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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,000

Tonight, one of America's oldest mysteries.

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00:00:04,000 --> 00:00:05,500

They're gone.

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00:00:05,500 --> 00:00:09,500

The entire colony is just gone.

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00:00:09,500 --> 00:00:13,000

A group of English settlers vanish without a trace,

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

leaving behind only cryptic clues.

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

The houses have been dismantled, taken down.

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

And the letters C, R, O, carved into a tree.

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

Now we'll reveal the top theories behind the entire colony.

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

He admits that he had a group of English colonists

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

killed many years ago.

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

They could have perished on the small boat.

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00:00:34,000 --> 00:00:37,000

The colonists survived, and they're in Georgia,

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

taken in by natives.

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

Can advanced technology finally provide answers?

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

Something was covered up here, a small detail

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

that may be hiding a big secret.

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00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:51,000

What really happened to the lost colony of Roanoke?

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

The Roanoke Island

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

The Roanoke Island

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00:01:03,000 --> 00:01:06,000

The Roanoke Island

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

The Roanoke Island

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00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:13,000

July 25th, 1587.

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00:01:13,000 --> 00:01:17,000

Just off the coast of present-day North Carolina,

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00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:22,000

three ships carrying English settlers land on Roanoke Island.

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00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:25,000

About 115 men, women and children,

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00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:27,000

along with John White, the governor,

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00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:29,000

arrived off the coast of North Carolina.

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00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:33,000

Their goal was to create the first permanent English settlement

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00:01:33,000 --> 00:01:34,000

in the New World.

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00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:39,000

Two years earlier, the English sent a group of mostly soldiers

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00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:41,000

to try and colonize Roanoke,

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00:01:41,000 --> 00:01:43,000

but it ends in disaster.

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00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:45,000

With severe food shortages,

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00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:48,000

attacks from the hostile Native American population there,

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00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:51,000

many died, and they barely escaped,

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00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:53,000

just getting back to England.

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00:01:53,000 --> 00:01:56,000

Governor White is determined to do better this time,

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00:01:56,000 --> 00:02:00,000

and he has more than just his life on the line.

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

On this expedition was John White's very pregnant daughter,

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00:02:04,000 --> 00:02:07,000

Eleanor, and her husband Ananias Dare,

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00:02:07,000 --> 00:02:10,000

among other colonists who were there who were also ready

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

to start their families and settle in the New World.

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00:02:13,000 --> 00:02:19,000

On August 18th, 1587, Eleanor Dare gives birth to her daughter, Virginia,

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00:02:19,000 --> 00:02:23,000

the first English child born in North America.

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00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:26,000

Unfortunately, there's no time to celebrate

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00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:30,000

because the colony is running dangerously low on supplies.

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00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:33,000

You'd think they would have learned from their last expedition,

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00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:35,000

but as they start to take inventory,

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:38,000

they realize they're not going to have enough provisions last through the winter.

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00:02:38,000 --> 00:02:43,000

The plan had been start growing their own crops and farming livestock,

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00:02:43,000 --> 00:02:45,000

but there's just not enough time.

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:49,000

So someone has to go back to England and secure more provisions.

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00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:51,000

On August 27th,

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00:02:51,000 --> 00:02:54,000

barely a week after his granddaughter is born,

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00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:59,000

White volunteers to make the transatlantic crossing himself.

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00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:01,000

It was quite a journey.

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00:03:01,000 --> 00:03:04,000

It took him two and a half months to get back.

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00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:09,000

When they finally arrived back on English soil, it was November.

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00:03:09,000 --> 00:03:13,000

Governor White quickly loads five ships with supplies.

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00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:15,000

They are pretty much ready to sail,

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00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:19,000

but the problem with this is there is a stay-of-all shipping

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00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:21,000

commanded by Queen Elizabeth I

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00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:25,000

because the Spanish Armada are making the most untimely arrival.

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00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:28,000

England is on the brink of war with Spain.

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00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:31,000

That means that Queen Elizabeth's hands are tied

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00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:35,000

and her money is more focused on war efforts than a failing colony.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:40,000

White has no choice but to stay in England indefinitely.

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00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:45,000

Meanwhile, at the colony, they expect White to return in six months,

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00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:48,000

and of course they don't know about the war news,

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00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:51,000

but you can imagine their sinking feeling as six months go by,

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00:03:51,000 --> 00:03:54,000

and then a year, and then two years.

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00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:59,000

Ultimately, it takes White three full years to return to the coast of North Carolina.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:02,000

When he does, it's August 18th, 1590,

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00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:06,000

the third birthday of his granddaughter, Virginia Dare.

