

Rough copy of the UNC proposal.  
At back are accompanying letters  
from national figures. Note dates  
of about June, 1955.

Proposal for a Grant of Foundation Funds  
to Augment the Outdoor Drama Movement  
as a Medium for Popular Education  
in Basic Democracy

As used herein, the phrase "outdoor dramas" means plays, not pageants. The intent is succinctly stated in the following quotation from an article in the New York Times by Kermit Hunter, <sup>1/</sup> author of "Unto These Hills" and "Horn in the West":

In four localities in the southeast are four outdoor dramas which open each summer in late June and play six nights a week until Labor Day.

These particular plays deal with American history, each tailored to tell the story of a certain period or movement; and all four are strictly plays rather than pageants. Individuals emerge as heroes or antagonists. Characters grow and develop as they meet the tides of circumstance. Plots are of necessity accordionized from actual historical facts in order that dramatic unity may be preserved, but the plays are true to history in tone and mood, and, as such, they have strong patriotic as well as dramatic appeal.

This proposal is founded in the belief (1) that the outdoor drama affords a wholesome and highly effective medium of popular education in basic democracy; (2) that the need for such popular education is great

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<sup>1/</sup> The full text of the article is attached as Exhibit 1. It appeared in the Sunday Times, July 18, 1954.

and immediate; (3) that interest in the outdoor drama as a community enterprise, sparked by the four successful dramas playing in North Carolina and Virginia, is now sufficiently widespread to warrant attention as a national movement; (4) that such a movement can, with adequate encouragement and direction, be made a permanent part of American cultural life, operating on a base of economic self-sufficiency, and providing great benefits to participants and audiences alike; (5) that the source of direction of the movement is the Department of Dramatic Art of the University of North Carolina, whence came the four dramas now in successful operation; and (6) that the University has, in Mr. Kermit Hunter, a man uniquely qualified to direct the project herein proposed.

## I

It is proposed that the Foundation provide a grant of One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) Dollars over a period of five years, to finance the establishment and operation of an Outdoor Drama Extension Service, under the direction of Kermit Hunter, within the Department of Dramatic Art of the University of North Carolina.

It is proposed that this project be executed from a station within the Department of Dramatic Art of the

University of North Carolina, such station to be especially designed for the purpose it is intended to serve, with the sponsorship and support of the University and its dramatic art department, and with the use of the University's physical plant and facilities for fiscal and administrative management.

Funds at the rate of \$30,000 per year would be budgeted approximately as follows: salaries, \$12,600 (being \$9,000 for the Director and \$3,600 for a combination secretary and administrative assistant); per diem compensation for consultants, lecturers, and assistants, \$10,000 (being subject to graduated scales ranging from \$30 to \$15 per day, depending on the talent of the person and the nature of the assignment); travel, \$6,000 (covering actual transportation expenses plus a per diem allowance in lieu of subsistence); and miscellaneous, \$1,400 (including postage, stationery, duplicating, printing, and supplies).

The proposed Outdoor Drama Extension Service would (1) collect, collate, and co-ordinate information relating to the writing, production, and establishment of outdoor dramas, and devise means for the dissemination of such information to schools, colleges, and universities, and to local community groups according to their interest and need; (2) consult and advise with local communities throughout the United States expressing interest in the

outdoor drama, and actively assist in the establishment and production of outdoor dramas where the elements and standards of success are in prospect; (3) conduct conferences and seminars (a) at the University of North Carolina and (b) at other colleges and universities according to their interest and facilities in the dramatic field; and (4) serve as a clearing house for writers, producers, actors, musicians, and technicians interested in the work of the outdoor drama.

The immediate goals of the project are: (1) to establish the outdoor drama as a permanent and ever-developing feature of dramatic art in the United States; (2) to establish and expand the outdoor drama as a permanent part of the curriculum of colleges and universities throughout the United States; and (3) to develop and maintain a clearing house for the movement, in the interest of (a) facilitating the work of writers, actors, and technicians and (b) preserving and placing in perspective the whole experience of America in this typically American undertaking.

The achievement of these goals, it is believed, would be worthy of a grant of Foundation funds if considered only in terms of promoting the dramatic arts. The proposed project, however, holds the additional

promise of promoting a new and highly effective medium of popular education in basic democracy. This promise is so great, and the need for its realization so immediate, as to make the promotion of the dramatic arts a secondary consideration. Fortunately, there is no conflict between the promotion of the dramatic arts and the fulfillment of the primary promise. The two so supplement each other as to blend into one endeavor.

Foundation support for the project appears to be warranted by the nature of the endeavor. In addition to the educational, civic, and cultural advantages for individuals in the use of leisure time and the technical training of persons interested in the dramatic arts, the project is directed toward economic benefits for the participating individuals, for the sponsoring local communities, and for whole geographic sections surrounding such communities.

## II

In March, 1954, the University of North Carolina Press published an Extension Bulletin (Vol. XXXIII, No. 4) entitled "Producing America's Outdoor Dramas." A copy of it is attached as Exhibit 2. This Bulletin was prepared by Samuel Selden, Chairman, Department of Dramatic Art, and Director of the Carolina Playmakers; Paul Green, novelist, short-story writer, and playwright; Kermit Hunter, author of three successful outdoor dramas; and others, all of the

University of North Carolina. The Bulletin presents, in condensed form, the history, concept, and technique of the redevelopment of this dramatic art.

Brief History of the Outdoor Drama. As pointed out by Mr. Selden in the Bulletin (p. 8), the outdoor drama has had a place in history. He and other contributors to the Bulletin have also outlined, specifically and by implication, the more recent development of this dramatic art form in the United States. Many of the paragraphs which follow, under this and other headings, are presented to supplement the contents of the Bulletin, and in the interest of continuity and emphasis of other topics treated herein which were not so developed in the Bulletin.

It is important to distinguish between pageant and outdoor drama.

Under pageant should be classed various centennials, celebrations, festivals, and commemorations, where performances are given in honor of some event or historical incident. These shows usually involve a narrator telling a story, with the story portrayed on the stage, either without dialogue or with a very small amount, and staged in the form of tableaux and picture-scenes.

The outdoor drama, on the other hand, has been variously termed symphonic drama, epic drama, and historical drama. It involves a definite play, with a plot. There are characters who grow and develop; the clash of ideas; climax and dénouement; and the various accompanying elements of scenery, dialogue, and costuming. It is a play done out of doors, with the added elements of music and ~~an occasional~~ dance to augment the action. omit

Another distinction (which is most important here) is that outdoor dramas are usually set up to run for eight or ten weeks at six nights a week during a whole season, and to continue year after year for an indefinite period.

