

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:25,000

What is that right there?

2

00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:30,000

I mean this just adds a whole new dimension to our understanding of these early settlers.

3

00:00:30,000 --> 00:00:33,000

You make a very compelling case, so how do you prove it?

4

00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:34,000

You dig them up.

5

00:00:34,000 --> 00:00:35,000

I can't wait man, let's do it.

6

00:00:35,000 --> 00:00:38,000

Look out!

7

00:00:45,000 --> 00:00:52,000

When we think of Thanksgiving, we think of pilgrims, turkey, and doorbuster deals on flat panel TVs.

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00:00:52,000 --> 00:00:57,000

But I've always been interested in a darker, earlier chapter of the American story.

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00:00:57,000 --> 00:01:06,000

The history books tell us that in 1607, Jamestown, Virginia became the first permanent English colony in the now United States.

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00:01:06,000 --> 00:01:09,000

There's just one problem. That may not be true.

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00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:14,000

You see, long before the Jamestown settlers ever laid eyes on the New World,

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00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:24,000

an Englishman named John White led 118 men, women, and children across the Atlantic to Roanoke Island in 1587.

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00:01:24,000 --> 00:01:27,000

White soon sailed back to England for much needed supplies,

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00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:35,000

but when he returned, he found the settlement eerily abandoned, with no sign of the colonists dead or alive.

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00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:37,000

The only clue to their fate?

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00:01:37,000 --> 00:01:42,000

A single word, croatoan, carved onto a post.

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00:01:42,000 --> 00:01:46,000

So what happened to these early pioneers?

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00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:54,000

Armed with new evidence, three different groups of explorers are racing to solve this 400 year old mystery.

19

00:01:54,000 --> 00:02:01,000

So I'm headed to North Carolina, where I'll join these teams to discover the fate of the lost

colony of Roanoke,

20

00:02:01,000 --> 00:02:05,000

and the truth behind America's first mystery.

21

00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:11,000

My name is Josh Gates.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:16,000

I'm a bucket bat with a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration.

23

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:20,000

I have a tendency to end up in some very strange situations.

24

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:23,000

This is horrible. This is officially horrible.

25

00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:30,000

My travels have taken me to the ends of the earth as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

26

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:31,000

We're gonna try, let's go.

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00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:34,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

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00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:48,000

Okay, so to really understand the story of the lost colony requires the tiniest bit of a history lesson.

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00:02:48,000 --> 00:02:52,000

Don't change the channel. This will be painless. This will be brief.

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00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:57,000

We'll even use some fancy animated maps. Do take notes though, there's going to be a quiz after.

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00:02:57,000 --> 00:02:59,000

Alright, deep breath, here we go.

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00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:07,000

On March 25, 1584, Queen Elizabeth I grants a charter to Sir Walter Raleigh,

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00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:12,000

authorizing him to set up a permanent English colony in the New World.

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:21,000

Under the leadership of Governor John White, 118 settlers leave their homes to establish themselves on a strange and unfamiliar continent.

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00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:28,000

The journey takes them from England, nearly 4,000 miles across the churning Atlantic Ocean,

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00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:33,000

to Roanoke Island in the outer banks of what's now North Carolina.

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00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:39,000

They spot the island on July 22, 1587 and come ashore to start their new lives,

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00:03:39,000 --> 00:03:43,000

where they get to work, planting and building a village in the New World.

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00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:47,000

During their first month in their new home,

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00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:50,000

Governor White's daughter Eleanor Dare gives birth.

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00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:55,000

Her daughter, Virginia Dare, becomes the first English child born in North America.

42

00:03:55,000 --> 00:03:59,000

The celebration doesn't last long.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:03,000

Life in the village is demanding and the settlers begin running short on supplies.

44

00:04:03,000 --> 00:04:07,000

They ask Governor White to return to England for life-saving help.

45

00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:14,000

He leaves at the end of August, not knowing that this will be the last time he will ever lay eyes on any of the colonists.

46

00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:18,000

See? That one's so bad. Alright, I'll let the show.

47

00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:27,000

I too arrive at the outer banks and cross over to the island of Roanoke.

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00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:36,000

And while the colonists may have vanished, they're still on everyone's minds.

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00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:42,000

My first stop on the island is the Fort Raleigh Visitors Center.

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:47,000

You know, walking through this museum, the mystery of the Roanoke colony really comes into light.

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00:04:47,000 --> 00:04:54,000

After John White left the colony in 1587, other than these scant remains, they seem to have completely vanished.

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00:04:54,000 --> 00:05:00,000

Nobody knows the exact location of the colony, though the few eerie artifacts that have been recovered

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00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:03,000

suggest that it was near this very spot.

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00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:05,000

So items like this are fascinating.

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00:05:05,000 --> 00:05:08,000

These, these are the remains of the Roanoke colony.

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00:05:08,000 --> 00:05:12,000

These objects found at Roanoke were obviously brought here by the colonists.

57

00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:17,000

These are not things that the natives had, but the problem is this is about all we've got.

58

00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:20,000

A few tokens, some beads, remnants of tools.

59

00:05:20,000 --> 00:05:25,000

There's no structures, no bodies, no clear evidence of what happened to the colonists.

60

00:05:29,000 --> 00:05:33,000

I go behind the Fort to see the remains of the Roanoke colony.

61

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:40,000

I go behind the Fort to meet an expert on the Roanoke mystery in the elaborate Elizabethan Gardens.

62

00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:49,000

Named for Queen Elizabeth I, who chartered the colony.

63

00:05:53,000 --> 00:05:58,000

Here, Tom Shields is going to help me navigate the many possible endings to the Roanoke story.

64

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:04,000

In terms of the theories about the fate of the lost colonists, what do you think are the most reasonable?

65

00:06:04,000 --> 00:06:05,000

There's two basic groups.

66

00:06:05,000 --> 00:06:10,000

They either died probably here, or they moved inland and assimilated or lived on their own in some way or another.

67

00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:12,000

Okay, so they either got killed or they left?

68

00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:13,000

Right.

69

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Okay, so in the, they got killed camp, what are the likely ways in which that could have happened?

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:19,000

One is just disease.

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00:06:19,000 --> 00:06:23,000

Almost every colony has lots of people dying early on.

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00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:25,000

Another possibility is starvation.

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00:06:25,000 --> 00:06:28,000

They arrive here in August, they're English planters.

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00:06:28,000 --> 00:06:32,000

They don't know they could probably get in one more good crop at this point in the year.

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00:06:32,000 --> 00:06:35,000

Drought is one of those things that we look at.

76

00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:36,000

So it could be lack of water.

77

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:37,000

It could be lack of water.

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00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:41,000

Then there's also attack by Native Americans.

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00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:46,000

Two earlier scouting out.

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00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:48,000

Two earlier scouting out.

81

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:50,000

Two earlier scouting out.

