



*The Lost Colony*, 1409 National Park Drive, Manteo, NC 27954 [www.thelostcolony.org](http://www.thelostcolony.org)

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***Lost Colony* buildings destroyed in fire  
Villa Dunes citizen saves Waterside Theatre**

(Manteo, NC – September 11, 2007) On 11 September 2007 at 12:35 A.M., a resident of Villa Dunes spotted a fire across the sound on Roanoke Island, and called 911. Part of *The Lost Colony's* Waterside Theatre was in flames. All fire departments north of Oregon Inlet responded.

Fire crews worked swiftly and efficiently to control the blaze, and take necessary precautions to save the nearby men's dressing room structure. In spite of their efforts, the maintenance shed, which appears to have been at or near the source of the fire was completely destroyed. Charred pieces of framing in a flimsy skeleton, pointing irregularly toward the star-lighted sky, appear to be all that remains of what was the Irene Rains Costume Shop. All of the show costumes, all of the historic costumes, all of the fabrics, all of the shoes and hats are traditionally stored in the costume shop. All are lost—except the court costumes which fortunately are still at the dry cleaners, and a few that have already been delivered to the NC Museum of History for the *Lost Colony* exhibition scheduled to open in October.

All of the colonist costumes, and all of the Indian costumes were destroyed. All of the vintage costumes are lost—all those built by Irene Rains in the 1940s and 1950s; and all of Fred Voelpel's in the 1960s, 70s and early 80s. Most of 5-time Tony Award-winning designer William Ivey long's costumes were also destroyed.

No other structures appeared to have been damaged. The Nags Head resident who reported the fire saved the theatre.

Ironically, 60 years ago, on 24 June 1947, a late afternoon fire destroyed two-thirds of the Waterside Theatre and most of the sets and props. The costumes in the 1947 disaster escaped the flames, however, because of costumer Irene Rains' quick action in removing them from the dressing rooms and casting the items on the shore. There was no possibility of saving anything from the current disaster. From the point of arrival of the firemen, it was impossible to enter the building. The flames were already topping the trees.

Once again, *The Lost Colony* and its supporters must suffer the loss of their history and re-build. Community support is critical and a fund will be established for the replacement of the costumes.

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