The first use in America of the dramatic form under discussion was THE LOST COLONY, by Paul Green, which opened in 1937 on Roanoke Island, on the coast of North Carolina. <sup>2/</sup> This play has been in continuous operation since that time, except for four years during the Second World War. The second permanent play was THE COMMON GLORY, also by Mr. Green, at Williamsburg, Virginia, which has been running since 1947. The third permanent play is

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<sup>2/</sup> California's RAMONA belongs in a somewhat different category.

UNTO THESE HILLS, by Kermit Hunter, playing each summer since 1950 at Cherokee, North Carolina, in the Great Smokies. The fourth is HORN IN THE WEST, also by Mr. Hunter, operating since 1952 at Boone, North Carolina, in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Only these four have achieved permanence.

Two other plays are scheduled to open in 1955: Mr. Green's THE WILDERNESS ROAD, at Berea, Kentucky; and John Caldwell's FLORIDA AFLAME, at Safety Harbor, Florida. Others, projected for 1956 and later, are listed below in the discussion of community demand for outdoor dramas.

There have been other efforts to establish outdoor dramas. Some of the plays have had only short runs; others longer. Mr. Green's THE HIGHLAND CALL was played at Fayetteville, North Carolina, in the 1940's. His FAITH OF OUR FATHERS ran in Washington's Rock Creek Park in 1951 and 1952. During the same years, Mr. Hunter's FOREVER THIS LAND played near Springfield, Illinois. The year 1952 saw the opening of Ernest Cooke's TIDE OF FREEDOM, at Bristol, Virginia, Hubert Hayes' THUNDERLAND, at Asheville, North Carolina, and Thomas Patterson's THE ARCOMA STORY, at Logan, West Virginia. The two last named were produced again in 1953, when Mr. Green's

THE 17th STAR, at Columbus, Ohio, was added to the list. None of these plays ran beyond 1953.

The reasons for the closings of these plays are many and varied. Some were not intended for permanence; others were so intended and fell short of the mark. Enough has been learned from this laboratory to give to any new project whose sponsors can obtain and will use the knowledge a much greater chance of success than would otherwise be possible.

Deviation from certain recognized principles and standards has been responsible for some failures, all of them damaging and a few of them disastrous. Some of the plays have lost money beyond any prospect of marginal returns, and have been closed for that reason. Others have been closed simply because they were barely breaking even, and the sponsors feared losses in future seasons if the plays were continued.

The plays that have been established under the guidance of one or more of the University of North Carolina's trio of pioneers in the field, Messrs. Green, Hunter, and Selden, have netted box office receipts sufficient to pay their way or to show a profit. More importantly, they have continued in operation. The principles and standards evolved by these men from their experience are available for others to

use and follow. What is lacking is the dissemination of knowledge.

When the whole inception and promulgation of a drama and its producing organization have been carefully supervised, the plays have been successful. When supervision has been haphazard or uninformed, the plays have failed. The principles evolved by the three University of North Carolina men have meant success in the outdoor drama. Their inability to take information and direction to certain localities has meant the difference between success and failure.

Economic Aspects of the Outdoor Drama. A few of the plays have shown sizeable profits from box-office receipts. Most of them barely break even.

From an economic standpoint an outdoor drama is certainly a success if it pays its way. Within limits, the play could operate at a deficit, and still be an economic success, overall, because of incidental financial benefits.

As a rule the dramas are not set up to realize large profits from box-office receipts, but to capitalize on the adjuncts which the play makes possible through the addition of a seasonal payroll and the larger volume of business resulting from it and from the increased flow of tourists. The people who come to see the play spend money throughout the area as well as in the immediate community.

The four continuing dramas, running ten weeks each summer (six nights a week, making 60 performances between late June and Labor Day), play each season to approximately <sup>325</sup>~~400~~,000 people. One of the dramas is in Virginia. It draws approximately <sup>75</sup>~~100~~,000 people each season. The other three are in North Carolina. They play to <sup>250</sup>~~300~~,000 people each season.

By actual count, one-third of the automobiles visiting the North Carolina dramas are from other states. If, as may reasonably be assumed, the occupants of these cars represent <sup>ABOUT 35%</sup>~~one-third~~ of the attendance, they account for 100,000 out-of-state persons visiting in North Carolina. It is also reasonable to assume that <sup>THESE OUT-OF-STATE VISITORS</sup>~~they~~ spend at least one night in North Carolina, and that their expenditures for a day in the drama area run from \$10 to \$25 per person, thereby accounting for not less than \$1 million and perhaps \$2 million per year. Certainly, they have added to the tourist flow in North Carolina, and have played a part in raising the tourist business to first place among the state's economic features. (The tourist business outdistanced textiles and agriculture, to rank first, in 1953-54.)  
<sup>ABOUT</sup>~~More than~~ \$200,000 of state funds have been invested by North Carolina in establishing the dramas, and the state continues each year to help advertise the plays as part of

its tourist appeal. The money initially invested by the state has long since been recovered from out-of-state visitors through gasoline and sales taxes. The amounts realized by the state government in gasoline and food taxes from <sup>IN-STATE</sup> ~~native~~ visitors to the dramas is additional.

The dramas also bring substantial economic benefits to the localities where they operate. At Cherokee, North Carolina, a small village of trading posts and trinket shops, the retail business in 1950 (the first season of UNTO THESE HILLS) was up approximately \$250,000. Bryson City, Sylva, and Waynesville, from 10 to 25 miles away, reported their tourist business increasing that year (and each year since) from 100 to 150 percent over previous years. The Nantahala Power and Light Company petitioned the state legislature for permission to construct \$100,000 worth of new equipment to service this operation at Cherokee, and the Southern Bell Telephone Company installed a dial telephone system in two counties to handle the increased volume of traffic.

At Manteo, North Carolina, home of THE LOST COLONY, the principal business of the town has come to be the play itself, which each summer brings in about 50,000 visitors. At Boone, North Carolina, HORN IN THE WEST has, according to the Chamber of Commerce, increased the summer retail

business in the town about one-third. At Petersburg, Illinois, two miles away from the site where FOREVER THIS LAND was produced in 1951 and 1952, the Chamber of Commerce estimated increased business of about \$60,000 each year during the two months of the show. Both Boone and Petersburg are towns of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 people. Cherokee and Manteo, North Carolina, are even smaller. Substantial increases in business activity resulting from the dramas have meant much to these communities.