82

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:58,000

Two earlier scouting expeditions by the English established relations with the natives that were uneven at best.

83

00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:01,000

Some tribes along the coast were peaceful and cooperative.

84

00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:04,000

But the English made enemies of other groups.

85

00:07:09,000 --> 00:07:12,000

So all sorts of possibilities.

86

00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:13,000

Which one?

87

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:14,000

We don't know.

88

00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:21,000

The more optimistic possibility is that we can't find the colony because it moved.

89

00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:23,000

So where would they have gone?

90

00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:32,000

The basis for a lot of the places people want to look for that is based on what John White said they intended to do.

91

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:33,000

Okay.

92

00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:41,000

According to John White's journal, if the colonists had to relocate in his absence, they were to move the settlement 50 miles into the main,

93

00:07:41,000 --> 00:07:44,000

which most believe means into the mainland.

94

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:50,000

They were also told to carve their destination into a post if they left.

95

00:07:50,000 --> 00:07:55,000

And White did find the word croat Owen inscribed into a wooden fence.

96

00:07:55,000 --> 00:08:00,000

But whether this was meant for him or what it means about the colony's location is a mystery.

97

00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:08,000

So there's somebody who I think you might want to meet who can tell you more about the colony from an English perspective, from her own personal point of view.

98

00:08:08,000 --> 00:08:09,000

Okay, sure.

99

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:10,000

Yeah, happy to meet him.

100

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:13,000

Oh my God.

101

00:08:20,000 --> 00:08:21,000

Holy moly.

102

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Wow.

103

00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:24,000

Hello.

104

00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:26,000

Your Highness.

105

00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:28,000

Good sir.

106

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:29,000

Very nice to meet you.

107

00:08:29,000 --> 00:08:31,000

Lovely to meet you as well.

108

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:36,000

I'm actually here doing a story on your Roanoke colony.

109

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:37,000

The Roanoke colony.

110

00:08:37,000 --> 00:08:40,000

I haven't heard from them in a while.

111

00:08:40,000 --> 00:08:48,000

I don't want to be, you know, too forward here, especially in front of royalty, but what the hell is going on here?

112

00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:49,000

Who are you?

113

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:50,000

I'm Emily.

114

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:51,000

You're Emily.

115

00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:55,000

I play Queen Elizabeth I here on Roanoke Island in the Lost Colony play.

116

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:56,000

In the play?

117

00:08:56,000 --> 00:08:57,000

Yeah.

118

00:08:57,000 --> 00:08:58,000

I thought I was having an acid trip.

119

00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:06,000

Turns out the queen is a member of the Lost Colony troop that has been reenacting their version of the Roanoke story since 1937.

120

00:09:06,000 --> 00:09:07,000

And it's still going strong.

121

00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:08,000

Still going strong.

122

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:13,000

So we would like to invite you to be a part of the Lost Colony tonight.

123

00:09:13,000 --> 00:09:14,000

Oh wow.

124

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:15,000

Okay.

125

00:09:15,000 --> 00:09:17,000

When you say be a part of.

126

00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:18,000

We have a role for you.

127

00:09:18,000 --> 00:09:19,000

We're with a costume.

128

00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:21,000

Am I allowed to say no to the Queen of England?

129

00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:22,000

You're absolutely not.

130

00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:23,000

I would have your head.

131

00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:25,000

Well then I guess I have to do it.

132

00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:35,000

I'm rushed over to the theater where about 20 minutes before the curtain is scheduled to go up, I'm hastily dropped into the hands of associate producer Lance Culpe.

133

00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:37,000

We need to get you into costume and fitting.

134

00:09:37,000 --> 00:09:38,000

Okay.

135

00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:41,000

We're going to measure you and see what costumes we can get you into today.

136

00:09:41,000 --> 00:09:43,000

Not many of them I'm guessing.

137

00:09:43,000 --> 00:09:45,000

He'll take a deep breath for me.

138

00:09:45,000 --> 00:09:46,000

Okay.

139

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:48,000

Don't look so shocked.

140

00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:49,000

Did you see that?

141

00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:51,000

I was like she looked like she'd never seen anyone this size.

142

00:09:51,000 --> 00:09:53,000

I'm going to get around your way.

143

00:09:53,000 --> 00:09:57,000

I measured for a costume that uses roughly three acres of fabric.

144

00:09:57,000 --> 00:09:58,000

Hey Josh you look great.

145

00:09:58,000 --> 00:09:59,000

Thank you.

146

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:00,000

Ready for makeup?

147

00:10:00,000 --> 00:10:01,000

Yes.

148

00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:02,000

Let's go.

149

00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:04,000

At some point will I be seeing a script?

150

00:10:04,000 --> 00:10:09,000

And quickly walk past the last of the Mohicans before heading to makeup.

151

00:10:09,000 --> 00:10:10,000

I feel like it's too much.

152

00:10:10,000 --> 00:10:11,000

Is it too much?

153

00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:15,000

Yeah you could probably tone it down a bit.

154

00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:16,000

Okay.

155

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:21,000

Five minutes before showtime someone finally hands me a script.

156

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:22,000

And guess what?

157

00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:24,000

I'm an Englishman.

158

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:25,000

Typecasting.

159

00:10:25,000 --> 00:10:32,000

This play, written by Paul Green nearly 80 years ago, is actually the longest running outdoor drama

in America.

160

00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:37,000

I'm honored to be a part of it since I'm fascinated by the story of the colonists.

161

00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:42,000

But also totally terrified since I literally don't know any of my lines.

162

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:46,000

And now Paul Green's the most common.

163

00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:47,000

Is it?

164

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:48,000

It is.

165

00:10:48,000 --> 00:10:49,000

Let's go.

166

00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:51,000

And we're off and running.

167

00:10:51,000 --> 00:10:53,000

From the wings I get a glimpse of the show.

168

00:10:53,000 --> 00:10:57,000

An ambitious production that recounts the colonists' brave journey to Roanoke.

169

00:10:57,000 --> 00:11:02,000

The playwright speculates that the settlers were ultimately done in by Native American attacks.

170

00:11:02,000 --> 00:11:07,000

As for me, I'm about to meet my own fate on stage in about two minutes.

171

00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:20,000

On Roanoke Island in North Carolina, I've been invited to take the stage with the cast of The Lost Colony Play.

172

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:26,000

The mysterious story of the English settlers who vanished off the face of the earth here 400 years ago.

173

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:32,000

Speaking of vanishing, I just got handed the script and I'm thinking about bolting for the exits.

174

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:35,000

And now, The Lost Colony.

175

00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:41,000

I'm playing the role of a man warning the ill-fated colonists not to travel to the New World.

176

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:43,000

What the heck happened to you?

177

00:11:43,000 --> 00:11:46,000

Neighbors! Neighbors!

