse was deemed, and has consistently lived up to, its reputation as "America's Foremost Summer Theatre" in large part because of its influence over American theater and all those who participate in it. Moreover, today it continues to make an outstanding contribution to American culture and functions as an enduring symbol of popular entertainment in the United States.

Criterion B: Performing Arts. Walter Hartwig (1880-1941)

¹ A hurricane in 1950 severely damaged the roof and lack of funds necessitated a cap and repair, rather than a rebuilding, of the original fly box that was torn off. In 2010, a new steel support system for the stage house section of the theatre was installed which helps to support a new rigging system. That said, the exterior of the building remains unchanged.

Walter Hartwig had a career as a theater promoter, developer, educator and owner that stretched from the 1910s until his death in 1941. He founded the Manhattan Theatre Colony and the Ogunquit Playhouse as an extension of the Little Theater Movement, a movement in which he played an essential role. Although Hartwig was a producer and a promoter, he was not a man who self-promoted. As a result, although Hartwig played a crucial role in the Little Theatre Movement and the growth of summer theater, he tends to be overshadowed by others. The Ogunquit Playhouse, which he built in 1937, embodies and represents the culmination of his career.

The Little Theater Movement was a national, although not a centrally coordinated, effort to change theater into something more than just the commercial fare typically available only at Broadway theaters. The movement was at its peak during the 1920s and 1930s, but as early as 1909 there were calls for the creation of a national "civic theater" movement in the United States (Bordman and Hishack). The men and women involved in this movement were deeply committed to the idea of "creat[ing] and maintain[ing] a permanent audience class and a public belief in the importance of theater in civic and personal life" (Chansky 2, 7-8). Little Theatres were local, community-run, and were not only a reaction against what some perceived as the over-commercialization of Broadway, but also a reaction against the rise of a new form of entertainment: moving pictures (Bordman and Hishack).²

It is important to understand that Little Theatres were not professional theaters, although many professionals, such as Hartwig, were rooted in such community organizations and later brought the ethos of the Little Theatre into commercial theater settings. Hartwig was central to the Garden City Players, a Little Theatre organization in Forest Hills, New York during the 1910s and 1920s. He performed in several productions, and wrote at least one play for the group before transitioning behind the scenes as a director and producer.³ From his involvement in the Garden City Players, Hartwig moved on in the late 1910s and early 1920s to become a key figure in the Little Theater Movement as well as a prominent figure in the New York theater scene more generally.

Hartwig's most important contribution to the Little Theatre Movement came in the form of the National Little Theatre Tournament, which he founded and then ran from 1923 to 1931 under the auspices of the Drama League of New York. The contest was and is credited with both stimulating and cementing the importance of amateur and regional theaters across the United States and in Britain (Dart 253).⁴ During a week-long competition, a series of Little Theatre companies performed their plays, typically one-acts; from this group four finalists were selected to perform on the last day of the competition for the Belasco Silver Cup and \$200 in prize money. \$200 was not a lot of prize money even by 1920s standards, but the companies did win national and local press coverage, with papers from the *New York Times* to the *Denver Post* debating the merits of Little Theater as represented by the competing groups.⁵ Along with promoting the idea of good community theater and American theater in general,⁶ the tournament also broke racial barriers. At a time of intense racial segregation, Hartwig put no limits on who could perform in the tournament. As a result, several African American Little Theater companies participated in the contest, with one company coming in fourth out of twenty entrants in 1929 (Martin 734).⁷

Hartwig also contributed to the discourse concerning theater in America. He wrote articles for the *New York Times*, *Theater Arts Monthly*, and for the long-running book series *The Best Plays*, edited by Burns Mantle. He also attended national conventions on theater and its place in American society, taking his place alongside luminaries such as Elia Kazan and Antoinette Perry ("Theatre Council opens Conclave").⁸ In a brief essay discussing the merit of Little Theatres and how the Little Theater Tournament promotes good theater, he highlighted the support of David Belasco "who had previously gone on record as having little respect for amateur theatricals," but his own work in founding the contest goes unmentioned (Hartwig 21).⁹ Hartwig's lack of interest in developing a household name outside of the theatre

² For all of their rhetoric regarding the art of theater, many Little Theatres did not produce plays that were all that much different from what could be found on Broadway. That said, as well as spurring discourse about the value of live theater in the age of film, the Little Theatre movement also laid the groundwork for summer and regional theaters.

³ Maude Hartwig scrapbook, New York Public Library. The scrapbook is composed of clippings from the local paper about the Players and the programs for their various productions.

⁴ The Drama League of America was founded in 1909 to stimulate interest in American modern drama. By 1920 the league had hundreds of centers, including the New York Drama League (Hardison Londre and Watermeier 300).

⁵ An article in *Theatre Arts Monthly* put it this way, "What the tournaments accomplished is a matter of opinion. That they were worth attempting would seem to have been proved. There were efforts not without power, and in the right direction. It is not a vain prophecy that succeeding years will see a development that will accomplish much for the American theatre" (Carmer 566).

⁶ New plays that had not been produced prior to the competition had the opportunity to be published by the Samuel French Publishing Company and the opportunity for royalties once other companies produced the work.

⁷ And African American Eulalie Spence won the prize for best unpublished play (and \$200) in 1927.

⁸ Perry was the woman after whom the Tony awards were named.

⁹ The writer's by-line does note that Hartwig is the director of the tournaments, but Hartwig himself makes no mention of it in the body of the article.

community is further evidenced by a letter to the New York *Sun* newspaper co-signed by half a dozen leading figures in the theatre—including critic Burns Mantle and playwright Kenyon Nicholson—regarding Hartwig's role in the contest: "Mr. Hartwig's interest has been so completely in the tournament itself that he has never sought to emphasize his personal relationship to it. He has even neglected to make clear to the public that identification with the success of the project which should have been his" ("Letter to the Editor"). In the world of theater Hartwig seems to have eschewed personal theatrics throughout his career, a trait which has subsequently lead scholars to overlook his historical influence when compared to other, flashier figures. He was certainly well-known within his own profession. For example, Katharine Brown, who brought the book *Gone with the Wind* to David O. Selznick's attention as a filmable property, wrote to Selznick in 1936, when casting for the film was under way and they were looking for local, Southern talent to perform as extras:

We have called Equity, *Billboard*, and *Variety* only to be told that as far as they know there are no existing stock companies operating in the South. Recalling that Walter Hartwig had run the most successful Little Theatre tournaments in New York, I got in touch with him this morning and he is digging back in his records and will furnish me with information as to the best Little Theatres in the South and the names of the directors (Brown, "Inter-Office Communication").

This is not the type of memo that is typically made public, easily catalogued, or located within a single archive; it strongly supports the ideas that Hartwig was indeed very well known within the entertainment industry. Other clues point to how well-known Hartwig was. For example, the literary magazine *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life*, referred to Hartwig as "indefatigable" when discussing his work with the Tournament ("The Gossip Shop," 622).

