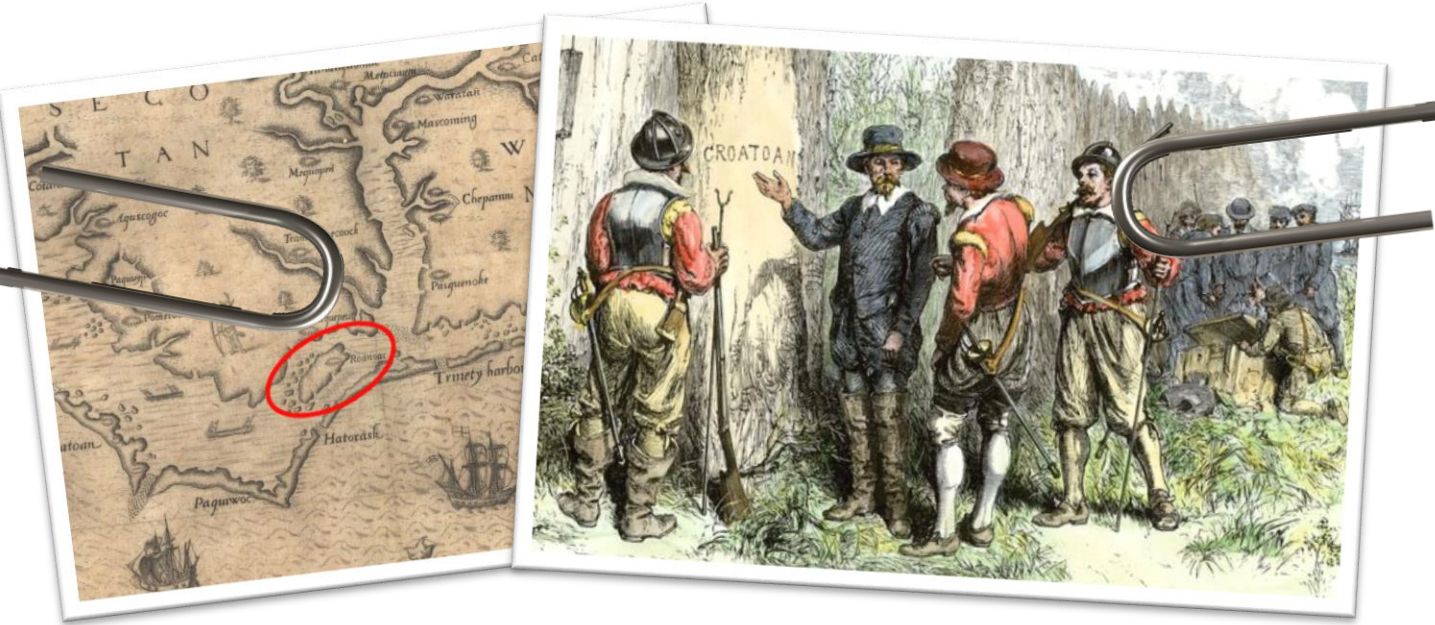


LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE

CRIME REPORT

Roanoke Island, North Carolina, 1590



The settlers of Roanoke faced almost immediate peril. They landed with few supplies and too late in the year plant crops. Their leader, John White, decided that the only chance of survival was for him to return to England to get more supplies. His journey took far longer than planned.

On August 15, 1590, three years later, John White returned to Roanoke Island and found it completely abandoned.

"The 15 of August towards evening we came to an anchor at Hatorask three leagues from the shore. We saw a great smoke rise in the isle Roanoke near the place where I left our colony in the year 1587, which smoke put us in good hope that some of the colony were there expecting my return out of England. When we came to the smoke, we found no man nor sign that any had been there lately,"

Strangely, White did not search for the lost colonists. He assumed they had left to join the local natives and were safe so he simply returned home to England. His own daughter and granddaughter were among them and he had left them on the brink of death yet, with no real evidence, he assumed they were fine. Some historians find that hard to believe. What really happened to the settlers of Roanoke Island?