The greatest source of income for the immediate locality of the play usually is the payroll of the production itself, amounting to \$50,000 to \$75,000, which is spent each summer in the town by the actors and employees of the drama. In the surrounding area increased tourist business has meant more construction of motels and rooming places, restaurants, filling stations, and other facilities such as craft shops, souvenir stands, and guided tours. Increases are seen immediately in all the other tourist attractions in the area, and new facilities of this nature have been built each year.

Cultural Aspects of the Outdoor Drama. (1) For the Participants. The benefits other than financial to be derived by the individuals and communities participating in the outdoor dramas can be divided into technical,

historical, and moral.

From the technical point of view, the four active dramas now in existence are giving summer employment, training, and stimulus to approximately 400 actors, technicians, and theatre people from colleges and universities all over the Southeast. The average salary is about \$40 a week. Living costs are comparatively low. The participants are assured of decent employment as they spend two months learning more of the techniques of their craft. These dramas are helping to bridge the gap between the campus and the professional stage. This gap has not been and cannot be filled by summer stock, community theatre, or other means, while the demand continues to be so much greater than the resources.

In many universities and colleges the teaching of the dramatic arts has had to be confined to a section or division of another department, due to the fact that a career in the theatre has continued to be a difficult and uncertain undertaking. More outdoor dramas would provide more opportunities for summer employment, and winter employment as well in places such as Florida, Texas, and California. The departments of drama in universities and colleges, and even high schools, might then be expected to grow. They would be effective, however, only insofar as the establishment of additional outdoor dramas

opened up additional opportunities for work. There is no other medium, with the possible exception of certain summer stock units, where a partially-trained actor or technician can leave college and move into a job in his chosen profession.

In this sense, therefore, the outdoor drama represents a new movement in the American theatre; but it can grow into a meaningful movement only when facilities are provided for training new people. As of today, a student cannot get first-hand information and training in the outdoor drama anywhere in the United States, except as part of the cast of one of the four continuing plays. By the same token, the technique of the outdoor drama cannot be taught anywhere in America today, since there are no provisions for teaching it at any college or university, including the University of North Carolina.

One of the benefits of the outdoor drama to the local community lies in the stimulus for the study of history. The four dramas now in existence provide film strips and slides for use in the public schools, and accompanying documents to be used in illustrated lectures to students on the historical elements in these plays. The history of the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina, the life of the southern Appalachian highlands during the Revolutionary Period, the story of Queen Elizabeth's fateful ef-

forts at colonizing the New World, and the efforts of Thomas Jefferson in establishing the American democracy: these are now portrayed not only on the stages of four theatres but also in film strips and slides for public schools; and they are presented in an interesting and dramatic way. (While they could be used anywhere, their use in practice has been largely local.) Essay contests are held in the schools by the play organizations themselves, designed first of all for publicity purposes but acting also as a stimulus to the study and interpretation of American history. The same applies to photography contests, debates, and other items in connection with the plays.

In Cherokee, North Carolina, Williamsburg, Virginia, and Petersburg, Illinois, the plays are (or have been) augmentations to the historic shrines that were already open to visitors. They have served to underline the importance of these localities, to make their history come alive, and to make more vivid the lesson which they have to give to modern America. Historical associations stimulate local groups to study history and to invite lecturers and writers to discuss these features. At Cherokee, an Indian village of the <sup>17<sup>th</sup></sup>~~16<sup>th</sup>~~ century has been created, with the authentic supervision of skilled anthropologists, so

that visitors can see aboriginal Indian customs recreated before their eyes. At the Cherokee Indian School there is a full-time teacher of dramatics furnished by the play association. At Williamsburg, the play association conducts an annual playwriting contest with prizes for scripts dealing with Virginia history. At Boone, plans are now under way for the construction of a Daniel Boone Memorial, for housing all types of material on Boone himself and the southern Appalachian highlands. At Manteo, in connection with THE LOST COLONY, there has been constructed an Elizabethan garden for visitors to see and enjoy.

In addition to the foregoing, the whole community which surrounds and participates in an outdoor drama is permeated by the moral tone of and audience reaction to the play, as hereinafter described. The pride of participation in a soul-lifting enterprise is never lost.

Cultural Aspects of the Outdoor Drama. (2) For the Audiences. In the four permanent outdoor dramas there has been a sincere effort on the part of playwrights, directors, actors, and technicians, along with local organizations, to make these plays morally sound and wholesome. Their themes deal variously with American ideals: love of the land, the brotherhood of man, the establishment of democratic principles, the civilizing of the frontier. They pictorial-

ize those elements in the American past which have been most effective in shaping this nation: the religion, the devotion, the honesty, the integrity, the inspiration of pioneer figures in the American past.

John Gassner, noted critic and author, stated that UNTO THESE HILLS was "an ideal realization of a long cherished dream of national American drama\* \* \* an epic of a people \* \* \* a drama of human relations that admirably expresses the unity of the human race." Of FOREVER THIS LAND Brooks Atkinson said, "it is a valuable piece of Americana." Of HORN IN THE WEST, the Charlotte Observer stated editorially that it "should leave a feeling of exultation with everyone who believes this country has a mission in the world."

A pronounced feeling of exultation and exhilaration has been typical of audience reaction to the outdoor dramas over the past 15 years. Kermit Hunter has a collection of letters he has received from people who have seen UNTO THESE HILLS and HORN IN THE WEST. Every writer attests to this sense of exhilaration in one form or another. One woman wrote that she was quite aged; that she had seen the best theatre in America, Europe, and Asia; and that she felt she had a basis for comparison in saying she was thrilled by UNTO THESE HILLS. Among more

simple folk in North Carolina, the author of these lines has seen the eyes grow misty and take on a far-away look as the same production was brought to mind. The reactions are the same to HORN IN THE WEST, THE LOST COLONY, and THE COMMON GLORY. Exultation and exhilaration are the general reaction, irrespective of age or degree of education.

Why is this true? There are two main reasons. One is the outdoor feature itself. The other is the wholesome idealism of the plays. Mr. Selden has aptly stated both of these reasons in the Bulletin. Speaking of the outdoor feature, he says (p. 10):

Why are the outdoor plays so popular today? There are many reasons. One of them is the fundamental urge each of us have to escape the confines of our cramped way of living in a modern world. We work in little rooms; we sleep in little rooms; we eat in little rooms; we play, dance, and even watch the movies and television with our elbows pinned to our sides. But, however civilized we have become, we never feel that this crowding is comfortable and right. Both our bodies and our spirits long for freedom. So, every once in a while we rebel. Then we get into our cars and drive into the country, to the seashore or the mountains. We step into a wall-less amphitheatre; above us is the sky, around us are trees or mountain tops. Slowly, as the night settles around us and the music begins to speak, we are ready to see courageous men and women walk before us. The lights go up and the play begins. There is no comparable experience to be found anywhere.