178

00:11:46,000 --> 00:11:47,000

I say it's gospel!

179

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:49,000

Every living word!

180

00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:58,000

Eleven months! Eleven months I was there in that cursed land and I would not go back for all the jewels of Spain!

181

00:12:04,000 --> 00:12:08,000

I walk off stage to thunderous applause. In my head anyway.

182

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:13,000

Alas, there was one problem with my performance though. My cup was empty.

183

00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:15,000

Now I need a real drink.

184

00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:32,000

The next morning I feel a real sense of purpose. Having spent last night walking a mile in the world of The Lost Colony.

185

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:35,000

Now, it's time to figure out what really happened.

186

00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:42,000

While a lot of people are searching for the physical location of The Lost Colony, other people are trying to figure out the mystery in different ways.

187

00:12:42,000 --> 00:12:46,000

One of those people is a guy named Charles Ewan who is a professor of anthropology.

188

00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:50,000

And he's got a novel approach that he thinks might just crack the case.

189

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:56,000

It's about a hundred degrees out right now, which seems appropriate.

190

00:12:56,000 --> 00:13:02,000

Since one of the newest theories about The Lost Colony is that it wilted in the face of a massive drought.

191

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:10,000

To prove the colonists couldn't take the heat, the professors asked me to meet him in the swamp, along with dendrochronologist Erika Wise.

192

00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:13,000

Hiya. Hey Charles.

193

00:13:13,000 --> 00:13:14,000

Hey Josh.

194

00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:15,000

Nice to meet you. How are you?

195

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:16,000

Hi. Nice to meet you.

196

00:13:16,000 --> 00:13:19,000

Pleasure. So what are we doing out here? What's the plan of attack?

197

00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:24,000

One of the things I'm interested in is finding out what happened to those folks.

198

00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:28,000

And if we're going to understand what happens to them, we really got to understand their environment.

199

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:33,000

Unfortunately, there's no one around today from the late 16th century, so how do we do that?

200

00:13:33,000 --> 00:13:38,000

But there are still living witnesses to the time period back then, and those are some of the trees.

201

00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:43,000

Trees? So we actually have trees here in North Carolina that were alive when the colonists were here.

202

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:49,000

Yeah, North Carolina has some of the oldest trees in the east, and some of them definitely date back to that era.

203

00:13:49,000 --> 00:13:51,000

And how do you get those trees to talk?

204

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:58,000

We just have to pull a little core out of them and look at their rings, because they're recording that information right in their tree growth.

205

00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:00,000

And I take it that's what this beauty's for.

206

00:14:00,000 --> 00:14:02,000

Indeed. It'll get us where we need to go.

207

00:14:02,000 --> 00:14:03,000

Okay, let's do it. Come on.

208

00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:04,000

Okay, let's go.

209

00:14:05,000 --> 00:14:12,000

We get settled into the airboat and head out into the swamp, in search of a tree old enough to spill the secrets of the lost colony.

210

00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:14,000

Okay, Cap, you ready?

211

00:14:14,000 --> 00:14:15,000

Ready if you are.

212

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:17,000

All right, bunch of chewing.

213

00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:37,000

We speed through the narrow waterways, eyeing the older, larger trees along the banks, but finding a 400-year-old tree means going deep into the wilderness.

214

00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:42,000

All right, Erica, it's feeling bolder in here.

215

00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:45,000

Is that a fair assessment of the least feeling of smoke here?

216

00:14:45,000 --> 00:14:49,000

The trees are getting a little bigger back here, because that's just very back here.

217

00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:59,000

We scan the waterline, but for the life of us, we can't see a tree for the forest.

218

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:02,000

That is, until Professor Ewing spots something.

219

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:04,000

How about that one? That one's pretty good.

220

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:06,000

Which one are you looking at?

221

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:10,000

Just off the quarter-mile there, sticking out of the water.

222

00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:11,000

Oh yeah, that's a big boy.

223

00:15:11,000 --> 00:15:13,000

Erica, what do you think about that?

224

00:15:13,000 --> 00:15:16,000

That's a beautiful tree. We've got to try that one.

225

00:15:16,000 --> 00:15:23,000

Now that we've identified the tree, we pull in and suit up with harnesses to get a sample from a higher point on the trunk.

226

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:28,000

Boy, climbing a tree sure has changed since I was 10 years old.

227

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:32,000

Once we're rigged up, we're going to go down the road.

228

00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:38,000

Once we're rigged up, the Professor and our boat captain hoist Erica into the canopy.

229

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:46,000

Josh, you want to come up now?

230

00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:47,000

Want to or have to?

231

00:15:47,000 --> 00:15:48,000

You need to come up.

232

00:15:48,000 --> 00:15:50,000

Alright, I'm coming up.

233

00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:57,000

This tree is not going to core itself, so I clip in and start to make my way up to meet Erica.

234

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:06,000

Okay, I am locked off and I am not looking down anymore.

235

00:16:06,000 --> 00:16:07,000

Now we're up here. What do we do?

236

00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:11,000

We're just going to drill a little hole in this tree and see what it tells us.

237

00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:13,000

Okay, got it.

238

00:16:15,000 --> 00:16:22,000

Erica begins the process of getting a core sample, but the tough hide of the tree makes it difficult for one person to turn the boarder.

239

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:24,000

Josh, come here and give me your hand, okay?

240

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:29,000

Okay, let me just see if I can swing my way over to you and get on that ledge.

241

00:16:29,000 --> 00:16:31,000

Charles, don't drop me down there.

242

00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:32,000

I got you.

243

00:16:34,000 --> 00:16:35,000

Okay.

244

00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:36,000

Okay.

245

00:16:36,000 --> 00:16:37,000

Hi.

246

00:16:37,000 --> 00:16:38,000

Hey.

247

00:16:38,000 --> 00:16:39,000

How are you?

248

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:40,000

Good, how are you?

249

00:16:40,000 --> 00:16:41,000

I'm good.

250

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:43,000

Okay, here we go.

251

00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:47,000

Take the top, take the bottom, turn, turn.

252

00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:56,000

I help Erica drill into the tree, but as we focus on getting a sample, I lose focus on my footing.

253

00:16:58,000 --> 00:16:59,000

Look out!

254

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:09,000

I'm somewhere on the Roanoke River, dangling high in a tree with dendrochronologist Erica Wise.

255

00:17:09,000 --> 00:17:15,000

We're taking a core sample, which may be able to tell us if the lost colonists were done in by a brutal drought.

256

00:17:17,000 --> 00:17:22,000

While all of my elbow grease is being put into the drill, I accidentally lose track of my feet.

257

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:26,000

Look out!

258

00:17:27,000 --> 00:17:28,000

Look out!

259

00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:34,000

Charles, you got me down there?

260

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:35,000

I got you.

261

00:17:36,000 --> 00:17:40,000

Once I get myself under control, Erica and I finish getting the core sample.