Did they move in with the local natives and become part of their society?
Were they attacked by natives who then removed all evidence of their assault?
Were they sabotaged by the Spanish as part of their war with England?

Perhaps it was something else entirely.

This case remains unsolved.



All along the way we saw in the sand the print of the savages' feet. As we entered up the sandy bank there was a tree, in which was curiously carved the Roman letters C R O we knew to signify the place where I should find the settlers. There was a secret token agreed upon between them & me at my last departure from them, which was, that they carve on the trees or posts of the doors the name of the place where they would be waiting. Even when I was there we were always prepared to move from Roanoke 50 miles into the mainland.

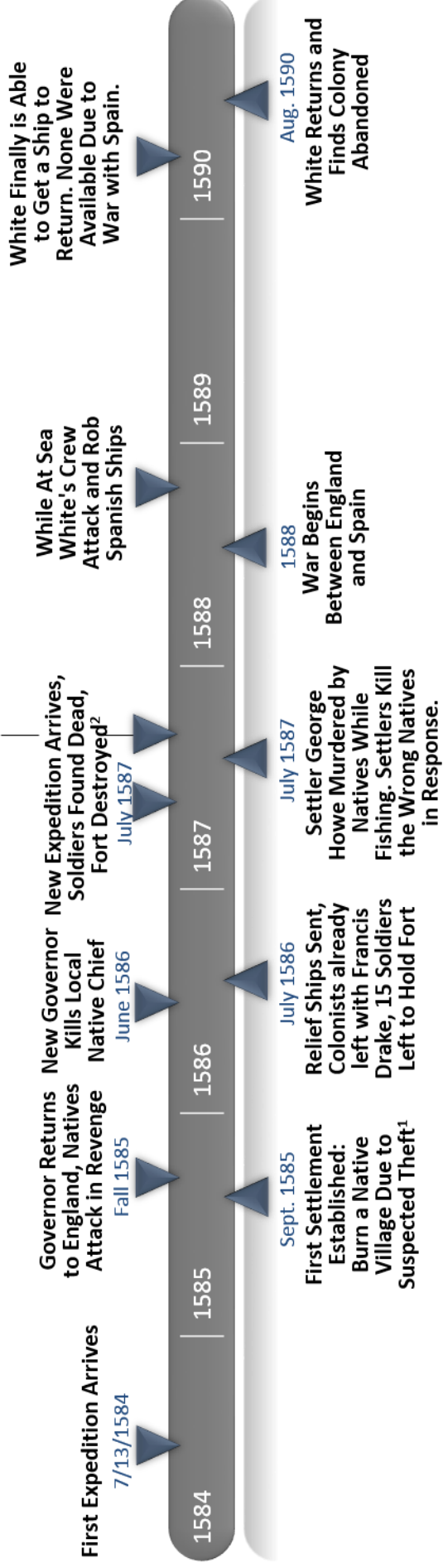
Therefore at my departure from them in 1587 I told them, that if they should happen to be distressed in any of those places, that then they should also carve over the letters or name, a Cross, but we found no such sign of distress. As we neared the settlement we found the houses taken down, and the place very strongly enclosed with a high defensive wall of great trees looking very fortlike. One of the main trees or posts at the right side of the entrance had the bark taken off, and 5 feet from the ground in capital letters was carved CROATOAN without any cross or sign of distress. We entered into the fort, where we found many bars of iron, two blocks of lead, four iron guns, iron shot, and other similar heavy things, thrown here and there, almost overgrown with grass and weeds.

In the end of an old trench made two years past by Captain Amadas we found five chests that had been carefully hidden by the settlers. Three of the chests were my own, and many of my things had been spoiled and broken; my books torn from the covers, the frames of some of my pictures and maps rotten and spoiled with rain, and my armor almost eaten through with rust. This could be no other but the deed of the savages our enemies at Dasamongwepeuk, who had watched the departure of our men to Croatoan; and as soon as they were departed dug up every place where they suspected anything to be buried: Although it much grieved me to see such spoil of my goods, I was greatly joyed that I had safely found a certain token of their safe being at Croatoan.