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00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:10,000

But Governor White doesn't return to his family.

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00:04:10,000 --> 00:04:12,000

He returns to a mystery.

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00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:14,000

They're gone.

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

The entire colony is just gone.

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00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:21,000

At some point in the previous three years,

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00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:25,000

everything and everyone had just disappeared.

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00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:28,000

There's no evidence that there was any kind of battle.

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00:04:28,000 --> 00:04:32,000

There's no evidence of bones or bodies that might indicate

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

an altercation between the colonists and the indigenous people.

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00:04:36,000 --> 00:04:40,000

What's weird is that there's basically nothing left behind,

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00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:42,000

and the town isn't so much abandoned.

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:44,000

It's been dismantled.

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00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:46,000

All of the buildings have been carefully taken apart.

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00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:50,000

The tools, the boats, the provisions, it's all been taken away.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:53,000

The big mystery is, where do they all go?

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00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:57,000

White and a few men spend hours searching the site.

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00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:00,000

They turn up only two clues.

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

They're carved into a fence post.

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

White and the English see this word, croaton.

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

And then carved into a tree, three letters, C-R-O.

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00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:13,000

When White sees the word croaton, he's actually quite jubilant.

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00:05:13,000 --> 00:05:16,000

He knows exactly where the colonists have gone.

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00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:20,000

The croatons are a tribe located just directly south of Roanoke.

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

John White assumes this was a full-scale relocation by the colonists

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00:05:25,000 --> 00:05:27,000

to live with the tribe.

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00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:31,000

Now, you might think, based on those carvings,

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00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:32,000

that there's another option,

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00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:35,000

that the colonists were attacked by the croatons.

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00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:38,000

But John White doesn't think so.

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00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:41,000

First of all, there's the careful dismantling of the town,

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00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:43,000

and you don't do that if you're under attack.

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00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:46,000

And secondly, White and the colonists have a plan

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00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:48,000

for what to do if they are under attack.

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00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:52,000

Prior to leaving, John White gave explicit instructions to the colony.

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00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:55,000

If they were in distress, or if they were in danger,

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00:05:55,000 --> 00:05:58,000

to carve a Maltese cross on a tree,

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00:05:58,000 --> 00:06:01,000

but there's no Maltese cross.

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

White returns to his ships, intending to sail south to Croatoan.

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

White has come with two boats, the Moonlight and the Hopewell.

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00:06:09,000 --> 00:06:11,000

But the crews are very antsy,

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00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:14,000

and they don't want to spend any more time in this hostile territory

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00:06:14,000 --> 00:06:15,000

than they have to.

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Imagine it from their perspective.

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:20,000

These are people who had signed up on a resupply ship

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00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:23,000

to come over to a place that they thought was going to be safe.

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00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:27,000

These people had not been hired to go in search of lost colonists,

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00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:30,000

who as far as they knew might have been held captive,

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00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:32,000

might have been in the midst of a war.

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

So they had much less enthusiasm than John White.

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00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:39,000

At first, they're willing to give White another day or two.

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00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:44,000

They plan to head to Croatoan the next morning, August 19th.

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00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:47,000

But they run into problems.

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00:06:47,000 --> 00:06:49,000

The Hopewell's anchor cable breaks,

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:52,000

and there's no way that they can risk going out into the treacherous waters

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00:06:52,000 --> 00:06:55,000

of the North Carolina Inner Banks.

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00:06:55,000 --> 00:06:57,000

The waters are very shallow.

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00:06:57,000 --> 00:07:00,000

The ship could be shipwrecked and cause an extreme danger for the crew

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

and others on board the ship.

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00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:06,000

A desperate White appeals to the crew of the Moonlight.

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00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:08,000

The crew of the second ship, the Moonlight,

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00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:12,000

are not willing to risk their lives in order to find the lost colonists.

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00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:15,000

They don't have as much invested in this as John White does.

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00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:17,000

Certainly he's thinking of his family.

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00:07:17,000 --> 00:07:20,000

They're just thinking about making it back to England safely

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00:07:20,000 --> 00:07:23,000

before the brutal Atlantic winter sets in.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:26,000

So the Moonlight goes back to England.

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00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:31,000

But White is able to get a small team to agree to repair the Hopewell,

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00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:33,000

sail to the Caribbean for the winter,

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00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:38,000

and then return to North Carolina in the spring to resume the search.

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00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:40,000

But it's as if this guy was cursed.

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00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:43,000

After White and the crew repair the Hopewell,

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00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:45,000

they set sail for the Caribbean.

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00:07:45,000 --> 00:07:48,000

But then a freak storm comes up, get blown way off course,

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00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:50,000

and they're forced to return to England.