262

00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:43,000

Okay, Charles, I need to pass you this core.

263

00:17:44,000 --> 00:17:47,000

With our sample in safe hands, it's time to come out of the trees.

264

00:17:48,000 --> 00:17:49,000

Charles, get me out of here.

265

00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:51,000

Alright, get me down slowly.

266

00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:52,000

Okay.

267

00:17:55,000 --> 00:17:56,000

Okay.

268

00:17:57,000 --> 00:17:58,000

Thanks, buddy.

269

00:17:58,000 --> 00:17:59,000

That was so bad.

270

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:00,000

Easy to say, Charles, we were down here.

271

00:18:00,000 --> 00:18:02,000

I was doing the heavy lifting.

272

00:18:02,000 --> 00:18:03,000

That's true.

273

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:10,000

Erica follows suit, and once we're all back in the boat, she carefully extracts the core from the boring mechanism.

274

00:18:10,000 --> 00:18:11,000

Alright, Mom, I'm gonna truth, here we go.

275

00:18:11,000 --> 00:18:13,000

Okay, let's see what we've got.

276

00:18:13,000 --> 00:18:18,000

The core is a cylindrical cross-section of the tree, revealing secrets from the past.

277

00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:22,000

Do we see evidence on here of times when water is scarcer?

278

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:23,000

Can that be corroborated here?

279

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:32,000

Well, so this tree definitely shows dry periods, wet periods over the centuries, so we just have to figure out exactly when those fell.

280

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:38,000

In examining the core, the more narrow the ring is, the drier the year in which it formed.

281

00:18:39,000 --> 00:18:47,000

In this case, we see there is an extended dry period nearly 450 years ago, right around when the colonists arrived at Roanoke.

282

00:18:48,000 --> 00:18:56,000

This is really exciting, these data here, in that it really gives us a better picture of what a struggle it was for those folks here.

283

00:18:56,000 --> 00:19:01,000

Do you think that it's possible that the ending of the colonists could be something as elementary as needing water?

284

00:19:01,000 --> 00:19:03,000

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

285

00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:06,000

They were here with minimal supplies.

286

00:19:06,000 --> 00:19:08,000

In an environment they'd never experienced.

287

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:16,000

If this does bear out that we've got a drought at that period, it would have been more surprising for John White to have found them when he got back.

288

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:23,000

I mean, this just adds a whole new dimension to our understanding of these early settlers.

289

00:19:25,000 --> 00:19:34,000

This is a significant piece of evidence that the colonists may have succumbed to a horrendous fate, finding the new world only to starve to death on her shores.

290

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:42,000

But the Roanoke bunch were hardy and resourceful, and there's still no direct evidence that a lack of water ultimately did them in.

291

00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:51,000

I'm back on the road to meet with a group of researchers on the mainland of North Carolina who have a totally different theory.

292

00:19:51,000 --> 00:19:57,000

They don't believe drought killed the colonists. In fact, they don't believe they were killed at all.

293

00:19:57,000 --> 00:20:06,000

One of the most debated clues in the Roanoke mystery comes from the journal of John White, who returns to England for supplies after the colony is established.

294

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:13,000

He and the settlers agree that they should move 50 miles into the main if they need to abandon the colony while he's gone.

295

00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:16,000

But what and where does he mean?

296

00:20:16,000 --> 00:20:23,000

When it comes to physical, tangible evidence that links us to the lost colony, there's not a lot out there.

297

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:32,000

One of the most interesting potential clues is a map that was actually hand drawn by John White

himself in 1585, and it depicts what is now the coast of North Carolina.

298

00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:45,000

White created one of the first British maps of the Roanoke area. The map has been preserved in the British Museum in London, but just recently, testing revealed startling new clues on the document.

299

00:20:45,000 --> 00:20:53,000

An archaeological team called the First Colony Foundation is using this evidence to piece together the real location of the lost colonists.

300

00:20:54,000 --> 00:21:01,000

On the remote edge of a forest on the Roanoke River, I meet First Colony archaeologist Eric Dietz.

301

00:21:01,000 --> 00:21:03,000

Are you Eric?

302

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:04,000

Yeah.

303

00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:06,000

Josh, how are you? Nice to meet you, man.

304

00:21:06,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Nice to meet you.

305

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:09,000

Yeah, it's a pleasure. So listen, this is not an easy place to find.

306

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:11,000

Yeah, it's a little off the beaten path.

307

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:13,000

Why, why, why way out here?

308

00:21:13,000 --> 00:21:17,000

There's a lot of places that are 50 miles into the main from Roanoke Island.

309

00:21:17,000 --> 00:21:18,000

Right.

310

00:21:18,000 --> 00:21:23,000

At this particular spot, we found something very interesting on the John White map that's in the British archives.

311

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:24,000

Really?

312

00:21:24,000 --> 00:21:25,000

And I can show that to you if you want.

313

00:21:25,000 --> 00:21:26,000

Yeah, for sure.

314

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:31,000

Okay, so here's a really good quality copy of John White's map.

315

00:21:31,000 --> 00:21:32,000

Uh-huh.

316

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:34,000

Here's Roanoke Island. Do you notice anything odd?

317

00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:35,000

On the map?

318

00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:36,000

Yes, on the map.

319

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:40,000

Um, this? This is what?

320

00:21:40,000 --> 00:21:45,000

That's a patch of some sort where they've either revised the map or there was a tear or something like that.

321

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:47,000

If you look up here, there's another one. Smaller.

322

00:21:47,000 --> 00:21:48,000

There's another one right there.

323

00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:51,000

Right in here, which is where we are.

324

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:52,000

And that's a patch also.

325

00:21:52,000 --> 00:21:53,000

Yes, it is.

326

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:54,000

Wow.

327

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:55,000

So what's under that?

328

00:21:55,000 --> 00:21:56,000

That's a great question and that's what we wanted to know.

329

00:21:56,000 --> 00:22:00,000

So the maps in the British Museum, so were they able to look at it?

330

00:22:00,000 --> 00:22:05,000

Well, they used the light box with backlighting and they used ultraviolet light and they were able to see what was under the patch.

331

00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:06,000

And was something under it?

332

00:22:06,000 --> 00:22:08,000

Oh, something spectacular.

333

00:22:08,000 --> 00:22:09,000

What they find?

334

00:22:10,000 --> 00:22:12,000

Oh my God, look at that.

335

00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:16,000

There's a symbol hidden under the patch.

336

00:22:16,000 --> 00:22:17,000

There certainly is.

337

00:22:17,000 --> 00:22:19,000

That's astounding.

338

00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:20,000

And we're in this spot.

339

00:22:20,000 --> 00:22:21,000

Yes, we are.

340

00:22:21,000 --> 00:22:22,000

And so what's the symbol?

341

00:22:22,000 --> 00:22:23,000

Symbols of Ford.