Anyone who has seen one of the outdoor dramas, or who has attended a concert at Denver's Red Rock, or an opera in St. Louis' Forest Park, knows what Mr. Selden means. Anyone who has not had such an experience has something to live for.

Mr. Selden's statement in the Bulletin continues (p. 10):

A second, even more powerful reason for the appeal of the outdoor play lies in the insatiable interest each of us has in the history of our country. We are proud of our political and social ancestry, and now that we are being separated further and further from the traditions of the Old World, we want to be reminded of those people whose thoughts and actions built the United States. In a period when too many people find themselves in cynicism and discouragement, especially when our lives seem to be hemmed in on every side, we need to be assured of the brave spirit which gave our nation its early strength. There is no place where that spirit lives more vividly and persuasively than in a kind of theatre where spectators may participate by imagination in the joyous actions of strong men and women.

Granting the outdoor drama an audience reaction of exhilaration, has this reaction a meaning deeper than fleeting emotion?

One answer lies in the fact that just this reaction, as the writer of these lines has experienced it and as he has seen it in others, has inspired this proposal.

The dissemination of American historical themes to American citizens of today is inherent in the production of an outdoor drama. Further study and research in historical materials by the participating community follows the production. The community reaction is only a more sustained manifestation of the general audience reaction.

These dramas do reach a deeper importance. They stimulate the study of forces, the ideals, and the interplay of ideas and movements that have shaped American history. They cause people to think about where their nation came from, and how it got where it is. These reflections must inevitably guide them in their determination of where their nation is going.

There is no better way to tell the story of America. And there is no story better calculated to stimulate and inspire good citizenship than the story of the basic tenets of the American heritage.

Community Demand for the Outdoor Drama. Several outdoor dramas are in the planning stage, the more immediate being THE WILDERNESS ROAD, by Paul Green, at Berea, Kentucky, for the summer of 1955, and FLORIDA AFLAME, by John Caldwell, at Safety Harbor, Florida, for the winter of 1955.

At Bethania, North Carolina, the congregation of the Moravian Church plans a drama for 1957 in celebration of 500 years of their Church, the play to be written by Kermit Hunter. Plans are under way at Tampa, Florida, for another drama, also to be written by Mr. Hunter, for the winter of 1956.

In addition to these plays definitely under way there have been dozens of requests from various parts of the United States for further information and help in planning outdoor dramas. Paul Green has visited Plymouth, Massachusetts, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and Santa Barbara, California (where a play by Mr. Green was staged for a brief run in 1953). During the past 12 months Kermit Hunter has visited a score of places, including San Antonio and Dallas, Texas, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Winter Park, Silver Springs, and Miami, Florida, Beckley, West Virginia, Columbia, South Carolina, Bath, North Carolina, Salem and Roanoke, Virginia, Chattanooga and Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and others. Along with Mr. Green and Mr. Selden, Mr. Hunter has answered letters and requests for information, delivered addresses, and written articles for various publications, all designed to give advice and information on the staging of outdoor dramas.

It is clear that there is a broad movement in the United States toward the producing of outdoor dramas. The difficulty is that the movement is embryonic and frustrated, due to the fact that not enough information of the kind needed can be made available where and when it is needed.

The potential for the further spread of interest in the movement throughout the United States may be measured by the steady increase of automobile travel. From an economic standpoint, one factor which looms large in the prospect of success of a projected undertaking in this field is the volume of motor travel by tourists and vacationers in or near the area of the outdoor theatre. It is not indispensable, as witness THE LOST COLONY on Roanoke Island, which is off the beaten path. UNTO THESE HILLS and HORN IN THE WEST, on the other hand, draw much of their support from the heavy summer traffic in the mountains of North Carolina. THE COMMON GLORY, at Williamsburg, also has a large volume of tourist and vacation travel to draw upon.

Once this factor is fully understood, and as community interest in the outdoor drama expands, areas throughout the United States may be expected to take

notice, including the resorts of mountains, lakes, and seashore, and the national forests and national parks. What, for instance, do people do with their evenings in such tourist meccas as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Glacier National Parks?

The Need for Encouragement and Direction. The outdoor drama movement was begun as part of the program of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina in the early thirties, under the auspices of the late Frederick Koch. It has been continued by Samuel Selden as director of the department since 1941. The first of the plays, THE LOST COLONY, was staged by Mr. Koch and directed by Mr. Selden.

Since that time all of the successful outdoor dramas have been a direct outgrowth of the University of North Carolina. The two plays by Mr. Green now in operation were written and produced by Chapel Hill people. Both of Mr. Hunter's continuing plays were written in Chapel Hill and staged by Mr. Selden. Mr. Green's FAITH OF OUR FATHERS was a Chapel Hill product, and his forthcoming THE WILDERNESS ROAD will be directed by Mr. Selden. Mr. Hunter's FOREVER THIS LAND was staged and directed by Mr. Selden. The students and staff of the Carolina Playmakers have been the unifying force for the acting and

technical staffs of all of these dramas. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that the outdoor drama movement, as it now exists, is a product of the University of North Carolina. Requests for new plays and for information are directed almost entirely to Mr. Selden, Mr. Green, and Mr. Hunter.

All three of these men are actively engaged in other matters. The outdoor dramas are in the nature of extra-curricular activities for them. Mr. Selden gives of his time in coordinating and staging the dramas in the form of extension services for the University, and the work develops into a year-round proposition. Mr. Green is a successful author in fields other than the outdoor drama, and Mr. Hunter is now teaching and working on his <sup>thesis</sup> this for a Ph. D. degree. Consequently, no one of them can devote the time needed to coordinate the movement, to give information and advice, or to visit various localities for extended periods and assist in promoting and establishing these dramas. From time to time sincere and promising efforts on the part of local organizations are forced to go for naught, because of the fact that no specific on-the-spot help and direction can be assured to them.