In addition to his involvement and promotion of Little Theatres, Hartwig, as a trained accountant, worked for many years for the producer David Belasco, who is credited with the development of realism in American theaters ("Walter Hartwig, 61 [Obit]"). Hartwig was also the general manager for Daniel Frohman, the producer who popularized the idea of touring stock theater companies in the United States (Norton). Hartwig was also closely associated with the Actor's Fund. In 1930, for example, the *New York Times* noted that the annual Actors Guild fundraiser was "as usual" managed by Frohman, "with the assistance of Walter Hartwig" ("Actor's Fund Benefit on Jan. 17," 35); such mentions of Hartwig in association with Frohman and/or the Actors Guild were common, and not just in the New York papers. The *Washington Post* reported on Hartwig's involvement with the Actors Guild on several occasions.¹⁰ Additionally, Hartwig was executive director of the New York Drama League, and it was he who persuaded the Drama League to pay more attention to community theaters and the Little Theater Movement (Norton).

Ogden Nash noted in a poem complaining about theater in New York city and published in *Life* magazine in 1935: "'it's Ho! for Shaw and Shakespeare in Ogunquit [...]/ it's my belief that it's not a play/if you can't get in to see it./So suppose we wait for a summer date,/and sit in a barn to see it" (101). The premise of the poem is that theater should not just be for those who can afford New York ticket prices, and that plays only truly exist when they are performed. These are precisely the sentiments Walter Hartwig put into action by founding the Ogunquit Playhouse. As Hartwig himself wrote as part of a debate within the pages of *Theater Arts Monthly*—a publication dedicated to establishing a national audience for theater, and therefore aimed at potential audience members and not theater professionals (Chansky 83)—regarding the value of summer theater: "these theatres are valuable assets to the theatergoing public and to the communities in which they operate," because summer theaters brought live theater to wider audiences, broke the strangle-hold New York city held over theater, and allowed actors to further hone their craft (Hartwig 434).¹¹ In a nationally published and well-regarded magazine, Hartwig emphasized the idea that live theater needed to be available to everyone, and not just those lucky enough to live near Broadway. In this way, Hartwig continued the thinking that influenced his work in the less commercially-oriented Little Theater Movement, promoted the value of summer theaters, and likely influenced others to create summer theaters of their own. Thus, although Hartwig died relatively early in his association with the Ogunquit Playhouse as it currently exists, he set the terms for how it functioned as a summer theater that his successors—Maude Hartwig, John Lane—followed. As Elliot Norton, drama critic for the *Boston Daily Record* noted in 1957 of Hartwig, "[he] was among the pioneers [...with] a fervent conviction that summer visitors to Maine would support the best actors in the best plays. He made his point and, in so doing, focused national attention on Ogunquit" (qtd. in Carroll 91). In establishing the Ogunquit Playhouse and writing about summer theater more generally, he created a definition for summer theaters that others emulated. Per Hartwig, summer theaters should be part of the community, provide quality live theatrical performances, and serve as centers for education.

¹⁰ For example, see: "Surprises at Benefit," *The Washington Post*.(4 Dec 1927): C8

¹¹ This series of considerations was not limited to summer theaters; live theater in America has constantly wrestled with competing ideas regarding where theater and its offerings fit within the hierarchy of lowbrow, middlebrow, and highbrow (Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*; Lynes, *Lively Audience*). The problem of "brow level" was—and of course still is—an integral part of the discourse concerning American theater, and the Ogunquit Playhouse, as part of the summer circuit, was a crucial part of that debate in terms of the kinds of shows it decided to produce for its audiences.

Starting in 1926 Hartwig maintained an office in New York City at 254 West 54th Street. Although the building housed the Gallo Opera House on the first floor (later a live venue for varied entertainment) there is no indication that Hartwig was involved with that venture. Another property associated with Hartwig is the house at 78 Dartmouth Street, Forest Hills Garden, in Queens. At least as early as 1925 he and Maud were residing at this residence in the planned, private community. After the formation of the Ogunquit Playhouse they returned to this Long Island home in the winters – a pattern that Maud maintained after Walter died in 1941. While it is true that this residential property had a longer association with Hartwig in terms of years, the Ogunquit Playhouse has a stronger association with him as a nationally important theater educator, producer and promoter.¹²

Criterion A: Education

While still based in New York, Hartwig took over Mariaden, a summer school of drama and dance in Petersborough, New Hampshire in 1927 and renamed it the Manhattan Theatre Camp. The “camp” involved a comprehensive eight-week program in theater for advanced students that covered everything from theater history to voice control, dramatic criticism to makeup design, and was “a comprehensive program worthy of a university theater department” (LoMonaco 52). The camp also included a professional stock company that toured New England (LoMonaco 51-53). When the Depression forced the Little Theater Tournament to an end in 1933, and as theater groups from across the country either shut down or could no longer afford to travel to New York City to compete in the tournament, Hartwig took the opportunity to focus on his theater camp (Dart 255-256).

In the summer of 1933 Hartwig renamed his camp the Manhattan Repertory Theatre Company and moved it to a former car garage in Ogunquit, Maine to found the Ogunquit Playhouse with a resident company (Carroll et al 6-8, 29). Some of the actors who made up that first resident company included: Ruth St. Denis, Leo G. Carroll, and Florence Williams (Carroll et al 10). Hartwig was associated with the Ogunquit Playhouse in its current building and location from 1937 until his death in 1941. Although his association with the current building was relatively brief, Hartwig is an important figure to consider in terms of the national importance of the Ogunquit Playhouse because his involvement situates the theater within the larger concerns of the Little Theater Movement. First, as noted above, Hartwig was committed to bringing quality live theater to a wider community, but equally important was his emphasis on educating both aspiring theater professionals and audiences about the value of good theater.¹³ This two-pronged mission remained central to the Ogunquit Playhouse long after Hartwig’s death, and was maintained by his widow, Maude Hartwig, and John Lane who took over the Playhouse from Maude Hartwig in 1951.¹⁴

The Manhattan Theatre Colony, an integral part of the Ogunquit Playhouse, is the component distinguishing this theater from other summer theaters that existed at the time. Although Hartwig’s theatrical venture in Ogunquit was undeniably a commercial one, his commitment—and the commitment of his widow Maude, and their successor John Lane—to the training of young theater professionals and to providing quality theater to everyone was rooted in the philosophy of Little Theatre and implemented through the resident company of accomplished actors and a “junior company,” known collectively as the Manhattan Theatre Colony (Hart et al 143-160; LoMonaco 53-55). One key reason Maude Hartwig was able to keep the playhouse open after her husband died and as the war took its toll is because the “junior company” from the Colony Theater was able to stage professional-caliber productions. That the Ogunquit Playhouse only briefly closed during the 1943 summer season is significant. During World War II, when faced with concerns about the price of gas and the scarcity of rubber, many summer theaters closed permanently, and the majority were shuttered for two or three years. That Maude Hartwig was able to sustain the Ogunquit Playhouse through a period of crisis within the summer theater circuit as a whole, is arguably one reason why the theater is still standing today.