342

00:22:23,000 --> 00:22:24,000

You're sure?

343

00:22:24,000 --> 00:22:25,000

Yes, no doubt.

344

00:22:25,000 --> 00:22:26,000

It represents a Ford.

345

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:28,000

This is a bombshell find.

346

00:22:28,000 --> 00:22:32,000

This symbol was a popular marker for English forts.

347

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:39,000

In fact, we know from historical illustrations that many early colonial forts took on this star-like shape.

348

00:22:39,000 --> 00:22:41,000

And so why do you think that was covered?

349

00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:43,000

Could be for secrecy.

350

00:22:43,000 --> 00:22:47,000

You may not be wanting to send a map back to England that would be captured that would show where a fortification was.

351

00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:48,000

Right.

352

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:51,000

It could be that it was altered because the fort was never built.

353

00:22:51,000 --> 00:22:54,000

Okay, but obviously a hugely intriguing place to look.

354

00:22:54,000 --> 00:23:02,000

Yeah, it definitely proves that this was a place of interest to the colonists at the time that John White was here because he placed this for whatever reason on the map.

355

00:23:03,000 --> 00:23:04,000

Okay, so what's the plan now?

356

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:08,000

Today, we're going to do some really high tech testing to peel away the vegetation.

357

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:10,000

And maybe see what that symbol is supposed to represent.

358

00:23:10,000 --> 00:23:11,000

Well, hopefully.

359

00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:12,000

All right.

360

00:23:12,000 --> 00:23:14,000

I can't wait, man. Let's do it. Come on.

361

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:22,000

The 60-acre piece of land under the patch is known as Site X, both because of the shape of the symbol and because Site X sounds really cool.

362

00:23:22,000 --> 00:23:23,000

Clayhore and Estange.

363

00:23:23,000 --> 00:23:29,000

Eric introduces me to the rest of his team and even shows me some artifacts that have already been excavated.

364

00:23:29,000 --> 00:23:31,000

This is lead-glazed earthenware.

365

00:23:31,000 --> 00:23:32,000

All right.

366

00:23:32,000 --> 00:23:33,000

You can tell the really distinctive yellow glaze.

367

00:23:33,000 --> 00:23:39,000

They compare small fragments like this that they found at Site X with pottery discovered at Roanoke.

368

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:44,000

Here we have a basin, and this is an archaeological example, and it dates to about 1677 to 1610.

369

00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:47,000

If you look at the glazing, the coloring, I mean, they're almost identical.

370

00:23:47,000 --> 00:23:50,000

And so items like this were found on Roanoke.

371

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:51,000

Yes.

372

00:23:51,000 --> 00:23:52,000

Incredible.

373

00:23:52,000 --> 00:23:55,000

But what they're really searching for is evidence of a structure.

374

00:23:55,000 --> 00:23:59,000

The real question is whether or not there's a fork here.

375

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:02,000

To find out, they're using a high-tech search tool.

376

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:07,000

This is crazy. What is this beast?

377

00:24:07,000 --> 00:24:13,000

Well, it's a big copter that's going to carry some lidar for us so we can do some great imaging of this area.

378

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:18,000

I've been lucky enough to have seen lidar in action before.

379

00:24:18,000 --> 00:24:25,000

It works by firing millions of laser pulses from the air to reveal evidence of human construction on the ground.

380

00:24:25,000 --> 00:24:31,000

Eric's team from Lidar USA has rigged up a portable laser unit to a powerful drone.

381

00:24:31,000 --> 00:24:34,000

So in terms of today, what's the plan? What are we scanning?

382

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:36,000

Well, Psydax is over in this direction here.

383

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:40,000

And what we're going to have these guys do is give us a better idea of the topography.

384

00:24:40,000 --> 00:24:43,000

Maybe it opens up new areas for us to go look and test.

385

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:45,000

How big an area are we talking about scanning here?

386

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:47,000

We're going to do about 40 to 50 acres today.

387

00:24:47,000 --> 00:24:49,000

It'll take about 15 minutes to cover that area.

388

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:50,000

Only 15 minutes?

389

00:24:50,000 --> 00:24:53,000

15 minutes, and we'll get it like twice over in that time.

390

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:54,000

That's insane.

391

00:24:54,000 --> 00:24:55,000

Oh, man.

392

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:56,000

The brave new world.

393

00:24:56,000 --> 00:24:59,000

And should we all be standing right here when it takes off?

394

00:24:59,000 --> 00:25:00,000

No.

395

00:25:00,000 --> 00:25:03,000

Okay, well, let's move to wherever we need to go.

396

00:25:03,000 --> 00:25:10,000

Eric and I take a step back while the Lidar crew preps their custom drone for take off.

397

00:25:10,000 --> 00:25:14,000

Once the lasers are up and running, it's time to see what this baby can do.

398

00:25:14,000 --> 00:25:27,000

He's up.

399

00:25:27,000 --> 00:25:43,000

I'm 50 miles from Roanoke Island at a location referred to as Psydax.

400

00:25:43,000 --> 00:25:44,000

So it's off.

401

00:25:44,000 --> 00:25:45,000

It's off.

402

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:50,000

New examination of a colonial era map has revealed a hidden symbol of a fort.

403

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:56,000

Now, the first colony foundation has just sent up a large drone armed with a high-tech laser

404

00:25:56,000 --> 00:26:02,000

to see if the lost colony of Roanoke could have survived by relocating here in 1587.

405

00:26:02,000 --> 00:26:05,000

You see, it's just a little bit above the trees.

406

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:11,000

The lower you are, the better the resolution is and more data points you get.

407

00:26:11,000 --> 00:26:29,000

Just a short 20 minutes later, the drone takes its final flight pass before Jean brings it in for a landing.

408

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:30,000

It's incredible.

409

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:33,000

All right, now let's see if she found anything.

410

00:26:33,000 --> 00:26:40,000

We remove the drive from the drone, and the data is ingested into a laptop where advanced software renders

411

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:43,000

a multi-layered graphic of the scanned area.

412

00:26:43,000 --> 00:26:44,000

But look at that.

413

00:26:44,000 --> 00:26:46,000

It's completely three-dimensional.

414

00:26:46,000 --> 00:26:47,000

How crazy is that?

415

00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:53,000

The program accomplishes in minutes what would have once taken archaeologists months to complete.

416

00:26:53,000 --> 00:27:00,000

The software can even strip away the foliage layer by layer to reveal the ground beneath the trees.

417

00:27:00,000 --> 00:27:02,000

So let's take a look around here and see what we see.

418

00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:04,000

What are some of the things that we're looking for here?

419

00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:06,000

What are some of the things that the lidar could reveal?

420

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:12,000

Any linear features that show up that run counter to the natural topography?

421

00:27:12,000 --> 00:27:13,000

Straight lines?