A case in point can be cited. Mr. Hunter was asked

if he could visit Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and help in promoting an outdoor drama. He assured the persons interested that he would be glad to do so, and a date was set some four months later. Meanwhile, the local people (of whom there were only a very few at the beginning) tried to stimulate the idea in the city among various business men, civic leaders, clubwomen, and historical societies. When Mr. Hunter visited Hattiesburg, he spent three days at meetings of various sorts, explaining and outlining the various factors involved. Not once, however, was it made possible for him to meet the business men, or to show the advantages of the idea to a group that would be financially responsible for promoting the idea. At the end of three days several hundred people had been sold on the idea; but not more than two or three of them were responsible business men.

While he was in Hattiesburg, Mr. Hunter studied traffic and tourist flow, weather conditions, and possible drawing area, and found an ideal location for a theatre. He showed theatre plans, construction costs, and organizational charts. He outlined a course of action, set up a sample budget, and assisted in setting up a local non-profit historical organization to promote

the drama. A year later the plan was hardly any farther along than before.

A similar situation has existed in South Carolina for the past four years. The same story is typical of at least a dozen other areas where there is a need, an opportunity, and a good potential in the outdoor drama, but where little or nothing has developed, not because the civic interest is lacking, but because the local citizens interested in the idea do not know enough to sell the idea to others, or do not have the funds to bring in a qualified consultant for an extended period or a series of visits.

In the course of this delay there has been lost, discounting economic factors, a chance to dramatize some of the most thrilling ideas in American history. As it is, they continue to lie dormant in history books. Untold up to this moment are, for example, the story of cotton in the delta country of Mississippi, the legend of Francis Marion in the Revolutionary Period, the establishment of the state of Oklahoma from the scattered Indian nations of a century ago, the clash of events and ideas which led to the formation of the state of West Virginia in the Civil War period, the story of Stonewall Jackson and the Valley of Virginia, and the

whole sequence of events dealing with the Alamo and the Texas struggle for independence: these and a great many more in areas reaching from one end of the continent to the other.

The Extension Bulletin of the University of North Carolina (Exhibit 2), while factual, is far from adequate to the need to furnish the required advice and help. Beyond a point, this need cannot be met from a distance. Since localities differ in their resources and their capabilities, it would be impossible for one of them to produce an outdoor drama merely from the information and advice in this Bulletin. They must have on-the-spot help over a long period, entailing numerous visits, to assure them of stable and factual information and direction. The interested localities need to have all the facts laid before them; they need to have a choice of playwrights and themes; and they need especially to be able to utilize their own talent, their own actors and directors and musicians. The outdoor drama movement should not be confined to the University of North Carolina. As matters stand, however, the failure of dramas in many regions can be attributed to the lack of information which only the University of North Carolina can give out of years of

experience in this field. The outdoor drama movement will continue to be frustrated until this information and help can be spread abroad and a new field of activity opened up for the American theatre.

Implicit in the foregoing is the suggestion that, as the outdoor drama movement was begun at the University of North Carolina and as it is now carried along by the efforts of a few men, the real future of this art form lies in the extent to which it can be taken to other parts of the United States by those who are already familiar with its operation.

The proposal for a grant of Foundation funds sets forth a plan whereby the movement can be given widespread national impetus over a five-year period. The proposal is based on the belief that within the five years the outdoor drama as an art form could be expanded and established, many outdoor dramas undertaken or planned, and most importantly, that many other craftsmen could be trained in this field or stimulated to seek training at schools equipped to furnish it. The outdoor drama deserves wider coverage; and especially it deserves to be stimulated to such an extent that of its own volition it will generate greater backing and recognition both in towns and on campuses. Drama departments need the benefits of lectures and seminars

in outdoor drama, to point out its differences from the indoor type, its opportunities and peculiarities; and a program for training writers, actors, technicians, business managers, and other outdoor drama personnel.

In summary, the movement as a whole needs to be coordinated: facts regarding outdoor drama need to be catalogued and disseminated; localities planning such dramas need the stimulus and help of people who can guide them to the solution of their problems; playwrights and technicians need conferences and classes in the techniques of outdoor drama. The movement needs to be lifted out of the realm of chance and put on a sound basis. The five-year program proposed would, it is believed, be sufficient to determine the efficacy of the outdoor drama itself, and to put various agencies in a position to continue the program in the future.

Kermit Hunter. In the staging of four outdoor dramas, Mr. Hunter has at one time or another personally supervised every element involved in the production. From this standpoint his experience has been <sup>more intensive</sup> ~~broader~~ than that of either Mr. Green or Mr. Selden. Mr. Green has not <sup>so extensive,</sup> had the time or the inclination to delve into the complexities of organization and management. Mr. Selden has <sup>been</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>forced,</sup> to confine his help to dramatic technique and playwriting. Besides the writing of plays and the composition of music for them, Mr. Hunter has analyzed and supervised budget

costs, business operations, theatre construction, traffic management, souvenir programs and concessions, bookkeeping and payroll activities, historical association organization, directing, lighting, costuming, and orchestration.

Kermit Hunter was born in Welch, West Virginia, in 1910. After public school he went to Emory and Henry College and to Ohio State University, where he received an A. B. degree in 1931. During the next ten years his major interest was music. He spent three years at Juilliard studying concert piano, and continued training for a career in music until called into military service in 1941. While living in Welch during seven of the ten years he worked as a news reporter and free lance writer and served as secretary for the local chamber of commerce and an association of taxpayers. The knowledge he gained of business and business men through this work is a valuable attribute for the undertaking herein proposed. The extent of his knowledge is unusual in one of Mr. Hunter's central interest and major talents.

Mr. Hunter's unit of the National Guard was called into active service in the United States Army in January 1941. He spent five years in uniform, attained the rank of lieutenant colonel of infantry (at age 33), was awarded the Legion of Merit, and released in 1946 to the active

reserve. During part of his service career, he was assigned to special duty, and traveled throughout Europe and Central America.

Five years in military service constituted an interruption which thwarted his career in music. Mr. Hunter went to Chapel Hill for further training in writing. He served as business manager of the North Carolina Symphony Society in 1946, and in 1947 enrolled at the University to begin working toward the degrees of M. A., and Ph. D. He received a master's degree in dramatic art in 1949, and is currently completing his thesis (having already passed the oral examinations) for the Ph. D. degree.

Mr. Hunter's abilities have received recognition. In 1931, he was awarded the Vandewater Poetry Prize at Ohio State University. He was chosen as winner in 1933 of the West Virginia Young Artists' contest in piano. In 1953, he was given the Charles Cannon Cup for HORN IN THE WEST; and UNTO THESE HILLS is currently entered in North Carolina's Sir Walter Raleigh Cup competition. The latter play was written by Mr. Hunter as his thesis for his master's degree. It was also under contract for production as an outdoor drama before it was written in 1949. During the same year Mr. Hunter was given the Joseph Feldman Award in playwriting by the University of North Carolina.

