

Pageant, Born of Depression and Necessity, Life-Saver to Roanoke

Paul Green's "The Lost Colony" Is Attracting Thousands To the Island

In Northeastern North Carolina, on a one-time remote island that a sea captain in 1584 recommended as a fertile site for an English settlement, there is an annual celebration that is year-round meat, if not both meat and drink, to more than a thousand municipal citizens.

The celebration ostensibly honors the Lost Colonists who founded the first English settlement in America on Roanoke Island, and the birth of the first child of English parentage on this continent, Virginia Dare, August 18, 1587. The chief attraction, presented on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights each week for nine summer weeks, is the really well-executed production of Paul Green's "The Lost Colony," whose roles are played almost entirely by men, women, and children who live on Roanoke Island.

Like many another civic show, this was born of depression and necessity. But unlike most others, "The Lost Colony" is thriving, attracting visitors, and making money for the citizens who should benefit.

In the late 1920's and early 30's, like other industries elsewhere, the island's chief maintenance fell on financial reefs. This was fisheries. Prices plummeted lower than the lowest tide that washes the island's sandy beaches. The island people are fishermen and, we find, fortunately, are actors. All they needed was D. Bradford Fearing and a fine sense of historical values.

Fearing is a North Carolina State senator; the leader of his town and county, the idol of the islanders.

Business Is Booming

Fearing is reaching his goal for his people as 100,000 Americans pay one dollar apiece each summer to see "The Lost Colony," the restored "Citie of Raleigh," and the village's museums. Other thousands are paying one to two dollars nightly for lodging in the island's hotels and in the scores of homes that have been turned into cash-producing tourist accommodations. Means of satisfying the visitors' hungers has given rise to a whole food-furnishing industry. Filling station businesses boom in the summer months. Even former fishermen who found no other way to profit from the celebration, earn steadily as guides for visitors who also want to put in a little sportsmanlike angling.

Fearing got the first show started as a 350th anniversary of the founding three years ago, July 4. Spectators were few in the first month, but when lusty advertising and priceless lip-service took effect, others came. By the end of August, 10,000 had witnessed the play's two-hour performance, including the President, the Postmaster-General, other high-placed Democrats, and a number of dramatic critics of major newspapers. Not a critic failed to praise it, one even dubbed it the "Patriotic Oberammergau of America."

The production made expenses and a bit over, which went back into the pot for improvements of grounds and the great theatre, which now seats more than 5,000 on practically every night of the performance. In the second summer, nearly 75,000 people saw the show. In this the third summer the islanders are preparing to greet 100,000 persons from all parts of the United States.

None Receive Pay

"None of the islanders receive pay for their work," the island's publicity department points out. "All this—the reconstructed city of The Lost Colony with its charming chapel, solid log houses, and grim stockade of pine logs, its huge museum of priceless 16th century relics, and its immense open-air theatre which is

equipped with every conceivable piece of theatrical equipment to help bring to vivid life the people of the colony on the actual site of their battles and suffering—all this has been obtained at considerable cost and self-sacrifice."

The original idea of the celebration dates to the 1880's and came to fruit in 1894 when the Roanoke Colony Memorial Association was formed. Each year since 1894, on Virginia Dare's birthday, memorial services have been held by the islanders in memory of the Lost Colonists.

But not until the late 1920's when private interests built the five-mile Wright Memorial Bridge across a part of Albemarle Sound, and Dare county erected another mile of bridges from Nags Head Beach to the island, was the famous site accessible to tourists. Now it is easily reached by a broad, paved highway through forests and sand dunes be-

side the sea. There are no toll bridges.

In November, 1931, fifty eminent North Carolina citizens convened at Raleigh, and at the suggestion of U. S. Senator Josiah W. Bailey, appointed a commission of eleven men to form plans for a major celebration in 1934. This year was the 350th anniversary of the discovery of Roanoke Island.

The islanders and their commission, through the influence of Senator Bailey and Representative Lindwood C. Warren, immediately secured the interest of Congress. But in the depression, the Congressional commission recommended that the national celebration be postponed until 1937, and denied financial aid by Congress.

First Crude Pageant

The determined islanders scraped together what funds were absolutely necessary. They wrote their own pageant. Working together they began the restoration of the village. The Civil Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration came to their aid. Work on the little chap-

el was pushed and the grimly stolid blockhouse was completed.

In a two-day celebration, August 17 and 18, 1934, on the open ground under the pines, the islanders presented their first crude pageant and were praised for their work by 2,000 visitors.

This first pageant gave inspiration to Paul Green. With this as a springboard, he developed the script for the nationally successful "The Lost Colony."

In it he has combined all his dramatic skill and his love and understanding of music. He has blended brilliant pageantry with moving living dialogue. Nowhere does the play lose its character despite the epic sweep of the pageant theme. Professional critics have declared that it is exciting, tender, tragic and beautiful.

