

## Prince, Lillian Hughes <sup>[1]</sup>

### Prince, Lillian Hughes

by Walter Spearman, 1994

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Photograph of Lillian Hughes Prince putting on her makeup as Queen Elizabeth in the "The Lost Colony," 1952. Item 1952.62.55 from the collection of the North Carolina Museum of History. Used by permission.

Lillian Hughes Prince, actress, was born in Birmingham, Ala., the daughter of George Washington and Mary Lillian McTyeire Hughes, and attended the local schools. On 24 Nov. 1915 she married William Meade Prince, a New York illustrator. She began her acting career while the Princes were living at Swan Pond, their estate at Westport, Conn., in a pre-[Revolutionary](#) <sup>[2]</sup> farmhouse that they had restored. In one of her first roles with the Westport Players she played a bridesmaid in a play starring Dorothy Gish. She studied acting with Harry Irvine at the Academy of Allied Arts in New York City and played a nine-week season at Irvine's Theater-in-the-Woods at Boothbay, Maine.

When the Princes moved to Chapel Hill in the 1930s, Lillian Prince became active in the Carolina Playmakers, appearing in thirty or more of their productions, including [Paul Green's](#) <sup>[3]</sup> *The House of Connely*, *The Little Foxes*, *Ah, Wilderness*, *Our Town*, and *The Madwoman of Chaillot* and such musicals as *Showboat*, *Oklahoma*, and *Spring for Sure*. She also worked with the organization for British War Relief.

After appearing in Chapel Hill in Howard Richardson's *Dark of the Moon*, Mrs. Prince joined the cast of the Shubert national touring company of the play in the demanding role of the "cunjer woman," which she played throughout the Northeast and the Midwest. In Chapel Hill she also sang roles in such Gilbert and Sullivan operettas as *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Pinafore*, and she performed with the Raleigh Little Theater in *Blithe Spirit*.

During the 1940s and 1950s Mrs. Prince played the role of Queen Elizabeth in Paul Green's outdoor drama, *The Lost Colony* <sup>[4]</sup>, presented each year on Roanoke Island. The Princes had a house on the island and spent their summers near the theater with their beloved poodle, Zaza.

Mrs. Prince died in New York, survived by a sister, Mrs. Walter Barrett of New York City. She was buried in the Chapel Hill Cemetery. In her will she bequeathed considerable funds to the [Carolina Playmakers](#) <sup>[5]</sup>, which had contributed extensively to her acting career.

#### References:

*Chapel Hill Weekly*, 1 Mar., 5 Apr. 1962.

*Durham Morning Herald*, 11 Nov. 1951.

*Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 Feb. 1949.

Walter Spearman, *The Carolina Playmakers: The First Fifty Years* (1970).

#### Additional Resources:

William Meade Prince and Lillian Hughes Prince Papers (#3660) 1890s-1962, Documenting the American South, UNC Libraries: [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/p/Prince,William\\_Meade\\_and\\_Lillian\\_Hughes.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/p/Prince,William_Meade_and_Lillian_Hughes.html) [6]

**Image Credit:**

[Lillian Prince as Queen Elizabeth in "The Lost Colony".] Color slide. 1952. Item no. 1952.62.55, from the collection of the North Carolina Museum of History.

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