Mr. Hunter composed and arranged the music for his drama FOREVER THIS LAND, in addition to writing the script. In the fall of 1954 he completed a novel, SPINNER IN THE SUN, a study of modern Egypt. Also in the fall of 1954 the Carolina Playmakers produced a play written by Mr. Hunter, based on the Communist threat in occupied Poland and entitled DARKENING SHORE. The spring of 1954 saw the production of his play, THE BELL AND THE PLOW, by the Tucson Festival Society and the University of Arizona as part of the annual Tohono Festival. THE BELL AND THE PLOW is a story of the early settlement of the Southwest, centering around the life of a pioneer priest, Father Kino.

Outdoor dramas to be written by Mr. Hunter include a sequel to UNTO THESE HILLS to be produced in 1956 at Tahlequah, Oklahoma; a drama based on Florida history for the winter of 1956; and a play based on the history of the Moravian Church, to be produced in 1957 at Bethania, North Carolina.

Mr. Hunter's own appraisal of the outdoor drama is set forth in his article in the New York Times (Exhibit 1). His interpretation of this dramatic form is woven throughout the dramas he has written. Each of them is honest, clean, vivid, and exciting.

Both Mr. Green and Mr. Selden attest that no one is so well qualified to undertake the coordination and direction of the outdoor drama movement as Mr. Hunter. He is the apostle of this form of dramatic art, and qualifies as writer, composer, producer, organizer, business manager, technician, and salesman.

Mr. Hunter is willing to undertake the assignment. Currently, he is teaching at the University of North Carolina, and devoting as much time to writing as his other duties will permit. If the assignment herein outlined can be tendered to him, he would expect to give up his classes, and to devote to the new work all of the time required to organize and direct it. He would expect, of course, to continue using some of his time for his own writing.

Conclusion. The project itself, as well as the nomination of Mr. Hunter to direct it, has the approval of Mr. Selden and Mr. Green. They are in agreement as to the need for coordination and direction of the outdoor drama movement and as to the feasibility of the plan herein proposed to attain those objectives. It should be clear from what has been said above that none of the three University of North Carolina men has a self-interest in the expansion of outlets for their own work product. The demands upon them already are more than they can meet.

There are far too many outdoor dramas in prospect for the scripts to be written by one or two men or for the plays to be produced by two or three men and one organization of playmakers. Each of these men would be glad to be relieved of some of the pressures upon them in connection with the outdoor drama, although each is willing to work unstintingly to channel the existing interest into a coordinated and expanding national movement.

The author of this proposal has, of course, sought information and advice from the trio of North Carolina dramatists and from the ranking administrative officials of the University in the shaping of the project and for the content of this memorandum in support of the proposal. His only claim to originality lies in the recognition of the connection between the outdoor historical play and the education of people in fundamental democratic processes. Tracing the source of that recognition would require the recitation of a personal story which is not germane. Suffice it to say that I am a lawyer who for more than ten years has occupied a judicial position which has taken me into every state in the union; that I have been interested in politics and government all my life; and that this interest has given me insight enough to have the courage of conviction in resting this proposal on a base which

emphasizes civic education more than dramatic art.

It is in this faith that the proposal has been submitted to men well-known in public life who have had occasion to see and know the effect of the outdoor drama. Each of them was asked, specifically, whether or not he believed it to be a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor drama to say that it has lasting and beneficial effects in terms of civic education and responsibility. Their replies, which are attached to my covering letter, speak for themselves.

C O P Y

Adlai E. Stevenson  
231 So. LaSalle Street  
Chicago

June 16, 1955

Dear Mr. Evans:

FOREVER THIS LAND was an inspiration to all who saw it. There can be no question, it seems to me, of the lasting and beneficial effects which such dramatic portrayals have on both their audience and the participating community. Generations reaching back to antiquity have used outdoor historical drama as a means of popular education, and I am delighted to see its revival in our midst today.

I know of Kermit Hunter's part in that revival and had the pleasure of meeting him while FOREVER THIS LAND was in production. The success of the Lincoln play owed much to his practical judgment and intellectual integrity.

An art form which is so potent in promoting civic consciousness deserves further encouragement. I am happy to commend the proposal for an Institute of Historical Drama at the University of North Carolina.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Adlai E. Stevenson.

Honorable W. Wey Evans  
Commissioner  
United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

C O P Y

COMMISSIONERS  
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PAUL H. McMURRAY  
C. MURRAY BERNHARDT  
DONALD E. LANE

United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

June 6, 1955

Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson  
11 South La Salle Street  
Chicago, Illinois

My dear Governor:

You will recall FOREVER THIS LAND, an outdoor drama based on the life of Lincoln, which played near Petersburg, Illinois, in 1951 and 1952, written by Kermit Hunter, of the University of North Carolina, who is also the author of two other outdoor dramas playing each summer in the mountains of North Carolina.

No doubt you are also aware of the plans for the opening this summer at Berea, Kentucky, of an outdoor drama written by Paul Green, another University of North Carolina man. Mr. Green's THE LOST COLONY has been playing at Rantoco, North Carolina, for several years; and he is the author of THE COMMON GLORY at Williamsburg, Virginia, and of FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, which played at the Carter Barron theatre here in Washington two seasons.

Mr. Green, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Samuel Selden, Chairman of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina, are the pioneers in this field of dramatic art. Because of their experience, the University at Chapel Hill is the fountainhead of knowledge in this particular dramatic field.

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal prepared by the University of North Carolina for a grant of foundation funds with which to initiate and conduct an Institute of Historical Drama, for the purpose of encouraging the spread of these dramas throughout the United States. The Institute would be directed by Kermit Hunter.

While I know very little about the dramatic arts, I have been and am impressed by the audience reaction (my own included) to these outdoor historical plays. People react to them as to a moving and powerful sermon. It is because of my conviction in this regard, as expressed to officials

Governor Stevenson - Page 2.

of the University, that this letter is written by me, although I have no connection with the University. The letter is written, incidentally, at the specific suggestion of the Chancellor of the University, Dr. Robert B. House.

The purpose is to elicit your opinion as to whether the outdoor historical dramas have value in terms of civic education.

The memorandum in support of the Institute project rests its case primarily on the value of these plays as media for civic education, rather than upon the promotion of the dramatic arts, worthy as such a purpose might be. Whether or not the plays have the educational value ascribed to them is, in the last analysis, a matter of opinion. The reasons given in the memorandum for believing that the plays promote good citizenship are summarized for your convenience on a separate sheet attached to this letter.