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00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:56,000

White attempts to raise the funds for another search and rescue mission,

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00:07:56,000 --> 00:07:58,000

but fails.

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00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:01,000

One can imagine how devastated John White must have felt.

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00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:03,000

He's so close to finding his family.

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00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:06,000

He's only 40 miles away, but he can't make it to them.

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

And after three years, he passes away,

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

never to return and never to know the fate of what happened to the colony.

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00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:17,000

News of the lost colony spreads throughout Europe.

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00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:20,000

And while White is never able to find out what happened,

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00:08:20,000 --> 00:08:25,000

ships begin to visit the area again some seven years after his death.

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00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:30,000

Occasionally, other European ships visit the Outer Banks during the 1600s.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:34,000

But once we reach the 1700s, it's a pretty heavily traveled area.

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00:08:34,000 --> 00:08:38,000

And no one ever actually sees the missing colonists.

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00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:43,000

But they do find evidence that perhaps they have blended in with the local tribes,

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00:08:43,000 --> 00:08:45,000

just as White believed.

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00:08:45,000 --> 00:08:49,000

One expedition reports native tribespeople with European features,

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00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:52,000

fair complexions, light-colored hair and eyes,

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00:08:52,000 --> 00:08:55,000

and some even claim to have European relatives.

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00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:59,000

Additional proof can be found in architecture.

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00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:05,000

One expedition reports a native village with timber houses built in the English style.

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00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:09,000

It seems likely that these tribes had English settlers living amongst them,

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

working together, intermarrying, having offspring.

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00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:18,000

Now all of this is hearsay, but it is potential evidence that the lost colony moved in with the Croatoans.

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00:09:18,000 --> 00:09:23,000

The Croatoan Archaeological Society, led by historian Scott Dawson,

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00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:27,000

has been excavating the area since 2009.

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00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:30,000

So the archaeologists who have dug on what is now Hatteras Island

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00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:36,000

have found fascinating artifacts that definitely are made in the time of the lost colonists.

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00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:41,000

They found the hilt of a rapier that is a kind of sword that was used during Elizabethan times.

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00:09:42,000 --> 00:09:49,000

They found fragments of pottery and dishes, a copper ring, a brass gun, and European coins.

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00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:55,000

But can we say that's absolute proof that the colonists moved in with the local indigenous people?

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00:09:55,000 --> 00:10:03,000

Genealogist Roberta Estes thinks it's possible and is using cutting-edge technology to try and prove it.

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00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:06,000

What she's doing is tracing Y chromosome DNA,

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00:10:06,000 --> 00:10:11,000

analyzing people in the area of Hatteras Island who may have mixed native European ancestry,

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00:10:11,000 --> 00:10:14,000

and who share surnames with the Roanoke colonists.

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00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:18,000

Estes has turned up a number of intriguing candidates.

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00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:22,000

These people may just have the right background to be descended from the lost colony,

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00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:26,000

living proof that the colonists survived and mixed with the Croatoans.

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00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:33,000

But the problem with this is to get an absolute match, we have to identify a matching family back in England.

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00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:39,000

If Estes can find a match, a confirmed descendant of a lost colonist and a Croatoan native, that'll be it.

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00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:44,000

It won't be the lost colony anymore, but for now, it remains just a theory.

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00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:56,000

When 115 colonists go missing from Roanoke Island in 1590, the English are eager to re-establish a presence in the New World,

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00:10:56,000 --> 00:11:00,000

but it takes them nearly 20 years to try again.

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

In 1607, England finally manages to establish a settlement on the James River in Virginia.

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00:11:07,000 --> 00:11:09,000

They call it Jamestown.

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00:11:09,000 --> 00:11:14,000

Like its predecessor, Jamestown is also plagued by misfortune.

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00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:17,000

The English can't seem to catch a break.

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00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Once again, they don't have enough to eat early on.

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00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:24,000

They arrive too late in the year to plant crops.

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00:11:24,000 --> 00:11:26,000

The English are starving.

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

Food shortages get worse and worse and worse.

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00:11:29,000 --> 00:11:34,000

The English resort to some fairly terrible behavior.

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00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:38,000

First, they slaughter and kill their own animals.

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00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:42,000

This is not a very good strategy for long-term since they need those animals to survive.

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00:11:42,000 --> 00:11:47,000

And when those run out, they turn to eating rats, mice, and snakes.

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00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:50,000

Then they boil and eat their shoe leather for sustenance.

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00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:55,000

There's even some evidence they may have resorted to cannibalism to survive.

