**The Lost Colony of Roanoke**

**Part 1: The Beginning**

It is one of American history's longest unsolved mysteries: What happened to the colonists at Roanoke? Since no one knows still, we must make our own conclusions, based on available evidence.

Here are some facts.

The island were first sighted by Europeans when English explorers Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe sailed by in 1584, on orders from Sir Walter Raleigh.

Amadas and Barlowe were so impressed with the island and its location for settlement that they convinced two of the Roanoke natives (willingly or not) to return to England with them.

The natives impressed Queen Elizabeth, who responded by giving Raleigh permission to claim all lands in and around Roanoke and the surrounding mainland. The very next year, a group of 100 men set sail for Roanoke Island.

That first group of colonists made a series of bad mistakes that doomed them:

1. They arrived too late in the season to plant any crops that would survive the cold winter. Because of that, they were short the supplies they needed to last all winter.

2. They were under the direction of Ralph Lane, a captain in the armed forces. His first priority was to build a fort. Lane looked at the situation around him as a military one. He saw the neighboring Roanoke tribe as possible enemies; and when a dispute over a cup turned violent, it was Lane who ended up killing Wingina, the Roanoke chief.

Lane and his fellow settlers lasted until English sea captain, Sir Francis Drake, sailed by in 1586. When Drake arrived, the settlers pleaded with him to take them home . Drake agreed, and the settlers left their new home for good.

A supply ship arrived a week later, under the command of Sir Richard Grenville. A total of 15 people from that crew stayed behind, finding a fort built by Lane and his men.

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**Part 2: The Second Voyage**

Raleigh set up another voyage and transported another group of people from England to Roanoke Island. This time, it was 150 people; this time, it was men, women, and children. Their leader was John White. They arrived in July 1587, and went in search of the 15 men who had stayed behind two years ago. They found nothing but human bones.



Again, no one thought how strange this was, and the settlers began to settle in, making improvements on the houses that were already there and building new ones.

The Native Americans living on the island were more hostile to the new settlers than they had to previous settlers. Only one group of the several who were living there was friendly in the least. That group was the Croatoans, who wanted peace and understanding between themselves and these new English "neighbors."

A misunderstanding followed, as the Croatoans accused members of another tribe of killing the 15 men who had stayed behind.

*White and other Englishmen attacked the town where the suspected killers lived. The only Native Americans the Englishmen found when they got there were the Croatoans, who had arrived on the scene and found the other tribe gone. Before things could be sorted, some Croatoans were dead.*

Things progressed in settlement, as the settlers planted crops on their part of the island. Not much is said in the history books about the relations between the English and the Croatoans at this time, so we don't really know whether they became more or less friendly. What we do know is that no more attacks came that month.

In August, the settlers decided that they needed more supplies from home. Gov. John White and several other sailors took the fleet of ships home to England to get more food and supplies. After this, nothing more is known for certain about the fate of the settlers who stayed behind.

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**Part 3: The Mystery Endures**

White arrived home in England and immediately tried raising money for a return to Roanoke. He wanted to get back as quickly as possible, since he knew that supplies were running low. However, he couldn't leave. The Spanish navy was attacking England. The English defeated the Spanish fleet, but the war between England and Spain was by not over, and White and the men he wanted to take to Roanoke were unable to leave because they were fighting in this war and weren't able to get a ship.

Finally, in 1590, White and a few sailors and ships sailed back to Roanoke. They arrived in mid-August, seeing smoke from two separate places on the island. They hoped that this smoke was from the settlements that they had left behind.

On August 16, they searched one area but found nothing. The smoke was from a forest fire. The next day, seven men drowned when their boat capsized. White went on, with a handful of men. Desperate for some sign from the settlers, they played familiar English songs on a trumpet but heard nothing in response.

On August 18, they went ashore and found no signs of human settlement anywhere they looked.

What White and his men did find was the beginnings of a puzzle that has yet to be solved. They found, carved on a tree, the letters CRO.

The men went to the area where the houses were but found that they had been taken down. Carved on one of the still-standing trees in this area was the word CROATOAN. The men did not find was a cross, the special sign that all of the English people had agreed on would be clearly visible if they were in trouble.

Since he knew that the Croatoans lived in a nearby island, White decided to sail and search for the settlers there. Again, they met with frustration.

A strong storm prevented the ships from sailing in that direction. In fact, the last time, the winds were so strong that the men found themselves being blown back to England leaving them with no choice but to sail home.

Exploration was expensive. White didn't have the money to pay for another voyage.

The fate of the Roanoke colonists was a mystery that didn't have enough evidence to be solved. To this day, no one can say for certain what happened to the Roanoke Colony settlers.

THE LOST COLONY QUESTIONS

1. What convinced (impressed) the Queen to follow up with exploration and settlement

 in the area of Roanoke?

2. What were two mistakes made by the first group that came to settle in Roanoke?

 1.

 2.

3. What eventually happened to this first group of settlers?

4. When the supply ship returned, Sir Richard Grenville left behind how many men?

5. The next group of settlers arrived in July 1585. How many came on this voyage?

6. What was different about the people that came on this voyage?

7. What did they find out about the men left behind by Grenville?

8. What was the “misunderstanding” that took place between the settlers and the

 Croatoan Indians (in your own words)

9. Why did Governor John White return to England?

10. What prevented White from returning immediately to Roanoke?

11. White eventually returned to Roanoke

 Describe what White found when he got back 3 years later:

12. Why was White and the rest of his group forced to go back to England?

13. What do you think happened to these people (use clues from the reading to

 support your opinion)