The brilliant musical score of the play, which was presented by special permission for one and a half hours over the Columbia Broadcasting System early this month (July 4), was developed from carols, ballads, and rondeaus like those the colonists sang

in the 16th century. The musical background has been woven to fit and heighten the mood, the tempo, and the color of the drama.

After this year the production of "The Lost Colony"—historical, patriotic and educational in the best sense of the word—may become even more a native enterprise, as indigenous as the great religious pageant of Bavaria. Then, indeed, it will be the Oberammergau of America.

ANGUS WICKER INJURED

Angus Wicker, of the Carthage section, was found unconscious with severe cuts on the right side of his neck in the Colin G. Spencer lumber yard on Monday and rushed to the Moore County Hospital. He is expected to recover.

GUEST IN ABERDEEN

Mrs. Rudel McGill of Montreal is spending several days as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. Talbot Johnson at their home in Aberdeen.

CHURCHES

The First Baptist Church will have its regular service Sunday morning at 11:00 o'clock. In the absence of the pastor who is on his vacation, the service will be conducted by the Rev. T. Sloan Guy who will use as his subject: "A Dry Brook." There will be special music by the choir.

There will be regular services at the Church of Wide Fellowship on next Sunday as follows: 9:45 a. m., Church School; 11:00 a. m., Morning worship with sermon by pastor; 7:30 p. m., Fellowship League for high school ages; 7:30 p. m., Vesper service in the church garden for everyone.

"Truth" is the subject of the lesson-sermon at the Christian Science Church, East New Hampshire avenue next Sunday morning at 11:00 o'clock. Sunday School convenes at the same time at the church.

ADVERTISE IN THE PILOT.

PHOTO-FLASHES



BOSTON RED SOX IN SENSATIONAL SPURT—Four of the "big guns" who aided the Boston Red Sox in defeating the Yankees five times straight—a rarity in baseball. Left to right: Cramer of Tabor 3b, Foxx 1b, and Williams rf.



PRETTY GIRL, PRETTY FLOWER—Hollywood, Calif.—Helen Parrish, film actress, admires the beauty of a California yucca. This flower is protected by a state law, forbidding picking or mutilation.



ALL AMERICAN CUSTOM—MID-SUMMER ICED TEA

A charming conspiracy to defeat the heat is the serving of iced tea on a penthouse terrace. This gracious hostess is using her silver to elegant advantage. The teapot, tray, lemon fork and iced tea spoons, are in the Fairfax pattern to match her other sterling flatware. She's a lucky hostess too, for the ice bowl and tongs, coasters, and lemon dish, which incidentally is a Gorham reproduction of a piece made in London in 1798, were all wedding gifts.



QUADS TAKE SUN BATH—Galveston, Tex.—The Badgett babies, now five months old, the country's youngest quadruplets, are shown with their mother, Mrs. W. E. Badgett, and their sister, Elsie Mae, 13. Left to right: Joan, Jeanette, Jeraldine, and Joyce.



SOCIALITE FASHIONS AT NEWPORT—Newport, R. I. (Left) Mrs. Francis Taylor, the former Lesley Bogart of New York, pictured in a bathing suit at this fashionable resort. (Right) Miss A. Frazer of Detroit, Mich., wearing striped pajamas with turban and beach slippers.



IN KENTUCKY FLOOD—Morehead, Ky.—Rajah, an 18½ foot, 143-pound python, belonging to a carnival, which escaped from its cage during the flood, and was recaptured.



SWIMS THE MISSISSIPPI—St. Louis, Mo.—Sunny Kole, six years old, of Edwardsville, Ill., swam across the Mississippi River in 19 minutes, setting an unofficial contemporary record for children.



KEEP OUT OF WAR—Former President Hoover (right) introduced by Sumner Blossom, editor, gives over the air a summary of his signed article in the current American Magazine in which he warns against involvement in European power politics and urges that we should not fight except in defense of this hemisphere.



ANOTHER ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY... Although Blue Marlin, the most spectacular deep sea game fish of all, are taken regularly at Cat Cay, Bahaman island paradise sixty miles east of Miami, this big gamester taken by Mary Sears of Greenwich, Conn., and Cat Cay, created a sensation. It weighed 730 lbs.—a new world's record.



FAMOUS SLEUTH ON AIR—Detective O'Malley, hero of William MacFadden's popular short stories in Collier's is now being dramatized three times weekly over WOR and the Mutual-Canadian Systems by the Federal Theatre Radio Division. Photo shows O'Malley, played by Jack Raymond, at work on a case.



HANDS OFF DANZIG—POLES WARN—Warsaw, Poland—A section of the great parade that featured the celebration of "Sea Day" in Warsaw recently, when hundreds of thousands took a public oath to defend Poland's exit to the Baltic Sea at Gdynia and Danzig.



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