422

00:27:13,000 --> 00:27:14,000

Yeah, straight lines.

423

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:18,000

Any sort of depressions or mounds that might run on a regular spacing?

424

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:19,000

Okay.

425

00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:21,000

Do you not see a giant star-shaped fort?

426

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:24,000

Can we see any evidence of where you were digging before?

427

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:28,000

Possibly some of these little bumps are where the trenches were filled back in.

428

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:29,000

Okay.

429

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:30,000

Yeah.

430

00:27:30,000 --> 00:27:32,000

What is that right there?

431

00:27:32,000 --> 00:27:33,000

Good question.

432

00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:34,000

Oh, wow.

433

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:35,000

Okay.

434

00:27:35,000 --> 00:27:37,000

I really like this landform right here.

435

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:38,000

Uh-huh.

436

00:27:38,000 --> 00:27:42,000

What's nice is with the lidar you can see the true prominence of that little ridge that sticks out here.

437

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:44,000

Is that natural?

438

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:47,000

No, you don't really see right angles in nature.

439

00:27:47,000 --> 00:27:49,000

That'd be a great strategic spot for a fort.

440

00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:50,000

Promising?

441

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:52,000

It's already something important.

442

00:27:52,000 --> 00:27:54,000

We just need to dig more to find out what it is.

443

00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:57,000

And in the end all this fancy equipment is nice but we do like to get dirty sometimes.

444

00:27:57,000 --> 00:27:58,000

Still gotta go dig holes, right?

445

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:01,000

So now you get your high-tech model and now more digging.

446

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:02,000

Yeah, I am.

447

00:28:02,000 --> 00:28:03,000

That's the fun part.

448

00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:09,000

To an archaeologist finding a shape like this hidden beneath centuries of vegetation is like seeing the bat signal.

449

00:28:09,000 --> 00:28:16,000

This is very cool stuff and it very well may lead them to more definitive evidence of a human presence here.

450

00:28:16,000 --> 00:28:19,000

However, there are also reasons to be cautious.

451

00:28:19,000 --> 00:28:27,000

For one thing the lidar didn't show any signs of post holes or other constructions which would have been necessary to house 118 people.

452

00:28:27,000 --> 00:28:32,000

And if they're not here at Site X, where else could they have gone?

453

00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:42,000

Some believe the probable landing spot was an island known to John White and the Lost Colonists as Croatoan and to us today as Hatteras.

454

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:52,000

I meet with local historian Scott Dawson from the Croatoan Archaeological Society who says he knows exactly where the Lost Colonists disappeared to.

455

00:28:52,000 --> 00:28:53,000

Scott?

456

00:28:53,000 --> 00:28:54,000

Yeah, Scott Dawson.

457

00:28:54,000 --> 00:28:55,000

Josh, nice to meet you man.

458

00:28:55,000 --> 00:28:56,000

Nice to meet you, Josh.

459

00:28:56,000 --> 00:28:58,000

Thanks so much for taking the time. I appreciate it.

460

00:28:58,000 --> 00:28:59,000

Oh, thanks for coming down.

461

00:28:59,000 --> 00:29:02,000

So I take it you have a pretty strong theory about what happened to these folks.

462

00:29:02,000 --> 00:29:07,000

I do. So basically I feel like they went where they literally wrote down they went.

463

00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:08,000

Croatoan.

464

00:29:08,000 --> 00:29:09,000

Just Croatoan.

465

00:29:09,000 --> 00:29:16,000

When John White finally returned to Roanoke Island in 1590 he found the colony had all but disappeared.

466

00:29:16,000 --> 00:29:21,000

There were no signs of attack but the colonists themselves may have left behind a clue.

467

00:29:21,000 --> 00:29:25,000

White discovered a carving along the fence that read Croatoan.

468

00:29:25,000 --> 00:29:30,000

On a nearby tree he found another carving, Crow C-R-O.

469

00:29:31,000 --> 00:29:34,000

I mean that certainly is the obvious answer, right?

470

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:38,000

That's exactly right. They literally carved it out in capital letters. That's pretty hard to get around.

471

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:49,000

Unlike other tribes in the area with which the colonists had hostile relationships, the Croatoan tribe had helped the colonists after they arrived and proved to be friendly trading partners.

472

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:54,000

And they had a relationship with the Croatoan tribe for years. They got along great with them.

473

00:29:54,000 --> 00:29:56,000

I see so it was sort of an alliance.

474

00:29:56,000 --> 00:29:57,000

Yes.

475

00:29:57,000 --> 00:30:00,000

You make a very compelling case. So how do you prove it?

476

00:30:00,000 --> 00:30:02,000

You dig them up.

477

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:07,000

To hear Scott tell it it seems like the obvious solution. But that doesn't mean it's correct.

478

00:30:07,000 --> 00:30:08,000

Do this.

479

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:15,000

The Croatoan Archaeological Society has an active dig site where Scott believes they're on the verge of a major discovery.

480

00:30:15,000 --> 00:30:22,000

The dig is on the other side of Roanoke Sound which gives Scott a chance to prove that he's not just a stuffy historian.

481

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:24,000

Right there he's wrangled some jet skis.

482

00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:34,000

Let's go.

483

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:38,000

Let's see what you got.

484

00:30:53,000 --> 00:30:57,000

I'm not sure yet if Scott can really prove where the Lost Colony ended up.

485

00:30:57,000 --> 00:31:03,000

But I am sure of one thing. If he's right, I'm about to be the first person to jet ski into the history books.

486

00:31:11,000 --> 00:31:21,000

Historian Scott Dawson is leading me to where he and a group of archaeologists have been working to solve the mystery of the Lost Roanoke Colonists of 1587.

487

00:31:21,000 --> 00:31:25,000

We cross over Roanoke Sound to Hatteras Island.

488

00:31:25,000 --> 00:31:28,000

400 years ago this was known as Croatoan.

489

00:31:33,000 --> 00:31:35,000

Take that history boy.

490

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:44,000

We're ripping along at a speed that would have made the early settlers here green with envy until suddenly speed is a little hard to come by.

491

00:31:48,000 --> 00:31:49,000

Oh Scott.

492

00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:50,000

Yeah.

493

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:52,000

I got a slight problem here.

494

00:31:52,000 --> 00:31:53,000

What's that?

495

00:31:56,000 --> 00:31:57,000

I'm in a foot of water.

496

00:31:59,000 --> 00:32:04,000

As it turns out, I'm not just standing on a sandbar. In the colonists time, this used to be the beach.

497

00:32:04,000 --> 00:32:09,000

In fact, all you have to do is drop your hands into the water to find something historic.

498

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:11,000

Oh my god.

499

00:32:11,000 --> 00:32:12,000

What is it?

500

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:14,000

This is Croatoan pottery.

501

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:15,000

This is pottery.

