

# INGLIS FLETCHER REVIEWS PAUL GREEN'S SYMPHONIC DRAMA "THE LOST COLONY"

Editor's Note: Inglis Fletcher's new book "Roanoke Hundred" will be published in October to complete a series of five she has written with historical settings in the Albemarle region of North Carolina. Her books, each a best seller, have included "Raleigh's Eden," "Men of Albemarle," "Toil of the Brave" and "Lusty Wind For Carolina." Recently Mrs. Fletcher saw Paul Green's symphonic drama in the Waterside Theatre on Roanoke Island and then wrote the following review of the show which this year is celebrating the 11th anniversary of its premiere in 1937:

"We drove from Edenton to Manteo and Fort Raleigh, where we saw The Lost Colony for the first time of this season. It was a splendid performance. It moved with precision and ease. The new performers in the cast did not stand out as new faces or new

voices, but they were an integral part of the whole tragic story, which is a tribute to the work of the actors and the directors.

"Seeing The Lost Colony always constitutes an adventure. Sometimes I have tried to analyze the feeling one has in listening to Paul Green's fine play. Deep emotions are stirred as the life of those courageous people unfolds. The words are rhythmic, almost Shakespearean. Again, one thinks of Greek tragedy, as the play marches on to its inevitable doom. But the Shakespearean form prevails, with its comedy close to tragedy, and the tragedy moving to heroic proportions.

"The people of the play are not actors. They are Devon folk, set out on a great venture, as their earlier kinfolk set out on an heroic undertaking under Sir Richard Granville in that first colony, when a hundred and seven men of Devon and Cornwall came to Roanoke Island, and for

a year struggled to establish a colony in the new world, for the glory of Elizabeth, and England.

"These men and women of The Lost Colony had no thought of being history's children. They were intent on gaining a foothold in the new world, adding their share to halt the power of Philip of Spain, in America. The shadow of Spain lay over them, and who knows but that shadow became the hurricane that finally engulfed them?

"The value of having the play on the spot where the events took place is beyond question. The earth itself becomes a part of the play and the action on the stage.

"The setting is well thought out, well executed, unobtrusive, like the actors and the music, it is all so well integrated that it is the living part of the whole. These were heroic people, yet I doubt if a man or woman felt heroic. Time has given them that stamp, raised them to what the Elizabethans called "Equestrian proportions."

"The effect of the drama of The Lost Colony upon the audience is different from any play I have ever seen. Many people have seen it many times. Sometimes I think the audience knows the play as thoroughly as the actors who speak the lines. This, too, is Elizabethan, where vigorous prompting often came from men seated in the pit.

"The audience is frank to praise or criticize each change that is made in lines or in stage business. Each successive change has its partisans.

"I belong to the group who think that the earlier ending was the best. After some years I still remember watching that little group of defeated men and women walking off into the unknown, in silence. People all about sat quietly, tears streaming down their cheeks. Their emotions were stirred to the depths, watching a little group of defeated folk walking away.

"They thought they were marching into the forest. We know they were marching into history. That moment of silence was great drama.

"Now they march away on a triumphant note of music and song. Perhaps that is better. Perhaps that is what was in the hearts and souls of those staunch Devon folk. Who knows? But somehow I feel that their going was stark tragedy, and that they moved off silently, in despair, knowing that the deep forest held no hope for them.

"This play, this Lost Colony, is so important in history, that I wish that every youth in the country could see it. The lesson is so obvious. Our nation was not built out of easy living. It was not a gift. It was the struggle of devoted, stalwart people."

## WHO KNOWS

1. How many of the G. A. R. were living on Memorial Day?
2. How was Puerto Rico secured by the U. S.?
3. How many neckties does the average man buy a year?
4. An 800-foot fence is being built across Mexico. Why?
5. In what country was Catherine the Great born?
6. Police of what countries carry no guns?
7. What is the average cost of a feature-length movie made in Hollywood?
8. What is the average size of the American woman's shoes?
9. Can you name three of the largest islands of the Philippines?
10. Whose official residence is in the Hradcany Castle?

### THE ANSWERS

1. 52. The youngest, 97, the oldest 107.
2. Ceded to the U. S. at the end of the Spanish-American war.
3. 13.
4. To check the northward spread of foot and mouth disease which has infected cattle.
5. Stettin, Prussia, in 1729.
6. Britain, Norway and Sweden.
7. \$1,000,000 as against \$300,000 in 1937.
8. 7 1-2B.

9. Luzon, Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan, Negros, Samar, Panay, Leyte, Bohol and Masbate are the largest.

10. The President of Czechoslovakia.

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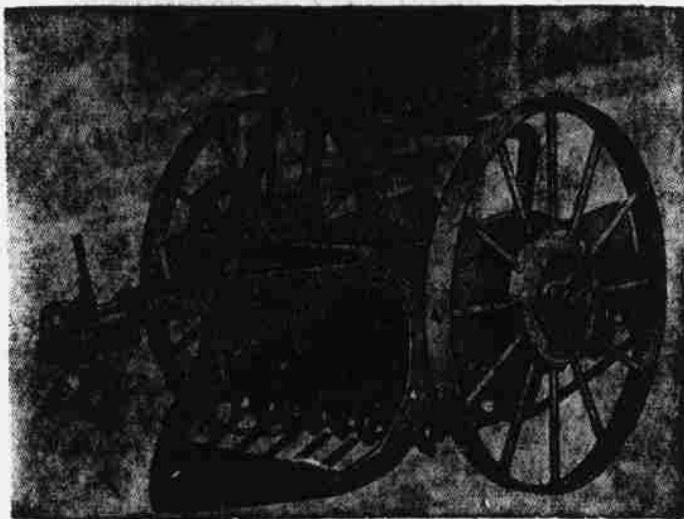
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