One of the hallmarks of the Manhattan Theatre Colony was that it was in fact a school with a set curriculum and reputable faculty; Hartwig and his successors did not simply take in tuition money and use students as cheap labor, as happened at the other summer theaters with so-called apprenticeship programs (LoMonaco 122-125). That the Colony was viewed as a legitimate educational institution is underlined by the fact that it was approved by the Veteran’s Administration as an educational facility for World War II veterans who held a Certificate of Eligibility (“The Manhattan Theatre Colony”). When applying to the program, potential students were required to outline any previous experience in

¹² The building at 254 West 54th street was built in 1926; thereafter Hartwig used this address on his professional stationery. In 1920 the US Census described Hartwig as living in Forest Hills Gardens as a boarder in a private home, but he had married and moved into 78 Dartmouth Street by the time the 1925 New York State Census had been taken.

¹³ In a 1926 interview with *The Washington Post*, about Little Theater, Hartwig asserted that if theater professionals treated theater as just another business, they were doomed to fail (“Amateurs Told to Stay in the Little Theaters”).

¹⁴ Lane ran the playhouse for 49 years, a remarkable achievement.

the theater (or film or radio) and to provide a statement outlining why they wanted to train at the Colony and what they hoped to gain from the experience. Upon acceptance, students at the Manhattan Theatre Colony were enrolled in a quality theater training program that *Variety* proclaimed to be "the best," actress Ruth Gordon aligned the program with the Old Vic in London, playwright Garson Kanin thought it "the right sort" of program, Hollywood producer Samuel Marx endorsed the school in *Variety*, along with many other actors and theater professionals who lauded the Colony for its blending of training, professional experience, and academic rigor. As late as 1952, then-president of the Actors' Equity Association, Bramwell Fletcher, recommended that aspiring actors attend the Manhattan Theatre Colony for training (Carroll and Hart 148).

An undated promotional brochure for the program—although it was almost certainly produced sometime in the late 1940s/early 1950s; the text notes that the colony had been in operation for "more than 20 years" and lists Maude Hartwig as the primary contact—catalogs the following applied courses offered during the ten week session: Rehearsal and Production, Voice and Diction, Body Control, Makeup, Radio and Television [Acting] Techniques, and Stagecraft (including scene design and stage lighting). According to the sample daily schedule included in the brochure, students typically began their days (Monday-Saturday) at 9:30am with coursework, and then continued on into the evening with either rehearsals or performances in front of paying audiences; Sunday afternoons were set aside exclusively for play readings and rehearsals, and included everything from classic work by Shakespeare to contemporary one-act plays ("The Manhattan Theatre Colony"). In addition to the school's regular faculty—including director Jack Kirkpatrick, who was in charge of the Colony from its re-location to Ogunquit until his retirement in 1957—notable actors such as Jessica Tandy, Celeste Holm, and Basil Rathbone regularly gave guest lectures and engaged in question and answer sessions with students when they were engaged at the Playhouse. Regular instructors at the Colony included actress/playwright Ernita Lascelles and actress Daisy Atherton, among others.

As evidenced by the brochure, the summer school was designed as a place for those people who hoped to become theater professionals, and as such it emphasized the practical over the theoretical. The students comprised their own summer stock company. Such an emphasis on professionalism was not unique to Hartwig's Ogunquit Playhouse school when it is compared to college and university theater programs of the era, even as it helped to serve as a model for other summer theater companies also hoping to foster talent. For example, Carnegie Mellon's School of Drama, founded in 1914, functioned as a conservatory for rising theater professionals, while the University of Iowa's Theater Arts Department, founded by Edward Mabee in 1920—Mabee was a central figure within the Little Theater Movement—similarly focused its curriculum around the idea of students producing and performing in plays.¹⁵ In other words, Hartwig's school was absolutely in keeping with the larger national trends of theater education of its time. At the same time, the school served to distinguish the Playhouse from other so-called "training systems" in place at other summer theaters by not treating its students like unpaid laborers. In another indication of the Ogunquit Playhouse's influence, one notable fact regarding the Berkshire Playhouse is that when it opened its doors in 1928 it included a school directly modeled after Hartwig's theater education program. After three years however, the Hartwig model was abandoned in favor of the more typical theater apprenticeship program because it was too complex for the theater to maintain (LoMonaco 56). Although students associated with the Berkshire Playhouse were presumably not simply used as cheap labor under the more traditional apprenticeship program, it did mean that aspiring professionals no longer experienced the type of education that exposed them to all aspects of the theater—from make-up design and publicity to acting and directing—that was the entire point of Hartwig's Manhattan Theatre Colony. In this regard, the Ogunquit Playhouse remained a unique training ground for those interested in learning about all aspects of the theater within a professional setting.¹⁶

The Manhattan Theatre Colony trained professionals in the entertainment industry in Ogunquit until 1965, and therefore had a long-term influence on the history of the American theater and the entertainment industry more generally.¹⁷ Not all of the Colony's students became huge stars, indeed most did not, however they did go on to have long careers, work with a wide range of people, and thus spread the knowledge gained through Ogunquit. For example, Penelope Windust, a student of the Colony during the 1950s, is a steadily working actress. She was nominated for a Best Featured Actress Tony Award in 1973 for her work in the play *Elizabeth I*; she later appeared in numerous television programs throughout the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (ranging from *The Six Million Dollar Man*, the original miniseries *V*, and *Criminal Minds*). More famously, Phyllis Thaxter, who started with the Colony in the 1930s, became an MGM contract player during the 1940s and starred opposite Van Johnson in *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. Unfortunately,

¹⁵ Mabee's students toured in their plays in cities throughout Iowa.

¹⁶ Currently the Berkshire Playhouse is known as the Berkshire Theatre Festival and is comprised of two separate stages: the main stage and the Unicorn Theatre ("History of BTF").

¹⁷ Unfortunately, it appears that at some point in its history the records pertaining to who attended the Colony over the years was lost. The names provided here were included in the book *The Ogunquit Playhouse: 75 Years*. The career histories were pieced together through the Internet Broadway Database (ibdb.com).

Thaxter's career was cut short by polio during the 1950s. She did, however, play the iconic role of Martha Kent in 1978's *Superman*.

