

Charles, Lucile Marie Hoerr ^[1]

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Charles, Lucile Marie Hoerr

By Ralph Hardee Rives, 1979

(31 Aug. 1903–7 Mar. 1965)

Lucile Marie Hoerr Charles, lecturer, scholar, and first director of dramatic arts at East Carolina University in [Greenville](#) ^[2], was a native of Chicago, the daughter of Charles Ferdinand Hoerr and Lillie Anna Sophia Oberman Hoerr. She received the Ph.B. degree in 1930 from the [University of Chicago](#) ^[3]. In 1941 she received the M.A. degree from [Columbia University](#) ^[4] and in the following year a master's degree from [Yale University](#) ^[5]. She acquired a Ph.D. degree in educational psychology from Yale in 1943. She adopted her father's given name as her professional surname.

Dr. Charles served as the drama director at the [Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in New York](#) ^[6] from 1930 until 1934 and was associated with the American People's School from 1934 to 1936. She conducted a series of radio programs under the auspices of the Columbia Broadcasting Company during the mid-1930s and was associated with the drama and speech department at Teacher's College, [Columbia University](#) ^[4], from 1937 until 1939. She was assistant professor of dramatic arts at Mary Washington College of the [University of Virginia](#) ^[7] from 1943 until she went to [East Carolina University](#) ^[8] in 1946 as associate professor of English and the first director of dramatic arts. She was the recipient in 1955 of a Bollingen Foundation Fellowship, which was renewed for a second year, to study at the famous C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. After work at the Jung Institute, she returned to [East Carolina University](#) ^[8] in 1957 and taught courses in English, speech, and drama until her death. In 1959 she was promoted to the rank of professor.

As the director of the dramatic arts program at East Carolina, Dr. Charles brought record progress between 1946 and 1953. Liveliness, color, and student development and growth were obvious under her capable leadership. Her dramatic activities included the production of three major plays each academic term, weekly workshop productions of one-act plays, and the broadcasting of several hundred radio shows. In addition, she founded the Eastern Regional Play Festival of the North Carolina Dramatic Association, which for a number of years in the 1950s was held annually on the campus of [East Carolina University](#) ^[9] and in which drama groups from throughout Eastern Carolina—college, high school, and little theater groups—participated. She provided for her student actors numerous trooping experiences to schools, towns, and military bases in Eastern Carolina. Her selection of plays reflected her desire to present productions of literary as well as dramatic value, and she sought to have a balanced program with one modern comedy or drama, one classical play, and an annual play for children. As her drama program developed, Dr. Charles created and organized classes in acting and interpretation and play production, and in 1952 she started a special course, a dramatic arts workshop, which coordinated lectures from several university departments.

Dr. Charles was a member of the [American Folklore Society](#) ^[10] and contributed to the *Journal of American Folklore* ^[11], the *New York Times* ^[12], *Theatre Magazine*, *Players Magazine*, *Journal of Adult Education*, *Theatre and School*, *North Carolina English Teacher*, and other publications. She conducted extensive research and investigation into primitive drama and in 1959 published *The Story of the Baby Spinx and Other Fables* ^[13]. Following an extended illness with [Guillain-Barre disease](#) ^[14], she wrote of her psychological experiences during recovery; these writings were published in several popular and professional periodicals and in *Psychosomatic Medicine* ^[15]. She was buried in Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago.

References:

Lucile Marie Hoerr Charles Papers (East Carolina University Manuscript Collection, Greenville)

Directory of American Scholars, vol. 2 (1964); *East Carolinian*, 11 Mar. 1965

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Authors:

Rives, Ralph Hardee ^[22]

Origin - location:

Pitt County ^[23]

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