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00:11:55,000 --> 00:12:02,000

Within three years, only 60 of the original 214 Jamestown settlers are still alive,

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00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:07,000

including a well-known figure in American history, Captain John Smith.

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

John Smith was such a fascinating guy.

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00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:11,000

He served as a mercenary.

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00:12:11,000 --> 00:12:18,000

He was captured by the Turks, sold into slavery, and then eventually made his way to England by way of Russia.

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00:12:18,000 --> 00:12:24,000

Then he ends up in the New World and becomes the leader of the new colony at Jamestown.

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00:12:24,000 --> 00:12:27,000

He is the first English explorer to map the Chesapeake Bay.

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00:12:27,000 --> 00:12:31,000

He then explores the coast of New England and gives the region its name.

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00:12:31,000 --> 00:12:36,000

His books and maps aid English colonization efforts for decades to come.

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00:12:36,000 --> 00:12:40,000

While he's struggling to keep his colony afloat in Virginia,

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00:12:40,000 --> 00:12:46,000

he's also got a burning curiosity to solve the mystery of the Roanoke colonists.

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00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:53,000

And it doesn't hurt that England's King James has issued an order to launch an investigation.

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00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:57,000

Smith works with the Jamestown Colonies' Secretary, William Strayke.

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00:12:57,000 --> 00:13:01,000

In his journals, we can see William Strayke's research into the case.

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00:13:01,000 --> 00:13:06,000

Operating on the assumption that Native American tribes might be the only people left to know what happened,

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00:13:06,000 --> 00:13:11,000

Strayke dives deep into a nearby local indigenous population called the Powhatan.

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00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:19,000

The Powhatan are led by a man named Wahoon Seneca, more commonly known as Chief Powhatan.

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

Chief Powhatan has a love-hate relationship with the English.

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00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:31,000

On one hand, he views them as a threat to his people and their way of life.

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00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:41,000

But he also thinks the English would be useful allies in the ongoing conflict between himself and the other tribes.

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00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:47,000

Today, Chief Powhatan is best remembered as the father of Pocahontas.

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00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:53,000

As the legend goes, Powhatan's men captured John Smith and ordered him put to death.

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00:13:53,000 --> 00:13:59,000

But the quite extraordinary thing about Pocahontas was she does seem to have been quite smitten with John Smith,

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00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:05,000

and she actually pleaded with Powhatan to spare his life, and so consequently he did.

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

But Chief Powhatan may not have always been so lenient, because according to Smith and Strayke's investigation,

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00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:18,000

he might be responsible for the destruction of the Roanoke Colony.

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00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:27,000

Chief Powhatan speaks to William Strayke, and he admits that he had a group of English colonists killed many years ago.

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00:14:27,000 --> 00:14:34,000

According to him, instead of migrating south to live with the Croatoan, the Roanoke colonists head north,

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00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:38,000

and they stay with a different tribe called the Chesapeake.

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00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:44,000

The Chesapeake are rivals with the Powhatan because they refuse to bend the knee to Chief Powhatan's authority and join the confederation.

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00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:52,000

So when he gets word that the colonists are possibly allying with the Chesapeake, he claims that this fulfills a prophecy he's received.

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00:14:52,000 --> 00:15:01,000

He's been warned that a great nation from the east is coming to overthrow his empire, unless he kills them first.

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00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:05,000

So that's exactly what he does.

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00:15:05,000 --> 00:15:10,000

After John Smith hears Chief Powhatan's confession, he digs deeper.

239

00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:18,000

Smith asks Chief Powhatan to prove his bold claim to essentially show me where the bodies are, but Chief Powhatan can't.

240

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:25,000

Powhatan couldn't show him where the bodies were, but what he did do is show him items from previous colonies,

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00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:29,000

and he showed them a mortar and pestle and a couple of other objects.

242

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:33,000

But again, these could not be confirmed as coming directly from the lost colony.

243

00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:41,000

But when Smith sends back his report to King James, the evidence is enough to convince him that this is what happened.

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00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:45,000

And if that's what the King believes, then the case closed, right?

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00:15:45,000 --> 00:15:52,000

The Powhatan theory becomes the official version of events for the next 200-plus years.

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00:15:52,000 --> 00:15:56,000

But today's historians question its accuracy.

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00:15:56,000 --> 00:16:02,000

Some argue that the settlers that Chief Powhatan bows of killing aren't the Roanoke colonists all.

248

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:08,000

Instead, he's referring to a different set of people, and the confusion happens because of the language barrier.

249

00:16:08,000 --> 00:16:14,000

Smith was specifically talking about the colony of 115, the last Roanoke colony that was established.

