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| Little Theatre Movement |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The Little Theatre Movement comprised a web of amateur theatre activities undertaken across much of the United States between 1912 and 1925. Little Theatre opposed commercialism; its proponents believed theatre could be used for the betterment of American society and for self-expression. Little Theatre founders and participants included playwrights, professors, liberal political activists, social workers, lawyers, heiresses, poets, actors, aesthetes, journalists, housewives, and students. They drew inspiration from the best-known work of the European Independent Theatre Movement and from the design aesthetics of Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, and Max Reinhardt. Eventually their values affected commercial theatre.  The Little Theatre Movement is best known for four of its earliest companies: the Provincetown Players, the Washington Square Players, the Chicago Little Theatre, and the Neighborhood Playhouse. No two of these were alike, suggesting the breadth and variety of the movement’s undertakings. The Provincetown Players started in 1915, when a group of New York-based writers and activists assembled at their summer beach haunt in Massachusetts to present short, original plays. The founders were idealist George Cram Cook and his writer wife, Susan Glaspell; the group is perhaps best known for giving Eugene O’Neill his start as a produced playwright. The Washington Square Players was also started by a group of iconoclastic New Yorkers. The WSP’s mission was not, however, the production of member-written, American plays, but rather the production of a variety of plays from many sources. |
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| Further reading:  (Browne)  (Chansky)  (Cheney)  (Lock)  (Mackay)  (Moderwell)  “A History of the Provincetown Playhouse.” <http://www.provincetownplayhouse.com/history.html>.  (Sarlós) |