Source: *The Journal of John White, 1590*



A Timeline of Violence in Roanoke



¹Contact with the natives was, at first, relatively peaceful. The settlers attacked and burned a native village due to suspecting a native of stealing a silver pitcher.

²The settlers arrived in late July, one month too late to plant for the season, and in the wrong location leaving them in danger from the very beginning. Their captain claimed he had to leave them due to a coming hurricane.

Natives Around Roanoke

The Natives told me about a settlement to the South with white men living there. They described them living two-story, thatched-roof stone houses – a style unique to the English people.

-John Smith, Jamestown

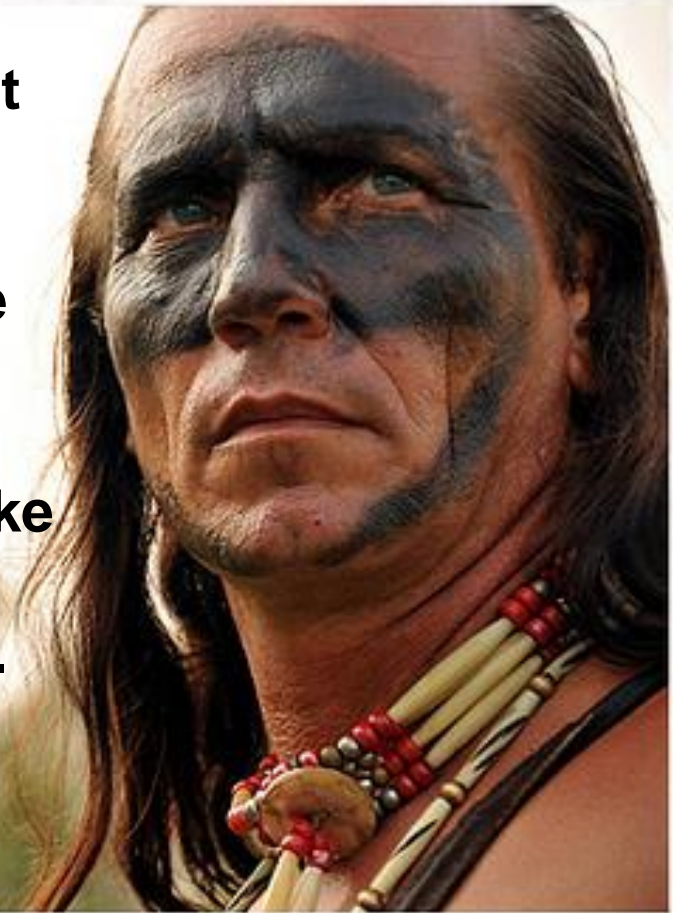


The Croatoan language has many English-sounding words. They say “mon” for man, “fayther” for father, “wit” for knowledge and “ax” for ask.

-North Carolina settlers, 1740

On Roanoke Island I met a band of natives called the Hatteras. They told me their ancestors were white people who could “talk in a book.” They had blue-grey eyes unlike any other Natives and were very friendly to us.

-John Lawson, English Explorer 1700



In the trees just outside our walls I saw a young boy – aged 6 or 7 – with blonde hair. He was dressed like the other natives but his skin was far lighter. I called to him hoping to speak with him. At the sound of my words he ran off into the forest. I started after him but he was gone.

-Thomas Sands, Jamestown

The fourth Voyage made to Virginia with three ships, in the year 1587. Wherein was transported the second Colony.

By Richard Hakluyt

May 16, 1587. Simon Ferdinando, the lead Admiral of our voyage, strangely abandoned one of our ships, leaving her wrecked in the Bay of Portuagal.