250

00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:20,000

But Powhatan could have easily been talking about the previous colonies that had come a couple of years earlier.

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00:16:20,000 --> 00:16:28,000

Remember, there was a 1584 expedition too, just male soldiers, 15 of whom were left behind when that expedition failed.

252

00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:31,000

And that might be who Powhatan killed.

253

00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:39,000

It's certainly true that a lot of blood was spilled in this particular chapter of history, both Native American and English.

254

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:45,000

But despite Chief Powhatan's account, we still can't prove that any of it belonged to the Roanoke colonists.

255

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:58,000

North Carolina's island dotted coast is now an idyllic and popular tourist destination.

256

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:06,000

But 400 years ago, it was largely inhospitable, as Roanoke's colonists discovered.

257

00:17:08,000 --> 00:17:12,000

When John White leaves in 1587, conditions among the colony were dire.

258

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:16,000

Food was limited, and the farming was not taking hold as they had hoped.

259

00:17:16,000 --> 00:17:20,000

There was a famine going on. There was clearly a great deal of bad weather.

260

00:17:20,000 --> 00:17:25,000

And they're struggling with skirmishes with Native American Indians.

261

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:29,000

We know they're not there when White returns three years later.

262

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:33,000

So pretty much every theory about what happened to them starts with a relocation.

263

00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:37,000

They have to go somewhere else. But Roanoke is an island.

264

00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:41,000

So if they want to flee, they'll have to cross a body of water.

265

00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:46,000

Luckily, while they don't have enough food to eat, they do have a boat.

266

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:50,000

The colonists originally arrived with three ships.

267

00:17:50,000 --> 00:17:53,000

One returns to England immediately.

268

00:17:53,000 --> 00:17:57,000

One is taken by John White, and one still remains.

269

00:17:57,000 --> 00:18:03,000

The boat they have left is called a penis, which is a small, nimble, flat bottom boat,

270

00:18:03,000 --> 00:18:06,000

mostly used for short trips and errands.

271

00:18:06,000 --> 00:18:12,000

You use it when your main vessel is too cumbersome or the water's too shallow.

272

00:18:12,000 --> 00:18:18,000

When White finally arrives in 1590, in addition to finding the community dismantled, the penis is gone.

273

00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:26,000

He presumably would have thought the colonists had gotten on it and went somewhere where he wouldn't have known.

274

00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:34,000

The point of them having this boat is for fishing or island hopping, foraging, or small-scale exploration.

275

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:36,000

It's not meant to be a long-haul ship.

276

00:18:36,000 --> 00:18:43,000

But in a dire emergency with no other options, this has to be their plan A.

277

00:18:43,000 --> 00:18:46,000

It's either get on the boat or die.

278

00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:52,000

And this is where the theorists really start speculating about where they may have gone on the small boat.

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00:18:52,000 --> 00:19:00,000

But this fails to take into account one other possibility that I think is definitely an option that they could have perished on the small boat.

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00:19:02,000 --> 00:19:04,000

This is very noteworthy.

281

00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:15,000

So far, throughout history, really, all 400-plus years, searching for the lost colonists has been largely limited to learning.

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00:19:15,000 --> 00:19:22,000

It's not limited to land, but I think it's just as likely that the answers are in the water.

283

00:19:22,000 --> 00:19:27,000

Unfortunately, this theory makes finding evidence almost impossible.

284

00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:40,000

First of all, you're not going to see any trace of what happened unless somebody's randomly diving or scanning the bottom of some body of water and lux into a one in a billion discovery.

285

00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:44,000

It's complicated to even know where to begin to look for a wreckage for the colonists.

286

00:19:44,000 --> 00:19:50,000

We don't know where they left from. We don't know how far they sailed out. We don't even know where they're going.

287

00:19:50,000 --> 00:19:58,000

If the colonists had decided that it was time to sail somewhere, the most logical place to go would be to sail back to England.

288

00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:06,000

They could have taken a short trip to some other spot in the New World, but the New World isn't working out for them.

289

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:10,000

So they valiantly try to go home.

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00:20:10,000 --> 00:20:17,000

Think about it. You are stranded with no food and no hope in a violent, strange new land. What do you do?

291

00:20:17,000 --> 00:20:24,000

You try to make it back home to a place you're familiar with, even if it means risking death.

292

00:20:24,000 --> 00:20:31,000

They had survived the crossing one way. Maybe they had what it took to make it the other way.

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00:20:31,000 --> 00:20:38,000

Another European colony also famously made the voyage home against even worse odds.

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00:20:38,000 --> 00:20:45,000

The Roanoke colonists might have been aware of a very well-known story published in Europe 25 years prior.