Your opinion on this phase of the proposal (even if based on the single play FOREVER THIS LAND) will carry great weight because of the unsurpassed insight that is yours by reason of your exceptional career in public life. The question, specifically, is this: whether or not you consider it a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor historical play (or plays) that you have seen to say that there are lasting and beneficial effects upon the audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Your attention to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Ney Evans

C O P Y

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Governor's Office

Raleigh

June 20, 1955

Luther H. Hodges  
Governor

The Honorable W. Ney Evans, Commissioner  
United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ney:

My evaluation of the proposal for an Institute of Historical Drama must be based primarily on the civic education phase, as yours has been, since I would not profess to speak for the dramatic arts.

I do believe that the plays here in North Carolina stimulate people and promote civic responsibility, and that, by their very nature, they should do the same elsewhere.

The drawing value of the plays in summer tourist traffic has been impressive. The State will continue to feature them as an attraction in what is now a leading industry, the tourist trade. Fortunately, the nature of their attraction is not competitive; it seems to build on itself.

From the standpoint of both the State and the University, I would be delighted to see the knowledge and experience gained here made available to all who are interested.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Luther H. Hodges

LHH/myb

C O P Y

May 16, 1955

Honorable Luther Hodges  
Governor of North Carolina  
Raleigh, North Carolina

My dear Governor:

You are familiar, of course, with the three outdoor dramas which are featured tourist attractions in North Carolina every summer: Paul Green's *THE LOST COLONY*, at Manteo, and the two plays in the west by Kermit Hunter, *UPON THESE HILLS*, at Cherokee, and *HORN IN THE WEST*, at Boone. It is probable that you have also seen *THE CANNON GLOSS* (another of Paul Green's plays), at Williamsburg, Virginia.

These four plays are the only outdoor historical plays that have achieved permanence, although efforts along the same line have been made with other plays in other localities. Experience has demonstrated that the successful production of such plays requires a degree of know-how not generally possessed outside the University of North Carolina, although there is a substantial community demand for the plays, and a widening interest among colleges and universities.

The University of North Carolina has prepared a proposal, copy of which is enclosed, for a grant of foundation funds with which to initiate and conduct (for a limited period; with no obligation for continuation) an Institute of Historical Drama. The purpose would be to encourage the spread of the outdoor dramas throughout the United States.

Although I know very little about the dramatic arts, I have been and am impressed by the audience reaction (my own included) to these outdoor historical plays. People react to them as to a powerful and moving sermon. It is because of my conviction in this regard, as expressed to officials of the University, that this letter is written by me, although I have no connection with the University. The letter is written, incidentally, at the suggestion of the Chancellor (Mr. House).

Governor Hodges - Page 2.

The purpose is to elicit your opinion as to whether the historical dramas have value in terms of civic education.

The memorandum in support of the Institute project rests its case primarily on the value of these plays as media for civic education, rather than upon the promotion of the dramatic arts, worthy as such a purpose might be. Whether or not the plays have the educational value ascribed to them is, in the last analysis, a matter of opinion. The reasons given in the memorandum for believing that the plays promote good citizenship are summarized for your convenience on a separate sheet attached to this letter.

Your opinion on this phase of the proposal will carry great weight, not only because of your position as Governor, but because of the insight that is yours from a distinguished career in private as well as public life.

The question, specifically, is this: Whether or not you consider it a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor dramas to say that they have lasting and beneficial effects upon their audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Your attention to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Ney Evans

C O P Y

UNITED STATES SENATE  
Committee on  
Agriculture and Forestry

May 20, 1955

Honorable W. Ney Evans  
Commissioner  
United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ney:

There is no doubt in my mind about your appraisal of the three outdoor plays in North Carolina. They do, as you suggest, affect people much as does a moving and powerful sermon. By reason of their historical themes, they are directed at matters of civic interest in the development of the economy and the politics of the region. People are uplifted by them, and I feel sure that the effect is the exercise of a soberer, sounder, and more objective judgment in the recording of current political decisions by the people who have seen them.

Kermit Hunter certainly has talent for the sort of thing the proposal outlines. I would like very much to see him given such an assignment.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ W. Kerr Scott

W. Kerr Scott  
Senator

WKS:mwp

C O P Y

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PAUL H. McMURRAY  
C. MURRAY BERNHARDT  
DONALD E. LANE

United States Court of Claims

Washington, D. C.

May 16, 1955

Honorable W. Kerr Scott  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal prepared by the University of North Carolina for a grant of foundation funds with which to initiate and conduct an Institute of Historical Drama at the University. The Institute would be under the direction of Kermit Hunter.

You will recall that the two outdoor plays written by Kermit Hunter (UNTO THESE HILLS, at Cherokee, and HEAR IN THE WEST, at Boone) began their runs in the mountains of North Carolina while you were Governor of the State; and that during your term Paul Green's THE LOST COLONY ran each summer at Nanteo, having resumed production after the war.

Paul Green, Kermit Hunter, and Samuel Selden (Chairman of the University's Department of Dramatic Art) are the pioneers in the field of outdoor historical plays. The reason there are three of these continuing plays in North Carolina, one in Virginia (also written by Mr. Green), and none elsewhere, is because of the superior know-how of these University of North Carolina men. Many other localities throughout the United States would like to produce such plays, but lack the technical guidance to do so.

Although I know very little about the dramatic arts, I have been and am impressed by the audience reaction (my own included) to these outdoor historical plays. People react to them as to a powerful and moving sermon. It is because of my conviction in this regard, as expressed to officials of the University, that this letter is written by me, although I have no connection with the University. The letter is written, incidentally, at the specific suggestion of the Chancellor (Mr. House).

The purpose is to elicit your opinion as to whether the three historical dramas playing in North Carolina have value in terms of civic education.

Senator Scott - Page 2.

The memorandum in support of the Institute project rests its case primarily on the value of these plays as media for civic education, rather than upon the promotion of the dramatic arts, worthy as such a purpose might be. Whether or not the plays have the educational value ascribed to them is, in the last analysis, a matter of opinion. The reasons given in the memorandum for believing that the plays promote good citizenship are summarized for your convenience on a separate sheet attached to this letter.