It is also the case that many of the students did not continue on as actors; because the curriculum at the Colony was wide-ranging, students had the capacity to move into other aspects of the entertainment industry, becoming playwrights, set designers, or production managers. Others then transitioned into teaching. Many of the "promising youngsters" who passed through the Manhattan Theatre Colony and the Ogunquit Playhouse went on to not only become working professionals in theaters across the country, they also became faculty members in universities where they went on to educate generations of actors and theater professionals in all aspects of the theater. For example, the award-winning playwright Joanna H. Kraus, who retired from her position as professor of drama at SUNY Brockport in 1995 after over 15 years of teaching undergraduates there, was a student of the Manhattan Theatre Colony in 1954 where she had the opportunity to perform in the play *Jenny Kissed Me* alongside then-newcomer Lee Remick and veteran actor Rudy Vallee (Rubin 2-6). Another notable Manhattan Theatre Colony alumnus was Don Doherty, who attended the program in 1942. Doherty played the role of Dr. Detmold in the original 1964 production of Stephen Sondheim's groundbreaking musical *Anyone Can Whistle*; he also served as production stage manager for a number of Broadway shows. Kermit Kegley, another alumnus from 1942, had an over twenty-year career as a production stage manager. From these examples of actors and other professionals, it is clear to see that the Manhattan Theatre Colony and the Ogunquit Playhouse has had an enduring impact on every level of the entertainment industry. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the original educational mission of the playhouse served as a crucial model for how such schools for aspiring theater professionals should operate. For example, Boston University's summer theater school, where students engage in "a core set of classes with group performance projects. The core classes include acting (improvisation, monologue work, and scene study), dramatic literature, design, movement, and singing. [...] Each student is cast in a performance project that rehearses throughout the five weeks. At the program's end, all students perform their projects in the College of Fine Arts studio theatres." Although geared towards upper level high school students, rather than a wider range of young adults—an indication of how the theater profession and education more generally has changed—the program targets those who aspire to be professionals, and, in a schedule that follows the Ogunquit Playhouse's regimen almost exactly, has its students doing classwork during the day and rehearsing plays in the evenings and on Saturdays ("Curriculum").

It is a result of this long-term generational system of education and apprenticeship that, whenever one talks with a theater professional regarding the Ogunquit Playhouse, their response is invariably "everybody knows about the Playhouse." It is perhaps because "everyone knows" within the entertainment industry about the Ogunquit Playhouse that, when the Broadway League, as part of its "Through the Stage Door" series of educational study guides to Broadway musicals, published its 2009 guide for high school students to the stage version of *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*—a musical about establishing a theatre stock company in Vermont—the Ogunquit Playhouse is noted first among the most "well known summer stock theatres" in a discussion about the cultural significance of summer stock in the United States ("Act V, Lesson I: Summer Stock and Local Theatre," 19).

Criterion C: Architecture

The Ogunquit Playhouse was built by Walter Hartwig in 1937 to house the Manhattan Theatre Colony. The building's simplified Colonial-Revival façade, and barn-like massing is iconic within the state of Maine, and reflects the theater's history as being rooted in the summer theater tradition. What differentiates this building from other summer stock venues nationwide is that the building was designed and built specifically as a theatre – a move that helped to confirm its status as a professional theatre on the summer stock circuit.

When the Playhouse was first formed its performances were held in a garage converted into a theater; and this was typical of summer theater. The practice of transforming a previously existing space into a theater in fact partially accounts for the various terms applied to summer theater: the straw hat circuit, the barn circuit, the silo circuit, summer circuit, and the mosquito circuit. Summer theater was perceived to be informal—one wore straw hats and linens rather than evening wear to a performance—took place in non-theater buildings—usually barns or abandoned churches—and many of them maintained a deceptive air of amateurism (LoMonaco 61-69). Many early summer theaters were often quite transitory, subject to the whims of nature as well as to the whims of patrons and famous stars who wanted a working vacation. However, as early as 1940 summer theaters as a whole had "ceased to be novelties; they [had] matured into full-fledged businesses" (Munsell 416). Indeed, during the 1930s and well through the 1960s, "summer stock was the leading employer of theatre professionals in the United States" (LoMonaco xvii; Morehouse 20). In other words, summer theater was, to a certain extent, more important than Broadway or Hollywood for actors, set designers, directors, etc. who wished to make their living through their chosen profession, and the Ogunquit Playhouse, under the initial leadership of Walter Hartwig held a crucial place in that circuit, especially after the 1937 construction of the new Playhouse building.

The Ogunquit Playhouse was designed in a simple, Colonial-Revival style, and was meant to fit within the local character of a small New England village. At the same time, the side gable, elongated front section of the building mimicked the proportions of a New England style barn, a characteristic that linked it conceptually to the setting of converted country buildings, a motif that was part of the allure of these theaters in the 1930s. Summer theaters were supposed to be informal, rural places, in contrast to the formal, urban spaces of New York City theaters, and as a result the building for the Ogunquit Playhouse as a whole is informal and friendly. In the middle of the Great Depression, and within a culture of summer theaters which privileged primitive barns and converted churches as venues, Walter Hartwig managed to raise funds and create a permanent building explicitly designed to be used as a summer theater. The Ogunquit Playhouse is historically important and groundbreaking not because of its architectural design, but instead in terms of the time period in which it was built and the cultural context in which the construction took place; within the framework of the history of summer theater, the Playhouse was a purpose-built structure that has remained relatively unchanged since its original construction in 1937. As such, it is a unique and distinguished building.

While the exterior of the Ogunquit Playhouse was not designed to look grand or imposing, its interior rivaled more imposing theaters in New York. In 1937, the Ogunquit Playhouse was—in contrast to a typical summer barn—a state-of-the-art theater that included a 30-foot proscenium and sat 700 people (“Man about Town”). During the 1930s and 1940s the Ogunquit Playhouse could lay claim to being the largest summer theater in Maine. To place this in perspective, the Music Box Theatre in New York city, built in 1921 and commissioned by Irving Berlin, originally sat 1000 people with a 40’ proscenium (“Music Box Theatre,” 13). Designed by Alexander Wyckoff, the Ogunquit Playhouse was “the realization of [Hartwig’s] conception of an ideal summer theater” (Michaud). As a building it allowed Hartwig to produce plays with the most modern elements of contemporary stagecraft, while allowing his patrons the illusion of attending a rustic, repurposed barn in keeping with the informality of the ideal of summer theater in the United States.¹⁸ And, once out of the repurposed garage, Hartwig’s Ogunquit Playhouse “rapidly became one of the premiere summer stock theatres in America,” in large part because the new building represented a kind of stability that few other theaters could match. As Hartwig himself remarked, “it’s not a barn with a shelf at one end.” (LoMonaco 54).

The architect of the Ogunquit Playhouse, Alexander Wyckoff, is an elusive historical figure whose main career involved stage design and teaching stagecraft; as far as can be determined the Playhouse is the only building that he ever designed in its entirety. (LoMonaco 52). It is probable that he became the architect for the Playhouse on the strength of his long-standing association with Hartwig. During the 1930s, with Hartwig as the producer, Wyckoff was for several years in charge of the production design for the annual Night in Poland Ball in New York City, where, according to the *New York Times*, thousands of Polish and Polish-American citizens and dignitaries were in attendance. (NYT 2-4-38; 1-31-38). The ball often included staged entertainment as part of its program. For example, in 1938, Wyckoff designed the sets and costumes for the history pageant celebrating Polish achievements entitled: “A Night in Old Krakow.”¹⁹ In addition to teaching stagecraft for the Manhattan Colony players, Wyckoff directed the Wyckoff School of Stage and Art Crafts in Edgewater, NJ where “marionette making, stage design, and costuming were taught (Hall 45). He was also an instructor of advanced design at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art and at the Department of Speech at the University of Michigan during the 1940s.