502

00:32:15,000 --> 00:32:16,000

That's pottery.

503

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:18,000

It's shell grog.

504

00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:20,000

Which just means there's shells mixed into it?

505

00:32:20,000 --> 00:32:22,000

There's shells mixed into it that made the pots stronger.

506

00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:24,000

This is from 18th century?

507

00:32:24,000 --> 00:32:28,000

From the 18th to 16th century in that area.

508

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:30,000

Let's see if we can find more of it.

509

00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:43,000

Aha.

510

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:46,000

Pottery.

511

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:47,000

Yes sir.

512

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:50,000

Okay, so you know that's really old Josh.

513

00:32:50,000 --> 00:32:51,000

Like how old is this?

514

00:32:51,000 --> 00:32:53,000

Like from about the year 500.

515

00:32:53,000 --> 00:32:55,000

So you're telling me this is more than 1500 years old?

516

00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:57,000

Yeah.

517

00:32:57,000 --> 00:32:58,000

That is crazy.

518

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:03,000

Finds like this have helped Scott and his team identify that the native Croatoans lived here.

519

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:06,000

After all, this was the island that was named for them.

520

00:33:06,000 --> 00:33:08,000

But we're the lost colonists here too.

521

00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:10,000

We've got Croatoan pottery here.

522

00:33:10,000 --> 00:33:13,000

But how does that connect us to the lost colony?

523

00:33:13,000 --> 00:33:20,000

The goal would be to find Elizabethan colonial material mixed in with Croatoan material.

524

00:33:20,000 --> 00:33:21,000

Right.

525

00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:25,000

Which is exactly what we're working on at our main site, which is a little bit inland.

526

00:33:25,000 --> 00:33:26,000

Okay, great.

527

00:33:26,000 --> 00:33:28,000

These shallow waters are federal property.

528

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:33,000

So we carefully leave the pottery where we found it and Scott shows me why we're really here.

529

00:33:33,000 --> 00:33:38,000

He leads me inland where his colleagues have been working to excavate a major dig site.

530

00:33:39,000 --> 00:33:40,000

Hi, how are you?

531

00:33:40,000 --> 00:33:41,000

Hi.

532

00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:44,000

Why do you guys get a full scale operation going in here?

533

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:51,000

Researchers from the University of Bristol and the Croatoan Archaeological Society have uncovered a large Croatoan village

534

00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:53,000

yielding thousands of artifacts.

535

00:33:53,000 --> 00:33:58,000

But how do you figure out if 118 English colonists were living here too?

536

00:33:58,000 --> 00:33:59,000

Simple.

537

00:33:59,000 --> 00:34:00,000

You snoop around.

538

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:02,000

This is Charlie.

539

00:34:02,000 --> 00:34:04,000

Hi Charlie, how are you doing?

540

00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:05,000

I'm Josh.

541

00:34:05,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Nice to meet you.

542

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:07,000

Nice to meet you.

543

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:09,000

So Charlie, walk me through what's going on down here.

544

00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:13,000

Essentially when you live in a place, you leave rubbish behind.

545

00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:14,000

That's what we're looking at.

546

00:34:14,000 --> 00:34:15,000

Right.

547

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:17,000

You are routing around in Croatoan garbage.

548

00:34:17,000 --> 00:34:19,000

Yes, pretty much.

549

00:34:19,000 --> 00:34:24,000

We are going through their refuse, which to non-archaeologists is an extremely odd thing to do.

550

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:27,000

But for us, this is exactly what we want.

551

00:34:27,000 --> 00:34:30,000

We want all of this disgusting dirt.

552

00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:33,000

Because we're finding things like this.

553

00:34:33,000 --> 00:34:34,000

What is it?

554

00:34:34,000 --> 00:34:36,000

Massive fish vertebra.

555

00:34:36,000 --> 00:34:40,000

So we know that they're eating that specific breed of fish.

556

00:34:40,000 --> 00:34:45,000

They're using their materials that they have to gain the food that they need to survive.

557

00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:47,000

I mean, you've got water.

558

00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:49,000

You've got all the fish you could possibly want.

559

00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:51,000

You've got deer living on the land.

560

00:34:51,000 --> 00:34:55,000

And this pit itself shows that they're not just surviving.

561

00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:57,000

They're eating really quite well.

562

00:34:57,000 --> 00:34:58,000

Yeah.

563

00:34:58,000 --> 00:35:02,000

One man's garbage is another man's key to solving a 400-year-old mystery.

564

00:35:02,000 --> 00:35:08,000

In this case, the fish bones seem to tell us that if the row-and-out colony was plagued by a

drought,

565

00:35:08,000 --> 00:35:11,000

the natives here didn't seem to have any trouble finding food.

566

00:35:11,000 --> 00:35:14,000

Another reason the colonists might have wanted to join forces.

567

00:35:14,000 --> 00:35:20,000

So in terms of the lost colony, is it possible that they became fully integrated into this Croaton life?

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00:35:20,000 --> 00:35:22,000

It's absolutely possible.

569

00:35:22,000 --> 00:35:25,000

In fact, the English were familiar with this tribe.

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00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:31,000

So there's a relationship here that had already existed prior to the lost colony.

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00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:36,000

In order to find even the smallest artifacts that could prove the colonists were here,

572

00:35:36,000 --> 00:35:38,000

they've set up a sifting station.

573

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:39,000

Okay?

574

00:35:39,000 --> 00:35:40,000

Now what do I do with this?

575

00:35:40,000 --> 00:35:41,000

You just dump this in there?

576

00:35:41,000 --> 00:35:42,000

Alright, well I could do that.

577

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:43,000

Yeah.

578

00:35:43,000 --> 00:35:44,000

It's an easy bit.

579

00:35:44,000 --> 00:35:47,000

Buckets of dirt are emptied into the trough.

580

00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:48,000

Alright.

581

00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:52,000

Pushing through an increasingly fine series of screens.

582

00:35:52,000 --> 00:35:57,000

Finally, a hose is used to distinguish the artifacts from the remaining dirt.

583

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:03,000

Okay.

584

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:04,000

Okay.

585

00:36:04,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Okay.

586

00:36:05,000 --> 00:36:06,000

Into the nitty gritty.

587

00:36:06,000 --> 00:36:07,000

Nitty gritty.

588

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:09,000

Yeah, you kind of have to change up your eyes on this one,

589

00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:11,000

because you're just looking for the tiniest little shape changes,

590

00:36:11,000 --> 00:36:13,000

tiniest little color changes.

591

00:36:13,000 --> 00:36:16,000

We have tiniest little teeth.

592

00:36:16,000 --> 00:36:18,000

This is from a sheep's head.

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00:36:18,000 --> 00:36:20,000

It's the grinder at the back of the jaw.

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00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:25,000

We sift through the sample, finding plenty of dirt, but not enough tater.