June 2: Captain Stafford, departed from our fleet with one of our ships to an Island, called Baque being so directed by Ferdinando. He told him he should there find great plenty of sheep. The next morning after, Ferdinando ordered us to sail off without waiting for Stafford to return and with no sheep.

July 1: After meeting back up with Stafford we landed at Rosse Bay. At this place Ferdinando had promised we would find plenty of salt and forced us to make as many sacks for that purpose, as we could. Governor White appointed 50 soldiers to go to land for salt in a place he himself heard of. Ferdinando persuaded White not to take in salt there, saying that he wasn't sure if that was the right Town. He also said if they sailed into the Bay, they could not without great danger come back. He then suddenly began to swear and tear God in pieces whining about great danger, crying "bear up hard, bear up hard!" So we left, with no salt thanks to him.

July 6: We landed at another island wherein Ferdinando said were two salt ponds, assuring us we'd find salt in them: but it proved as true as finding of sheep at Baque. In this Island, while Ferdinando went off by himself ashore, others spent the day in other parts of the Island. We don't know what he did all day.

July 22: We arrived safe at Harorask after sailing around aimlessly for weeks. White went ashore with 40 soldiers to find the 15 soldiers left before. He planned to return to the ship with them and then for all of us to sail north to the Bay of Chesapeake, where we intended to make our settlement and fort. But as soon as we were on land Ferdinando, called to the sailors into the ship ordering them not to let any of the settlers back on but to leave them in the Island. He said it was too late in Summer and he had to sail immediately to avoid the coming storm. The same night at sunset we went to the place where our fifteen men were left, but we found none of them, nor any sign that they had been there except the bones of one of those fifteen, which the Natives had slain long before.

Interrogation Transcript of Mr. Simon Ferdinando

(Translated from original Portuguese)

<Begin Recording>

SIMON FERDINANDO: Of course he would say that – John White hated me and loved himself. He won't admit blame for the failed colony so he tried to put it all on me.

DETECTIVE STONE: Yes, we know you two didn't get along very well, that's why we're here to ask these questions and get it all straight. For example, why did you stop off at a Spanish island during the voyage? We have a witness who says you commanded him to tell the Spanish where you were taking the settlers.

FERDINANDO: We were low on supplies. I knew a guy who would help us. I've sailed these islands for years – why do you think I was hired to lead the voyage to begin with? I was trying to save the settlers not doom them.

DETECTIVE STONE: Mr. White says they didn't get any supplies from the islands because of your own interference.

FERDINANDO: If saving his miserable life counts as interference then fine – I'm guilty. The Spanish didn't want any English settlers in the New World. If I let White just wander through the islands looking for salt he'd have been captured or killed. Yes, I was cautious. Maybe he should have tried it himself.

DETECTIVE STONE: There is evidence that the voyage from those islands to Roanoke Island took far longer than it should have. What happened?

FERDINANDO: I'm not proud to say it but I was lost. The weather wasn't great and I lost my bearings at sea.

DETECTIVE STONE: So, you made a mistake that caused them to miss the planting season. Then you made it worse by abandoning the people there? Why would you do that?

FERDINANDO: Precisely because of the mistake. It was storm season. If I didn't leave immediately there was no way I would get back to England before the next Spring. My job was done. I got them to America. I didn't need to leave my crew stuck there for another six months.

DETECTIVE STONE: But, your job wasn't done, was it? You dropped them 50 miles short of the planned destination.

FERDINANDO: I'll say it again – I had no choice. I had to get back to England. I left them on the island where there was an English fort and 15 soldiers who had already built up a settlement. They were safe when I left and that's a fact. Anything after that is John White's fault – not mine.

To Her Majesty,

January 30, 1567

My beloved Queen I regret to tell you that the rumours are true. It seems the Spanish King Philip has, in fact, ordered his men to attack any Englishmen they find at sea or on land in the New World. I and my brother were recently the target of such attacks. We had been anchored at the Mexican Harbor of San Juan de Ulloa earlier this month. We were trading peacefully until the arrival of a Spanish Warship. They attacked without warning, slaughtering the crews of our two ships. Over 300 of our men were massacred and more were captured and taken prisoner. I managed to escape only by the grace of God.