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00:20:45,000 --> 00:20:51,000

There was a group of marooned French colonists that shares many similarities to the Roanoke adventure.

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00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:57,000

It's the kind of story that would have gone viral today, but even back then it managed to spread far and wide.

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00:20:57,000 --> 00:21:05,000

In 1562, the French set out to establish the Charles Ford Settlement in what would become South Carolina.

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00:21:05,000 --> 00:21:10,000

But by the following year, these colonists also run out of supplies.

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

Their leader, Admiral Jean Ruebaud, sails home for more provisions, leaving two dozen people behind.

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00:21:18,000 --> 00:21:29,000

Unfortunately, upon returning to Europe, Ruebaud is unexpectedly detained, leaving the settlers to fend for themselves in a strange land.

301

00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:32,000

Just like Roanoke.

302

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:37,000

But unlike Roanoke, this colony has a much bigger obstacle.

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00:21:37,000 --> 00:21:40,000

These French settlers don't have access to a boat.

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

So in 1563, the Frenchmen build their own boat.

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00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:53,000

And against all odds, logic and reason, they make it back to Europe. Just barely, but they do make it.

306

00:21:53,000 --> 00:22:01,000

The colonists are probably thinking, if the French can make it on a boat they built themselves, then surely we can make it with a boat that we have on hand.

307

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:04,000

But the problem may lie in their numbers.

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00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:08,000

The population of the colony starts off with just over a hundred people.

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00:22:08,000 --> 00:22:15,000

And because the pinnets were so small, it's unlikely that all the colonists were on board that ship.

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00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:19,000

But depending on when the colonists flee, some months have passed without supplies.

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00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:26,000

Between starvation, disease and native attacks, there may be far less than 100 survivors to board the boat.

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00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:30,000

Capacity might not have been an issue.

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00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:32,000

But stability is.

314

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:36,000

For any crew crossing the Atlantic, it was challenging at best.

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00:22:36,000 --> 00:22:43,000

These colonists didn't have instruments. They were facing rough waters. And they also were facing challenging weather.

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00:22:43,000 --> 00:22:48,000

In addition to that, this is not a seafaring boat. This is a shoreline boat.

317

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:57,000

And with rough seas and the complications of the water surrounding the outer banks, it would have proved to be very difficult and very hard if they made it back.

318

00:22:57,000 --> 00:23:03,000

Surely they would have returned to their families. There would have been some evidence, but there's nothing to say that they made it home.

319

00:23:03,000 --> 00:23:07,000

Could the remains of the lost colony be buried underwater?

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00:23:07,000 --> 00:23:15,000

So far, no such shipwreck has been found. But some researchers remain optimistic.

321

00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:22,000

To date, scientists have only been able to explore about 35% of the U.S. coastal sea floor. So there's a lot to go.

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00:23:22,000 --> 00:23:32,000

Maybe someday with advances in technology, we'll find the remains of the lost colonists who make it off the island, but don't survive the journey home.

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00:23:52,000 --> 00:24:00,000

By the 20th century, the leading theories as to what happened to the colonists were that, number one, they joined with the pro-Itoans to the south.

324

00:24:00,000 --> 00:24:05,000

And number two, they had gone north to the Chesapeake where they were murdered by Powhatan's people.

325

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:10,000

Another possibility is quite simple, that they'd tried to sail back to England.

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00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:17,000

There's just so little evidence. There's almost nothing that has survived. And we haven't even located the site of the colony.

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00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:23,000

Roanoke Island is about the size of Manhattan, and we don't even know where they lived on that island.

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00:24:23,000 --> 00:24:30,000

The primary surviving written source for the bulk of the information that we have on the colony is from John White's diary.

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00:24:30,000 --> 00:24:33,000

And of course, he wasn't there for the disappearance.

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00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:40,000

But in 1937, a new written account is found. And it's a bombshell.

331

00:24:40,000 --> 00:24:47,000

November of 1937, near Eatonton, North Carolina, about 60 miles west of Roanoke Island,

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00:24:47,000 --> 00:24:52,000

a man named Lewis Hammond is hunting for hickory nuts along the Chowan River.

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00:24:52,000 --> 00:25:00,000

When he finds a large rock, it's covered in strange inscriptions that appear to be Old English.

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

Hammond brings the rock to Emory University in Atlanta to have a history professor named Haywood J. Pierce help him decipher what it says.

335

00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:13,000

Pierce takes one look and he can't believe his eyes.

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00:25:13,000 --> 00:25:19,000

The carved stone purports to be a message from Eleanor Dare, John White's daughter.