Your opinion on this phase of the proposal will carry great weight, because of the insight that is yours from a long and distinguished career in public life, and particularly because of your special interest in these plays as a facet of the State's economy and cultural development during your term as Governor. Specifically, the question is this: Whether or not you consider it a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor dramas to say that they have lasting and beneficial effects upon their audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Your attention to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Ney Evans

C O P Y

UNITED STATES SENATE

Committee on  
Government Operations

June 8, 1955

Honorable W. Ney Evans  
Commissioner, United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ney:

I am very happy to comply with your request in regard to the outdoor dramas. I am familiar with the North Carolina plays and have, of course, talked with many others who are familiar with them. To answer your specific question: I do consider it a fair and accurate appraisal to say that they have lasting and beneficial effects upon their audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Surely the movies, the radio, and now television, have demonstrated the effectiveness of dramatization as a means of driving home any kind of message, from a commercial advertisement to a political appeal. Considering the inspirational qualities of the historical plays, I should think their value in the promotion of better citizenship as a part of audience reaction would be accepted without question.

The proposal appears to me to have great merit. I hope it receives favorable consideration from the Foundation.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Sam J. Ervin, Jr.

Sam J. Ervin, Jr.

SJE:bc

C O P Y

COMMISSIONERS  
RICHARD H. AKERS  
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PAUL H. MC MURRAY  
C. MURRAY BERNHARDT  
DONALD E. LANE

United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

May 16, 1955

Honorable Sam Ervin, Jr.  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal prepared by the University of North Carolina for a grant of foundation funds with which to initiate and conduct an Institute of Historical Drama at the University.

You are familiar, of course, with the three outdoor plays that run each summer in North Carolina: Paul Green's LOST COLONY, at Manteo, and the two plays by Kermit Hunter, HORN IN THE WEST, at Doone, and UNTO THESE HILLS, at Cherokee. It may be news to you as it was to me, that North Carolina, through the University at Chapel Hill, has been the pioneer in this field; and that our State and its University continue to be the fountainhead of knowledge and experience in this particular dramatic field.

Although I know very little about the dramatic arts, I have been and am impressed by the audience reaction (my own included) to these outdoor historical plays. People react to them as to a moving and powerful sermon. It is because of my conviction in this regard, as expressed to officials of the University, that this letter is written by me, although I have no connection with the University. The letter is written, incidentally, at the specific suggestion of the Chancellor (Mr. House).

The purpose is to elicit your opinion as to whether the three historical dramas playing in North Carolina have value in terms of civic education.

The memorandum in support of the Institute project rests its case primarily on the value of these plays as media for civic education, rather than upon the promotion of the dramatic arts, worthy as such a purpose might be. Whether or not the plays have the educational value ascribed to them is, in the last analysis, a matter of opinion. The reasons given in the memorandum for believing that the plays promote good citizenship are summarized for your convenience on a separate sheet attached to this letter.

Senator Ervin - Page 2.

Your opinion on this phase of the proposal will carry great weight because of the insight that is yours from a distinguished career in public life, as a jurist on the trial bench and the Supreme Court of North Carolina and as United States Senator.

The question, specifically, is this: Whether or not you consider it a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor dramas to say that they have lasting and beneficial effects upon their audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Your attention to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Ney Evans

Alben W. Barkley  
Kentucky

COPY

UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D. C.

July 5, 1955

Honorable W. Noy Evans  
Commissioner, United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Evans:

I do indeed recall FOREVER THIS LAND, which I saw with the Honorable Adlai Stevenson, while he was Governor of Illinois. The appraisal you have suggested appears correct to me. Every reminder of the idealism which lies at the roots of our way of life, and of the struggles to overcome hardships and handicaps in the course of its development, has some beneficial effect; and the greater its emphasis, as in an appealing dramatization, the more lasting is the effect. I feel sure that more plays of the type of FOREVER THIS LAND would serve a very useful purpose in promoting good citizenship.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Alben W. Barkley

COMMISSIONERS  
RICHARD H. AKERS  
W. NEY EVANS  
WILSON COWEN  
GEORGE H. FOSTER  
CURRELL VANCE  
MARION T. BENNETT  
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PAUL H. McMURRAY  
C. MURRAY BERNHARDT  
DONALD E. LANE

United States Court of Claims  
Washington, D. C.

COPY

May 16, 1955

Honorable Alben W. Barkley  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

You will recall having seen FOREVER THIS LAND, an outdoor drama based on the life of Lincoln, which played near Petersburg, Illinois, in 1951 and 1952. This play was written by Kermit Hunter, of the University of North Carolina, who is also the author of two other outdoor dramas playing each summer in the mountains of North Carolina.

No doubt you are also aware of the plans for the opening this summer at Berea, Kentucky, of an outdoor drama written by Paul Green, another University of North Carolina man. Mr. Green's THE LOST COLONY has been playing at Manteo, North Carolina, for several years; and he is the author of THE COMMON SENSE at Williamsburg, Virginia, and of FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, which played at the Carter Barron theatre here in Washington two seasons.

Mr. Green, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Samuel Selden, Chairman of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina, are the pioneers in this field of dramatic art. Because of their experience, the University at Chapel Hill is the fountainhead of knowledge in this particular dramatic field.

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal prepared by the University of North Carolina for a grant of foundation funds with which to initiate and conduct an Institute of Historical Drama, for the purpose of encouraging the spread of these dramas throughout the United States.

While I know very little about the dramatic arts, I have been and am impressed by the audience reaction (my own included) to these outdoor historical plays. People react to them as to a moving and powerful sermon. It is because of my conviction in this regard, as expressed to officials

Senator Barkley - Page 2.

of the University, that this letter is written by me, although I have no connection with the University. The letter is written, incidentally, at the specific suggestion of the Chancellor of the University, Dr. Robert B. House.

The purpose is to elicit your opinion as to whether the outdoor historical dramas have value in terms of civic education.

The memorandum in support of the Institute project rests its case primarily on the value of these plays as media for civic education, rather than upon the promotion of the dramatic arts, worthy as such a purpose might be. Whether or not the plays have the educational value ascribed to them is, in the last analysis, a matter of opinion. The reasons given in the memorandum for believing that the plays promote good citizenship are summarized for your convenience on a separate sheet attached to this letter.

Your opinion on this phase of the proposal (even if based on the single play FOREVER THIS LAND) will carry great weight because of the unsurpassed insight that is yours by reason of your exceptional career in public life. The question, specifically, is this: whether or not you consider it a fair and accurate appraisal of the outdoor historical play (or plays) that you have seen to say that there are lasting and beneficial effects upon the audiences in terms of civic education and responsibility.

Your attention to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Noy Evans