I write to you boldly to promise that they will face retribution for these attacks. I care not for the size and reputation of their navy. God will deliver them into our hands for their love of that false monk their Pope. I assure you our people will not be subject to these Catholic blasphemers any longer.

Sincerely,

Francis Drake

In investigating the traditions of the natives living today near Roanoke historians have found many family names identical with those of the Lost Colony of 1587. A list of the colonists is provided below. The names in bold and italics in the list are those found in the native families today.

Roster of Settlers in Roanoke Colony, 1587

MEN

- Roger **Baily**
- William Clement
- Ananias **Dare**
- Robert **Little**
- Christopher **Cooper**
- Hugh **Taylor**
- Thomas **Stevens**
- William Berde
- John **Sampson**
- Richard Wildye
- Dionys **Harvie**
- Lewes Wotton
- Roger Prat
- Michael Bishop
- George **Howe**
- Henry **Browne**
- Simon Fernando
- Henry Rufotte
- Nicholas **Johnson**
- Richard Tomkins
- Thomas Warner
- Henry Dorrell
- Anthony **Cage**
- John Stilman
- John **Jones**
- John Earnest
- John **Brooks**
- Henry **Johnson**
- Cuthbert **White**
- John Starte
- John Bright
- Richard Darige
- Clement **Taylor**
- William **Lucas**
- William Sole
- Arnold Archard
- John Cotsmuir
- William Nichols
- Humphrey Newton
- Thomas Phevens
- Thomas **Smith**
- Martin Sutton

- Thomas **Colman**
- John Borden
- Thomas **Gramme**
- Charles Florrie
- Henry Mylton
- Mark **Bennet**
- Henry **Paine**
- John Gibbes
- Thomas **Harris**
- Robert **Wilkinson**
- Thomas **Scot**
- John Tydway
- Peter **Little**
- Ambrose **Viccars**
- John Wyles
- Edmund English
- Bryan Wyles
- Thomas Topan
- Thomas Ellis
- Henry **Berry**
- John **Wright**
- Richard **Berry**
- William Dutton
- John Spendlove
- Maurice **Allen**
- John Hemmington
- William Waters
- Thomas **Butler**
- Richard Arthur
- Edward Powell
- John **Chapman**
- John Burdon
- James **Lasie**
- James Hynde
- John **Cheven**
- William **Willes**
- Thomas Hewett
- William **Brown**
- George **Martin**
- Michael Myllet
- Hugh **Patterson**
- Richard Kemme
- John Farre

- Thomas **Harris**
- John **Bridger**
- Richard Traverner
- Griffin **Jones**
- John **White**
- Richard Shabedge

WOMEN

- Eleanor *Dare*
- Andry Tappan
- Margery **Harvie**
- Alice **Charman**
- Agnes Wood
- Emma Merimoth
- Winifred **Powell**
- Colman.
- Joyce Archard
- Margaret Lawrence
- Jane *Jones*
- Joan Warren
- Elizabeth Glane
- Jane Mannering
- Janes **Pierce**
- Rose **Payne**
- Elizabeth **Viccars**

BOYS AND CHILDREN

- John **Sampson**
- Thomas Humphrey
- Robert Ellis
- Thomas Smart
- Ambrose **Viccars**
- George **Howe**
- Thomas Archard
- John Prat
- William Wythers

CHILDREN BORN IN VIRGINIA

- Virginia Dare
- Harvie

In addition to these names matching the colonists we have the following additional English surnames among the Natives names in Sampson County: Jacobs, Goodman, Simmons, Ammons, Brewington, Mainor, Manuel or Emanuel, Jones, Bedsole, Faircloth, Harding and Warrick.