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00:25:19,000 --> 00:25:28,000

On one side of the stone, Dare report the sad fate of her husband, Ananias Dare, and their four-year-old daughter, Virginia.

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00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:32,000

They apparently both die in the year 1591.

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00:25:32,000 --> 00:25:37,000

Below that, Dare instructs whoever finds the stone to bring it to Governor White.

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00:25:37,000 --> 00:25:44,000

She wants her father to know what happened to her family, and making the stone carving is the best way she knows how to do that.

341

00:25:44,000 --> 00:25:48,000

On the reverse side, there's an even longer message.

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00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:55,000

Eleanor describes the initial departure from Roanoke and the route they've taken so far.

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00:25:55,000 --> 00:26:01,000

They travel west about 50 miles and end up close to the spot where the stone is found.

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00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:07,000

Next, she writes that after a miserable period of illness, starvation, and violent attacks from local tribes,

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00:26:07,000 --> 00:26:14,000

the population of the colony, which starts off with just over 100 people, dwindles down to just seven souls.

346

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:20,000

I've looked at this stone in great detail. It makes for a great story. It makes for a very plausible story.

347

00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:23,000

The problem is, there's no record of where they went.

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00:26:23,000 --> 00:26:26,000

But she does provide a hint of a clue.

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

After the seven colonists bury the remains of their peers, Dare writes that she's inscribed their names on a grave marker somewhere,

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00:26:33,000 --> 00:26:36,000

along with further details of recent events.

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00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:42,000

In other words, there may be a second hand-carved message with more answers.

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00:26:42,000 --> 00:26:50,000

After reviewing it, Haywood J. Pierce, the history professor, knows exactly how important this rock is.

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00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:57,000

So he buys it from Lewis Hammond and launches this obsessive search for the second stone.

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00:26:57,000 --> 00:27:04,000

Pierce believes finding the second stone will authenticate the first stone, effectively solving the Roanoke mystery,

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00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:08,000

and earning himself a permanent spot in the history books as well.

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00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:15,000

Professor Pierce offers a \$500 reward to anyone who can find the second Dare stone.

357

00:27:15,000 --> 00:27:23,000

By today's inflation, that's \$10,000. During that time, the country was still in the Great Depression, so we know the hunt was on.

358

00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:27,000

Soon enough, Pierce's plan works.

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

The next stone is found by Bill Eberhardt, a backwiz man from northern Georgia.

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00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:38,000

He brings a 21-pound rock to Emory University that he claims he found in South Carolina.

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00:27:38,000 --> 00:27:44,000

Sure enough, it has the names of the dead that Eleanor Dare mentioned that she carved into it.

362

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

But Eberhardt's find doesn't end there.

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00:27:47,000 --> 00:27:53,000

In total, within less than a year, Eberhardt finds several dozen more stones.

364

00:27:53,000 --> 00:28:01,000

Taken together, they finally paint a clear picture of what happened to the Roanoke survivors. It's an incredible tale.

365

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:09,000

They eventually make it to safety after a 500-mile journey to Georgia.

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00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:15,000

Together, this evidence has become known as the Dare stones.

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00:28:15,000 --> 00:28:23,000

According to the Dare stones, the colonists survived and they're in Georgia, taken in by natives, and Eleanor's husband passes away.

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00:28:23,000 --> 00:28:28,000

Eventually, Eleanor Dare is married to a Native American man in 1593.

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

Together, they have a daughter named Agnes, and Eleanor dies in 1599.

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00:28:34,000 --> 00:28:43,000

After Eleanor's death, Griffin Jones and Agnes Dare leave behind obituaries for the other survivors as they die off,

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00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:48,000

but nobody knows what happens to Agnes or Griffin.

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00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:53,000

And it's easy to say Professor Pierce was very excited about these findings.

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00:28:53,000 --> 00:29:00,000

He hosts a scientific conference in October of 1940 inviting 34 academic experts to examine the stones.

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00:29:00,000 --> 00:29:06,000

A panel of these experts issues a press release supporting the stones' authenticity.

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00:29:06,000 --> 00:29:11,000

Pierce submits an article of his findings to the Saturday Evening Post.

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00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:18,000

When the article comes out on April 26, 1941, it's quite shocking, but not for the reason Pierce expected,

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00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:23,000

because according to the article, the fact-checkers find all kinds of problems with the story.

378

00:29:23,000 --> 00:29:26,000

The Dare stones are our hoax.

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00:29:27,000 --> 00:29:32,000

After examining the stones, a linguist finds several flaws.

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00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:38,000

They used words which were not in the English language at the time, like trail and reconnoiter.

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00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:45,000

One of these stones even purports to the names of people, but those names don't appear on the ship's manifest.