The Ogunquit Playhouse still functions as a very successful summer theater—with a focus on musical theater—and it still draws in television and movie stars to play the leads in its productions. The building is a direct, physical link to an important type of popular entertainment (1930s-1960s) in the history of the United States. A measure of the summer theaters’ importance is their sheer number: LoMonaco lists approximately 800 “summer stock” theaters in her index—both Equity and non-Equity—the majority of which had their beginnings in the period between 1910-1939. However, of those hundreds of summer theaters, nationwide only twenty-two of those older summer theaters are still functioning as theaters.²⁰ Of those twenty-two theaters, the Ogunquit Playhouse is the longest continuously running purpose-built summer theater.²¹

¹⁸ As LoMonaco notes, summer theater patrons craved “a rustic illusion,” one that theater owners tried to meet by including a “respectable appearance of decay” (76).

¹⁹ In addition to the extensive history pageant, there was also dancing and three orchestras.

²⁰ The twenty two theaters are (including the Ogunquit Playhouse): Barnstormers Theatre (NH, now a year-round theater); Barter Theatre (VA); Berkshire Playhouse (MA, reorganized in to the Berkshire Theatre Festival in 1967, merged in 2011 with the Colonial Theatre); Buck’s County Playhouse (PA, shut down in 2011); Cain Park Theatre (OH, amphitheater/open air); Cape Playhouse (MA); Dorset Playhouse (VT, houses two different acting companies, the Dorset Theatre Festival (professional) and the Dorset Players (non-professional)); Flat Rock Playhouse (NC, founded as an itinerant group—Vagabond Players—in 1937, established a permanent theater in 1952); Iowa Summer Repertory (an extension of the University of Iowa’s acting program since the late 1920s); Ivoryton Playhouse (CT); John Drew Theatre Guild Hall (NY, now a year-round, mixed use theater); Little Theatre of the Rockies (CO, part of the University of Northern Colorado); Mountain Playhouse (PA); Olney Theater (MD, now a year-long theater); Peninsula Players (WI); Petersborough Players (NH); St. Louis Municipal Theater (MO, large-scale, open air theater, originally for staging opera); Theater by the Sea (RI; closed for six years during WWII, closed again 2003-2007); Weston Playhouse (VT); Westport Playhouse (CT). Those theaters

The Ogunquit Playhouse was not the only summer theater in New England, nor even the only summer theater in Maine. The Lakewood Theater in Skowhegan, Maine was, during the 1930s and 1940s, as well-known as the Ogunquit Playhouse. Lakewood produced professional, Equity shows and was known at the time as a place where new plays could "try out" prior to a Broadway run. However, the Lakewood Theater differs from the Ogunquit Playhouse in two important respects: it never had a school attached to the theater, and its building was not originally constructed as a legitimate theater. It has been significantly renovated over the decades and converted into a theatrical space, but that was never the original intent for the building. In 1882 the Lakewood Theater began its life as a hall for spiritualists,²² it was taken over and turned into a skating rink in 1884, and in 1898 the building was again restructured "and a rather crudely designed open-air theater partially covered with a roof, resulted," complete with removable seats to accommodate evening dances (Oblak 9-12). It is not clear if permanent seats were installed during the 1925 renovation of the space, but it is certain that the building was renovated *into* a theater, it was not originally built as a theater.²³

Starting in 1925 when Robert Lindsay took over as director of the Lakewood Players, the theater gained a reputation as a place where new plays were tried out before they went to Broadway. However, the Lakewood Theater did not premiere a greater number of new plays on its stage than the Ogunquit Playhouse, or indeed than any other summer theater. In fact, by 1950 *Billboard Magazine* noted that the Ogunquit Playhouse was one of the "few summer theaters [still] making any real effort as a try-out house"; where the Ogunquit Playhouse's reputation remained consistent, Lakewood's reputation evolved in a different direction. Because of Lakewood's location in rural agricultural and blue-collar Skowhegan, the theater was hit very hard by the shortages of World War II, and was closed for three seasons (Oblak 43, 107-122). Although it continued to produce highly regarded stock productions stars into the 1960s, it never fully regained its former reputation. Currently, in sharp contrast with the Ogunquit Playhouse, the Lakewood Theater is no longer a professional, Equity theater.

Regionally, there are other summer theaters that were comparable to the Ogunquit Playhouse during the 1930s-1950s in terms of the types and quality of the productions. The most commonly mentioned include: the Cape Playhouse (Massachusetts), the Westport Country Playhouse (Connecticut), and the Berkshire Playhouse (Massachusetts) (see above for information regarding the Berkshire). Like the Lakewood Theater, none of these three playhouses were originally purpose-built as theaters. The Cape Playhouse began as a Unitarian church, the Westport Country Playhouse is a significantly renovated barn, while the Berkshire Playhouse began its life as a casino/club in 1888 and was moved to its current location via horse-drawn carriage (Somerset-Ward 32-33).²⁴

It is true that, like the Lakewood Theater, the Cape Playhouse, the Westport Country Playhouse, and the Berkshire Playhouse had earlier beginnings than the Ogunquit Playhouse by a few years. The Cape Playhouse opened in 1927, the Westport in 1931, and the Berkshire in 1928, however none of them had the sustained impact of the Ogunquit Playhouse. When the Cape Playhouse opened, its owners explicitly distanced the theater from the Little Theatre Movement claiming that they had "no room for the arty" in theater, and certainly no room for an educational component. Indeed, the area around the Cape Playhouse soon expanded to include an art gallery and a movie house, both of which were completed by 1930. The Cape Playhouse complex was thus quite different from the Ogunquit Playhouse in its intent and its impact on American theater, with live theater essentially viewed as just one among many different kinds of entertainment options open to its patrons (LoMonaco 59).

The Westport Country Playhouse was founded in 1931 by Lawrence Langner, who is most famous for co-directing the New York Theatre Guild, an institution committed to producing plays and musicals typically ignored by other

most comparable to the Ogunquit Playhouse and/or which serve as good representatives in terms of the scope of summer theater, are discussed within the text of narrative.

²¹ This information was gathered by surveying LoMonaco's appendix of theaters in her text *Summer Stock* and so the numbers are only as accurate as LoMonaco's list, which she admits may not be complete given the nature of summer theater. It should be noted that the Deertrees theater in Maine was built in 1936, and is a purpose-built theater. However, construction occurred three years after Hartwig had firmly established the Ogunquit Playhouse, and Deertrees has never operated continuously. It was closed throughout World War II and several times thereafter during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Its history is so sporadic that LoMonaco only notes Deertrees in her compendium of summer theaters, and not at all in the body of her book.