595

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:28,000

Then a sharp eye changes that in an instant.

596

00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:31,000

Ah, a bead.

597

00:36:31,000 --> 00:36:32,000

A bead?

598

00:36:32,000 --> 00:36:33,000

There you go.

599

00:36:33,000 --> 00:36:34,000

Oh nice.

600

00:36:34,000 --> 00:36:35,000

Look at that.

601

00:36:35,000 --> 00:36:36,000

That's what's called a seed bead.

602

00:36:36,000 --> 00:36:38,000

Wow, that is awesome.

603

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:39,000

Look at that.

604

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:41,000

And this would have been European.

605

00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:44,000

Yeah, made in Italy, and Venice most likely.

606

00:36:44,000 --> 00:36:46,000

It's strange because it's so tiny.

607

00:36:46,000 --> 00:36:48,000

It's actually made out of glass.

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00:36:48,000 --> 00:36:52,000

That is so wild to think that something so fine, so small,

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00:36:52,000 --> 00:36:57,000

produced in Venice, made its way onto a beach in North Carolina,

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00:36:57,000 --> 00:36:58,000

hundreds of years ago.

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00:36:58,000 --> 00:37:00,000

Ah, it's so cool.

612

00:37:00,000 --> 00:37:05,000

These are very, very good examples of the difference between pre-European and European.

613

00:37:05,000 --> 00:37:10,000

These very European artifacts are being integrated within Native American dress.

614

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:15,000

It replaced the shell-based currency with glass beads.

615

00:37:16,000 --> 00:37:20,000

Something very small, but very significant.

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00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:24,000

This bead may be all that's left of one of the famed colonists of Roanoke,

617

00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:28,000

a tiny forensic clue that speaks to us from the past,

618

00:37:28,000 --> 00:37:32,000

and shows us that not only does beauty endure, it informs.

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00:37:32,000 --> 00:37:37,000

There is evidence to indicate that that last colony came down here.

620

00:37:37,000 --> 00:37:39,000

Why is it still so controversial, do you think?

621

00:37:39,000 --> 00:37:41,000

Why do you think that so many people don't accept that?

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00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:48,000

Before John White left the colony, there was some discussion of moving 50 miles into the main.

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00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:54,000

While most people have taken 50 miles into the main to mean into the mainland,

624

00:37:54,000 --> 00:37:58,000

it's just as possible that main means coast.

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00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:04,000

And Croatoan Island happens to be, you guessed it, 50 miles down the coast from Roanoke.

626

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:12,000

As we continue to explore the site, the North Carolina skies open up,

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00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:15,000

so we run for the cover of a small tent.

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00:38:15,000 --> 00:38:20,000

Our dig is on hold, but Scott wants to show me a recently uncovered artifact here

629

00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:25,000

that could be the strongest tie yet between the Croatoan tribe and the Roanoke colony.

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00:38:25,000 --> 00:38:26,000

Okay, you ready?

631

00:38:26,000 --> 00:38:28,000

What the hell is that?

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00:38:33,000 --> 00:38:37,000

I'm on Hatteras Island with the Croatoan Archaeological Society,

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00:38:37,000 --> 00:38:43,000

which is excavating a Native American site that existed at the same time as the lost colony of Roanoke.

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00:38:43,000 --> 00:38:49,000

Now, historian Scott Dawson is about to show me one of the strongest pieces of evidence yet

635

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:54,000

that the lost colony may have made a new home here with the Croatoan tribe.

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00:38:54,000 --> 00:38:56,000

What the hell is that?

637

00:38:56,000 --> 00:39:01,000

This is the handle of a raker, which is a sword.

638

00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:02,000

Wow.

639

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:04,000

And the blade would have been coming this way.

640

00:39:04,000 --> 00:39:05,000

Sure, yeah, yeah.

641

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:07,000

So the handle would have come here.

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00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:11,000

So this is definitely from the 1500s. This is from early colonial times.

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00:39:11,000 --> 00:39:17,000

And typologically, it's been dated using other samples to around 1580, 1590.

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00:39:17,000 --> 00:39:21,000

Wow. So this really is right in the money. This is lost colony time right here.

645

00:39:21,000 --> 00:39:28,000

That's right. And the rapier is particularly good because the rapier is an extremely expensive gentleman sword,

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00:39:28,000 --> 00:39:31,000

and they even said in the sources they would not trade her part with her sword.

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00:39:31,000 --> 00:39:36,000

Wow, right. So if it's something that they wouldn't have traded that was this valuable and this precious,

648

00:39:36,000 --> 00:39:38,000

possibly was actually brought here by its owner.

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00:39:38,000 --> 00:39:40,000

Right. It's reasonable.

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00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:42,000

That is extraordinary.

651

00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:46,000

The rapier handle isn't the only significant colonial relic found at this site.

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00:39:46,000 --> 00:39:50,000

They found an Elizabethan gun barrel and even Nuremberg tokens,

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00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:53,000

like the ones found at the original Roanoke site.

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00:39:53,000 --> 00:39:58,000

The presence of these artifacts suggests the colonists and Native Americans

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00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:02,000

may have been living here together at the same time.

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00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:06,000

And for you, Scott, do you think the lost colony folks came here?

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00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:07,000

Are you convinced of that?

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00:40:07,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Most of my reasoning for believing they came down here is from the primary sources.

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00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:15,000

They literally wrote down they came here, they had a relationship with this tribe.

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00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:18,000

I mean, those things, the historical context can't be thrown out the window.

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00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:20,000

And in terms of the archaeological record?

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00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:25,000

The archaeology is very circumstantial, but it's very compelling.

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00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:30,000

Right. Until we find that one magical object that seals the deal, you'll continue to dig.

664

00:40:30,000 --> 00:40:32,000

Oh, yeah. I'm not stopping.

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00:40:32,000 --> 00:40:34,000

Thank you so much.

666

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:35,000

Thanks, Josh.

667

00:40:35,000 --> 00:40:36,000

Thank you.

668

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:08,000

For today, those questions remain.

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00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:11,000

But what we do know is that the disappearance of Roanoke

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00:41:11,000 --> 00:41:14,000

couldn't stop the colonization of North America.

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00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:20,000

Soon after, Jamestown became the first permanent English settlement in the now United States.

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00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:24,000

The same determination that drove the first colonists inspired their successors

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00:41:24,000 --> 00:41:30,000

and continues to inspire researchers like Charles Ewing, Eric Dietz, and Scott Dawson.

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00:41:30,000 --> 00:41:36,000

Thanks to them, it appears that one day soon, we may know for sure what happened to the lost colony.

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00:41:36,000 --> 00:41:38,000

One thing is certain, though.

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00:41:38,000 --> 00:41:44,000

The bravery of Roanoke's settlers reminds us that exploration always means risk,

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00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:49,000

and that those who dare sometimes are lost, but not forgotten.