

BERETANIA TENNIS CLUB, INC.
1325 Victoria Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

INFORMATION SHEET

1. INTRODUCTION

Beretania Tennis Club, Inc (BTC) is a private club whose facilities are dedicated to the game of tennis and related informal social activities.

The facilities are quickly and easily accessible from downtown Honolulu. The facility offers tennis players amenities, including men's and ladies' locker rooms, private lockers, linen service, parking, reservation times for use of the courts, and a sense of privacy in an urban area.

Membership is by invitation.

2. HISTORY

In March of 1895, the first efforts were made to formally organize tennis in Honolulu. The Pacific Tennis Club was formed in that month and before the end of the month games were being played on the club's courts at Merchant and Richards on land donated by William Irwin for this purpose. [*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 19, 1895, page 7, and March 21, 1895, p. 5, and *Star Bulletin*, March 11, 1895, page 3]. Four months later, in July 1895, the **Beretania Tennis Club** was formed with J. C. Cooke as president, W.L. Stanley, vice president, W. G. Singlehurst, secretary, B. F. Beardmore, treasurer, and with W. C. Parke, L. de L. Ward and C. H. Atherton sitting on an executive committee. By August, twenty-two members, including Prince David Kawanakoa, had joined, (*Independent*, July 9, 1895, page 3, and *Star Bulletin* August 3, 1895), and in August courts were laid out and opened at the Beretania Street School Grounds, where the club had obtained a five-year lease from the Board of Education for an unused portion of the parcel. [*Honolulu Star*, August 5, 1895, page 3].

The Beretania Tennis Club's five-year lease expired on June 30, 1900, and the club was notified that the Territory of Hawai'i needed to expand the school grounds into the area of the tennis courts. The Board of Education allowed the club to remain on the site until it could find a new location, which it did in October 1900. [*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, August 22, 1900, page 7, and October 5, 1900, page 2] Mr. Charles Cooke, for a nominal consideration, offered the club part of his vacant lot at Beretania Street facing Thomas Square. Here three cinder courts and a handsome new clubhouse were built at the corner of present-day Hotel Street and Ward Avenue. [*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, October 27, 1900, page 9] The club remained at this location until 1937, when it moved to its current location. Since the

dissolution of the Pacific Tennis Club in 1916, the Beretania Tennis Club has been the oldest private tennis club in Honolulu.

The move to Victoria Street was made with an eye to improving the club's facilities. Such a move was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Castle brothers, Alfred L. and W. R. Jr., who donated the land, which was a portion of the premises of their childhood home, the residence of their parents, William R. and Ida Castle. Alfred Castle was a long-time member of the club and an ardent tennis player. With regards to the new courts, the *Advertiser* noted, "The new courts are laid out with a view to perfect playing conditions and the three doubles courts lie exactly correct for light." [*Honolulu Advertiser*, May 6, 1937, page 11] The former courts and clubhouse were taken over by the newly formed Thomas Square Tennis Club. [*Advertiser*, June 22, 1937, page 10]. The Beretania Tennis Club became organized as a Trust around the time of this move.

While the Club was at the Ward Avenue and Hotel Street location it hosted numerous internationally known tennis stars, including the Japan champion Zenzo Shimizu, Bill Tilden, the first American man to win the Wimbledon championship (1920) and the number one men's amateur player during the period 1920-1925, and various Davis Cup teams from the United States, Japan, Australia and Germany. At the present location, in addition to hosting many tournaments, the club featured a number of exhibition matches over the years which involved the German, Australian, and Japanese Davis Cup teams.

In more recent years, BTC promoted tennis with low-key activities, including several annual and periodic tournaments dedicated to the promotion of the sport. Members included prominent tennis players in the Honolulu community.

On August 30, 1996, the trustees of the club at the time (William Aull, Frank Manaut, and Dan Case) jointly filed a "Petition for Instruction," with the Hawaii Court System, seeking guidance regarding the administration of the Trust. BTC was the named beneficiary of the Trust, so long as the property was used exclusively as a tennis club. If the Trust were to end for any reason—including cessation of the play of tennis—the remainder beneficiary of the Trust was Punahou School. There was general agreement that based on the terms of the Trust and a law known as the "Rule Against Perpetuities," the property upon which BTC was situated would revert to Punahou School in February 2018. Thus, BTC was in jeopardy of losing the site and its improvements.

Members of the club then banded together and expended considerable effort to arrange for the purchase from Punahou School of the residuary interest it had in the property. As a result, BTC became a non-profit corporation on September 8, 1998, with each member of the Club automatically becoming a member of a non-profit Hawaii corporation.

3. CORPORATE TAX STATUS

The club has a tax-exempt status as a social club under Section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code. As a Section 501(c)(7) organization, the club is generally exempt from income tax. Donations to the club, however, are not tax-deductible.

4. GOVERNANCE

BTC is organized as a non-profit corporation, run by its Board of Directors (BOD). The present membership and its governing Board of five directors are committed to maintaining the club for the exclusive use of tennis and to ensuring the continuation of the character and ambience of the facility for its members.

5. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

The membership of the club is approximately 70 members, including some non-resident members.

The BOD strives to maintain reasonable membership dues. The BOD tries to strike a good balance between: (a) enhancing the facilities with more revenues, and (b) being able to comfortably accommodate preferred playing times for members.

On rare occasions, the Board imposes assessments on full-time members, in order to timely respond to significant improvements, mandated either by building codes, disrepair, or adding features desired by members. The last time an assessment was imposed was 1998, for the acquisition of fee simple ownership of the land and facilities.

Over time, BTC has benefitted from generous monetary gifts from members. For instance, although not tax-deductible, multiple members made large donations to the 1999 Aloha Contribution Program, to enable BTC to make a \$150,000 down payment to Punahou School for the property purchase, which donations resulted in a manageable remaining indebtedness for the other members.

Failure to pay Board-approved fees, dues, and assessments results in expulsion from the membership roster.

6. FEES, DUES, AND ASSESSMENTS

The Bylaws of the club allow for the Board to determine fees, dues, and assessments.

The regular monthly dues for full memberships is \$110. The regular initiation fee is \$1,250.

7. CONTACTS - For more information on any of the foregoing topics, you may contact any of the directors.