²² Indeed, as of 1971 the spiritualists and their descendents still had the legal right to use the building for worship; when William Hayden took over the space in 1884 he allowed them access to the building, an arrangement that he perpetuated in his will (Oblak 12).

²³ Lakewood was also closed for a significant period (1942-1944) during World War II, something which also distinguishes it from the Ogunquit Playhouse.

²⁴ Another significant theater in the region is the Weston Playhouse (Vermont), which is currently housed in a building purposely constructed as a theater, however construction did not occur until 1962 when a fire devastated the original 1937 structure: a converted Congregational church (<http://www.westonplayhouse.org/westonhistory.php>).

commercial theaters.²⁵ Clearly, what distinguishes the Westport from other summer theaters is its association with the Theatre Guild, but that distinction is not as clear as might be supposed. Thanks to the circuit, many of the shows and stars seen on the Ogunquit Playhouse stage were seen at Westport, and vice versa. Both theaters also produced artistically challenging plays, but not so often as to risk their respective bottom lines. The Ogunquit Playhouse, for example, collaborated with producer Michael Myerberg—famous for the first production of *Waiting for Godot*—to stage the premiere of the avant-garde play *Balloon* written by the Irish playwright Pádraic Colum in 1946. Colum described his play in a program note as: “a comedy out of the headlines stated in the manner of Commedia dell’Arte” (“Program note”).²⁶ The play is remembered today for its use of mobile sculptures by the American abstract artist Alexander Calder (Hart et al 52-53; <http://calder.org/chronology/period/1945-1953/10>).²⁷ The Westport Country Playhouse had no school in place for aspiring professionals, and although the theater was a nicely designed space, at its core it was still a renovated barn.²⁸ And, unlike the Playhouse, the Westport was closed for a significant period of time during the war: 1942-1945.²⁹

In terms of the wider United States, there are few summer playhouses that can compare with the Ogunquit Playhouse as a nationally known, purpose-built, enduring professional summer theater that influenced theater in the United States.³⁰ Other theater companies, such as the Barnstormers (former store), the Ivoryton Playhouse (converted recreation hall), the Mountain Playhouse (converted gristmill), the Peninsula Players (converted former boy’s camp), and the Petersborough Players (former barn) are all housed in buildings originally meant for other purposes. While the Dorset Playhouse in Vermont was purpose-built as a theater, its primary occupants were for years a community (non-professional) company of actors, and it no longer operates as a summer theater, but as a year-long facility that effectively disconnects it from the particular history of summer theaters.

Another example of the varied history of summer theater is in New Hope Pennsylvania, and the building known as the Bucks County Playhouse (originally a grist mill). When the mill was threatened with destruction in the 1930s, the building was purchased by a small group, including playwright Moss Hart, for the purpose of transforming the space into a theater. Performances began in July 1939, several years after the Ogunquit Playhouse had established itself; the theater and Hart can thus be viewed as following the path set by Hartwig in Ogunquit. While for a time the Bucks County Playhouse was very successful, a series of floods—including the “great flood of 1955”—damaged the property, coupled with a series of owners with varying degrees of management skills, meant that by the 1970s the theater was barely surviving (Mycek 38, 41). Unlike the Ogunquit Playhouse, which under the long-term leadership of John Lane was able to navigate changing trends in popular entertainment, the Buck’s County Playhouse declined in importance as a regional theater, later functioned as a non-Equity house, and as of June 2011 has gone dark.

The Barn Theatre was founded in 1946 by Jack Ragotzy in Augusta, Michigan, and is thus nearly a decade younger than the Ogunquit Playhouse, and follows many of the familiar patterns Hartwig established, with some key differences. Ragotzy, like Hartwig, a theater professional who wanted to bring live performance outside of Broadway is an Equity house. As the name of the theater suggests, it quite literally stages theater in a barn, a renovated dairy barn, to be precise. It has always been a professional, Equity house, established a professional theater school in the 1990s—using the educational formula first used by Hartwig in the 1930s—and is considered to be a historic site. While certainly important in terms of Michigan’s cultural history, it did not change summer theater but instead followed the trend Hartwig set.

Founded in 1933, the Barter Theater in Abingdon, Virginia is comparable to the Ogunquit Playhouse in age, but its home is a former Presbyterian Church, which serves to emphasize the uniqueness of the Ogunquit Playhouse 1930s building. The Barter Theater is often mentioned as a significant summer theater because the original price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in livestock or produce. In terms of the mission of bringing theater to a wide audience and connecting to its local community, the Barter Theater and its founder Robert Huffard Porterfield went much further than most to do so (LoMonaco 96-98). That said, by 1946 the theater had to conform to union rules and pay its actors in cash

²⁵ The Theatre Guild is perhaps most famous for its production of *Oklahoma!* (1943); Langner credited his production partner Theresa Helburn for steering the show through the Guild.

²⁶ *Balloon* was first published in 1929 and it took nearly twenty years before it was staged. After its premiere at the Ogunquit Playhouse, although there were numerous attempts to bring *Balloon* to New York, the play was never produced on Broadway (Sternlicht xix). The work is regarded as a flawed, but significant work in the development of Colum as a playwright.

²⁷ Calder, a pioneer in kinetic sculptures, was also known for his set designs.

²⁸ In addition, the Westport was significantly renovated between 2003-2005 such that very little of the original building design remains.

²⁹ Unlike the Lakewood, it was able to restore its reputation, both because of Langner’s continued association with the theater and its relative proximity to New York.

³⁰ Because so little scholarship has been done on summer theaters, much of the information that follows is culled from the websites of various summer theaters across the country.

rather than in bartered items, and the practice was abandoned; while an interesting experiment its bartering scheme certainly did not set a wider trend nationally.³¹ As a summer theater with something unique to offer, the Barter Theatre's influence was minimal when compared the Ogunquit Playhouse, its building, and its education system.

The Black Hills Playhouse in South Dakota began its life as a camp for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, was converted to a playhouse in 1946 by drama professor Dr. Warren M. Lee, and has maintained its association with the University of South Dakota. Unlike many of the other theaters mentioned above, the Black Hills Playhouse is housed in a purpose-built theater, however the building was constructed in 1955 as the original converted building failed to meet the needs of the company, making it two decades younger than the Ogunquit Playhouse.³² Again, like all of the theaters referenced here, the Black Hills Playhouse was and is important to the state in which it is located, but, like these other theaters, its existence can be said to be predicated on the long-term success of the Ogunquit Playhouse and the precedents it set.

Finally, special mention must be made of Florida, because it is illustrative of one of the ways in which summer theater was adapted to suit the needs of audiences. One reason summer theater began in the northeast was because hot New York city summers coupled with a lack of air conditioning meant in the early decades of the twentieth century, Broadway shut down in the summer. As summer theaters became an established part of American theater, parallel "winter theaters" were established in Florida, including the Royal Poinciana Playhouse in Palm Beach.³³ The Royal Poinciana, established in 1962, was run by the Ogunquit Playhouse's John Lane during the 1970s, and indeed many so-called winter theaters were run by seasoned summer theater veterans. Although the years Lane was involved with the Poinciana fall outside the timeframe of significance for the Ogunquit Playhouse, it is worth noting the consistent pattern of people associated with the playhouse—Hartwig, Lane, playwright Joanna H. Kraus, etc.—working to establish the value of professional live theater in United States.³⁴

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

It is important to note that Martha LoMonaco, author of *Summer Stock*, the only scholar to study the breadth of summer theater within its wider historical and cultural contexts, credits Walter Hartwig's Manhattan Theatre Colony and the Ogunquit Playhouse—with the Cape Playhouse (Dennis, MA) and the Berkshire Playhouse (Stockbridge, MA) following close behind—with founding summer theater in the United States. Without the stability and longevity of the Ogunquit Playhouse, summer theater would not have become such a crucial element of American theatrical, and its wider popular culture.

While the summer circuit is primarily linked to the independent theaters along the eastern seaboard that produced both their own plays and co-produced touring Broadway shows (LoMonaco 52-55), the popularity and profitability of these theaters engendered similar, albeit smaller, circuits "from Virginia to Maine, from Cape Cod to the Rockies," and California (Morehouse 20). The northeastern summer circuit, which the Ogunquit Playhouse anchored, shared many of the same plays, musicals, and stars, yet each theater remained "a unique operation that reflected [...] its supporting community" (LoMonaco xix). For over 30 years summer theater was an integral part of American culture. Upwards of 500 summer barns were in business during the 1930s and 1940s—this includes Equity and non-Equity theaters—with a slow decline in numbers beginning in the 1950s. By the 1990s, there were just three survivors of the Northeast Equity summer circuit: the Ogunquit Playhouse, the Cape Playhouse (Dennis, MA), and the Westport Country Playhouse (CT) (Somerset-Ward 211). The Ogunquit Playhouse, and the building that has housed it continuously since 1937, is an enduring, exemplary, and unique example of this national cultural phenomenon; it is part of a larger pattern of the cultural/historical significance of theater in the United States that deserves to be better studied and understood.

Summer theater in the United States was a national phenomenon. Popular, national publications such as *Billboard Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, and *Newsweek*, as well as more specialized periodicals such as *Theatre Arts* and *Variety*, all covered various aspects of summer theater—from the stars to production reviews to considerations of the value of summer theater—throughout the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and well into the 1960s. Newspapers from coast to coast,

³¹ In the name of tradition, one performance a year accepts food donations to a local shelter for a ticket in lieu of money.

<http://www.bartertheatre.com/about/history.php>

³² The new building was cited for safety code violations in 2010 and was closed for the season. The theater has since re-opened.

<http://blackhillsplyhouse.weebly.com/faq.html>

³³ Currently, the theater building exists in a state of limbo, as fans of the theater and real estate developers have been locked in a years-long battle over whether to preserve or demolish the building.

³⁴ Recently, the current Managing Director of the Ogunquit Playhouse, Bradford Kenney, has been working to revive the Royal Poinciana Playhouse and re-establish the connection between the two theaters.

ranging from the *Los Angeles Times*, to the *Milwaukee Journal*, to the *Reading Eagle* (Reading, PA), to the *Baltimore Sun* to the *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), not to mention national publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *New York Times* began coverage of the new trend of summer theaters beginning in the 1930s. Media attention only increased thereafter, with regular columns established to evaluate individual productions throughout the rest of the mid-twentieth century. Magazines, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, and *Billboard* also routinely discussed summer theaters and their productions during the summer months. The ubiquity and familiarity of the idea of summer theaters, with their less formal stages and bucolic settings, was captured by the hit Judy Garland/Gene Kelly MGM film musical *Summer Stock* (1950).³⁵ Although it is true that the roots of summer theater were firmly planted in New England, summer theaters—and their off shoot, “winter stock” in Florida—covered the nation. In her book, *Summer Stock*, Martha LoMonaco lists summer theaters that opened between the 1910s through the 1990s. Between 1930 and 1960—the time period which concerns the Ogunquit Playhouse application for national significance—thirty-two states (plus the District of Columbia) saw at least one summer theater come into existence. Those thirty-two states were: New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Delaware, Maine, Connecticut, Missouri, Indiana, California, Virginia, Texas, New Hampshire, Illinois, Minnesota, Arkansas, Vermont, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Colorado, Florida, Tennessee, Maryland, Nebraska, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Other states that had avoided the trend in earlier decades, including Kansas and Georgia, opened new summer theaters during the 1960s-2000s, demonstrating that although summer theater and the summer circuit may have passed its height of expansion and growth after the 1950s, it never completely died away as a form of American popular entertainment.³⁶

The “straw hat circuit” was a “trade descriptive for summer legitimate stage activity” (O’Brien 67). More often than not, however, the “straw hat circuit” was a catch-all phrase used to describe anything that took place at a “hundred remodeled barns, churches and casinos, on college campuses and [...] amusement parks [by] several thousand professional, semiprofessional and amateur performers” (“Theatre: Straw Hat Season”). More specifically, those theaters on the “summer circuit” were a loose affiliation of Equity theaters—professional, union, organizations—primarily in the Northeast, which shared or packaged particular productions with, and for, each other. Most summer theaters, like the Ogunquit Playhouse, usually had at least one, and very often two, “untried” or “prior to Broadway” show as part of the normal season. Of those shows which premiered on the summer circuit, many never made it to Broadway, while others transferred to the Broadway stage as summer successes only to flop in New York.³⁷ Rarely did a summer show become an unqualified hit,³⁸ and yet the *New York Times* noted when summer theaters had notable premieres and tracked the progress of shows from the circuit to Broadway.³⁹ Given the individual character of each summer theater and its audience, not all plays travelled to all theaters within the circuit, and that circuit was not static in its membership.⁴⁰

Among the historically most stable summer theaters from the summer circuit, there are a few survivors, with the Ogunquit Playhouse acting as an important exception. But even during the height of summer theater during the 1930s and 1940s, the discourse about summer theater in journals like *Theatre Arts Monthly* and newspapers like the *New York Times* reflects the liminal state of the art form. At one level, summer theater was meant to be rooted in the community, featuring local favorites who received applause from the moment they stepped onto the stage, sometimes upstaging famous stars like Bette Davis (LoMonaco 148-149). Summer theaters marketed themselves as both local and “Broadway,” as a quaint, can-do example of local entrepreneurship and as a part of a larger business/cultural model in competition with film, and later television, striving to bring Art to the locals. In this regard, summer theater has clear links to the goals of the Little Theater Movement: the promotion and proliferation of quality live theater across the country. To be successful, summer theaters had to be commercial businesses, but such theaters could not be perceived as businesses by their patrons, and, to a certain extent, by the actors who inhabited their stages.⁴¹ The basic image of summer-barn-silo-mosquito-straw-hat-theater was and is remarkably stubborn and is one key reason why the form is understudied and

³⁵ *Summer Stock*, and its “let’s put on a show” ethos helped to concretize the notion that summer theater is generally a field for amateurs. The reality of summer theater, as evidenced by the Ogunquit Playhouse, is quite different.

³⁶ And of course those states where summer theaters opened in the early decades of summer theater also saw new theaters coming into existence after the 1960s, albeit at a slower rate.

³⁷ Many plays billed as “prior to Broadway” never opened in New York City because the promised funding failed to materialize. For example, Michael Myerberg’s production of noted Irish playwright Pádraic Colum’s avant-garde play *Balloon* premiered at the Ogunquit Playhouse in 1946—Colum and Myerberg tried and failed to open the play in Michigan in 1943—and for 2 years afterward the *New York Times* sporadically mentioned that it would soon open on Broadway, only to have the plans fall through time and again. It never did open in New York. The following gossip item is representative: Lewis Funke, “News and Gossip Gathered on the Rialto,” *New York Times* 16 February 1947: X1.

³⁸ This is not to say that summer theater produced no Broadway hits. First-time playwright Ronald Alexander’s *Season with Ginger*, which premiered at Ogunquit in 1952, was renamed *Time out for Ginger* and enjoyed a successful Broadway run. (Alexander 33-35).

³⁹ Whether or not a play is popular on Broadway is not necessarily a mark of its artistic merit, nor does it imply that the show will be universally popular.

⁴⁰ For example, in 1935 the *New York Times* listed 31 theaters in 8 states (New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania) as being part of the summer circuit. In 1936, the paper listed 35 theaters in 9 states (New York, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) (Somerset-Ward 58-59, “Ode to a Meadow Lark,” 140).

⁴¹ Charlotte Harmon and Rosemary Taylor’s *Broadway in a Barn* (1957) has a lighthearted, gossipy take-on the contradictory ways in which patrons and stars viewed summer theater.

easily dismissed.⁴² It should not be; the Ogunquit Playhouse is an important link back to a very particular aspect of American cultural history and popular entertainment that flourished for 30 years and still endures today.

The debate between art and entertainment was inextricably linked to different ideas regarding the function of summer theater. Some, like actor/playwright Hume Cronyn and theater critic Walter Kerr, were adamant that the summer circuit and theaters like the Ogunquit Playhouse needed to premiere and try-out new plays and feed those plays onto Broadway, rather than simply produce the previous year's greatest hit (Crist; Kerr D2; Fleigers 898).⁴³ By not producing new shows, theaters were implying that summer audiences were not sophisticated enough for such fare. In addition, not producing new plays through the summer circuit did not capitalize on the strengths of the actors and other theater professionals making their living on the circuit. In contrast, other commentators as early as the 1930s believed that the summer circuit was best suited to the familiar and the pleasant, and that indeed since most summer theaters produced a different show each week of the season, an untried play was ill-served by the summer circuit model (Skinner 1).

One of the chief difficulties in appropriately locating the Ogunquit Playhouse within the proper historical context—and thus correctly understanding its national significance—is, as noted above, that because the Ogunquit Playhouse operates during the summer months, it is too often lumped together with amateur community theaters. As a well-established, professional, Equity theater, the Ogunquit Playhouse is in no way similar to an amateur, short-lived, community theater. Although the general public may be unaware of the distinction between a professional Equity theater and an amateur, non-Equity theater, this difference is quite important and well-known within the entertainment community.⁴⁴

The misapprehensions about summer theater persist in large part because there are no scholarly articles that directly address summer theater as a particular genre of American entertainment within which different subgenres—that is, amateur vs. professional—existed. There is currently one scholarly book currently available, *Summer Stock* by Martha LoMonaco, which surveys the intricacies of summer theater from the early 1900s to the 1990s. Its appendix includes over 800 entries detailing summer theaters that opened (and closed) their doors across the country.⁴⁵ While theater history as a whole has been a respected field for decades, as an academic discipline it nonetheless still tends to favor the “highbrow” over so-called “middlebrow” and “lowbrow” forms of theater that summer theaters have come to represent. For example, the study of musical theater has only become a respected avenue of study for academic scholars within the past twenty years—with a spate of books to prove it—and yet musical comedies and musical plays have been a staple of American theater since the early nineteenth century.⁴⁶ In other words, the absence of sustained scholarship in terms of summer theater does not equate to a lack of importance or significance within American culture, but is instead indicative of particular trends within academic communities which have tended to value “art” over “entertainment”.

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⁴² Films such as the Judy Garland vehicle *Summer Stock* (1950) only perpetuated the stereotype, however it is also the case that the existence of the film *Summer Stock* indicates the ubiquity and popularity of summer theater within the popular culture landscape of the United States.

⁴³ Cronyn and Jessica Tandy premiered several works on the summer circuit and were quite impressed by the Ogunquit Playhouse.

⁴⁴ While the average playgoer might not know the technical difference between and professional Equity house and an amateur, non-Equity house, s/he will certainly recognize the difference in the quality of the performances and the overall productions.

⁴⁵ And LoMonaco makes no real effort to distinguish between Class A and B Equity, non-Equity (but professional), and amateur theaters.

⁴⁶ The journal *Studies in Musical Theatre* was launched in 2007, demonstrating that a critical mass of scholars engaged in studying musical theater had finally been achieved.

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Name of Property _____

County and State _____

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1				3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries of the nominated property have not changed. However, it has received a new street address of 10 Main Street, Ogunquit, Maine

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Kathryn Edney, Assistant Professor, History, World Languages and Cultural Heritage Department,
Regis College (Weston, MA)

organization Ogunquit Playhouse date 3 April 2014

street & number 10 Main Street telephone (207) 646-2402

city or town Ogunquit state ME zip code 03907

e-mail kathryn.edney@regiscollege.edu

Additional Documentation

Name of Property

County and State

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Ogunquit Playhouse
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MAINE, York

DATE RECEIVED: 11/13/95 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/28/95
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/14/95 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/28/95
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 95001458

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 CAPITOL STREET
65 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333



18 August 2014

Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW,
Washington D.C. 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find one (1) partial National Register nomination for a property in the State of Maine:

Ogunquit Playhouse Additional Documentation, York County
(Sections 1,2,3,4, 8, 9 and 11 only.)

Please note that this information is being submitted to update the current listing of the Ogunquit Playhouse with regard to areas, period and level of significance. The property was originally listed in the Register on December 14, 1995 and has the NRIS # 95001458. A copy of the original nomination is included for your ready reference.

If you have any questions relating to these nominations, please do not hesitate to contact me at (207) 287-2132 x 2.

Sincerely,

Christi A. Mitchell
Architectural Historian

Enc.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Ogunquit Playhouse
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MAINE, York

DATE RECEIVED: 8/29/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/15/14

REFERENCE NUMBER: 95001458

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/15/14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*additional areas of education
& architecture added.*

RECOM./CRITERIA A, B, & C

REVIEWER W. J. Blum

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 10/15/14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.