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00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:47,000

They seem to be just fabrications.

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00:29:47,000 --> 00:29:49,000

Then there's the handwriting.

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00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:55,000

The 47 stones found by Everhart don't match the handwriting on the initial stone found by Hammond.

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00:29:55,000 --> 00:30:01,000

And they're carved into a different kind of rock. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

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00:30:01,000 --> 00:30:06,000

The timing of the 1937 find is also suspicious.

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00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:11,000

In 1937, it's the 350-year anniversary of the Lost Colony.

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00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:15,000

There's a lot of fanfare built up around this anniversary and the celebration.

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00:30:15,000 --> 00:30:19,000

It's also an interesting time because the country is the middle of the Great Depression,

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00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:22,000

so it's a wonderful way to live the spirits of the population.

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00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:27,000

In modern terms, Roe and O could be described as having a moment.

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00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:35,000

So if somebody were trying to make money off some bogus artifacts, this would be the time.

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00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:39,000

Is it possible that Everhart faked the Dare stones?

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00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:42,000

This never occurs to Haywood Peers.

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00:30:42,000 --> 00:30:46,000

Everhart to him is just some manual laborer with a third grade education.

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00:30:46,000 --> 00:30:49,000

There's no way he could produce such authentic forgeries.

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00:30:49,000 --> 00:30:55,000

Come to find out, Everhart has a history of forging and selling fake Native American artifacts.

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00:30:55,000 --> 00:31:02,000

While the 47 Dare stones forged by Everhart have been officially declared fraudulent,

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00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:06,000

some still believe the original is genuine.

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00:31:06,000 --> 00:31:13,000

There's still a chance that the original stone brought in by Lewis Hammond could be the 400-year-old work of Eleanor Dare.

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00:31:13,000 --> 00:31:19,000

Then again, Hammond may have just been looking to make a quick buck and earn 15 minutes of fame through a scam of his own,

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00:31:19,000 --> 00:31:22,000

which Everhart then took to an extreme.

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00:31:22,000 --> 00:31:30,000

Either way, apart from the Dare stones themselves, there's no evidence that the Lost Colonists ever ended up in Georgia.

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00:31:33,000 --> 00:31:42,000

Across four centuries, the writings of Governor John White are the only clue as to the final destination of the Lost Colony of Roanoke.

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00:31:42,000 --> 00:31:51,000

John White leaves behind a journal that's very extensive, but just like the rest of us, he's in the dark about what happened to the colonists after they leave.

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00:31:51,000 --> 00:31:56,000

Although he was governor of the colony, he was first and foremost a painter by trade,

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00:31:56,000 --> 00:32:03,000

and it's because of his drawings and his incredible paintings that he produced during his time on Roanoke Island

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00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:08,000

that we know a great deal about what life was like amongst the Native American Indian population.

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00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:16,000

White also leaves behind one other potential piece of evidence, a hand-drawn map.

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00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:25,000

The Virginia Paws map is arguably the finest piece of 16th-century North American cartography there is.

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00:32:25,000 --> 00:32:27,000

There were three expeditions to Roanoke.

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00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:35,000

White made this map during the 1585-1586 Sir Walter Raleigh expedition a few years before the Lost Colonists.

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00:32:35,000 --> 00:32:43,000

The map shows Roanoke Island, the colonists' eventual landing spot and its surrounding areas in great detail.

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00:32:43,000 --> 00:32:53,000

It's incredibly accurate. You can still look at that map today over 400 years later and define all of the key estuaries, the lakes, the islands.

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

It's a remarkable map.

416

00:32:55,000 --> 00:33:03,000

In 2012, a research group called the First Colony Foundation examines White's map for new clues.

417

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:07,000

The First Colony Foundation, they don't even start by actually looking at the original.

418

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:16,000

They go over a high-quality reproduction of the map and something jumps out at them, a small detail that may be hiding a big secret.

419

00:33:16,000 --> 00:33:21,000

They see a faint round shadow, which seems to have been overlooked.

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00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:29,000

This could just be a topographical outline, but the team thinks it might instead be a patch. Something was covered up here.

421

00:33:29,000 --> 00:33:37,000

Maybe a spot where John White accidentally spills a blob of paint, makes an error, and it's just covered up with a piece of parchment.

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00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:42,000

Or maybe it's something more. There's only one way to find out.

423

00:33:42,000 --> 00:33:52,000

They notify the British Museum, which takes the original copy of the Virginia Pars map and scans it using advanced imaging technology.

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00:33:52,000 --> 00:34:01,000

And sure enough, under the patch is not an errant paint blob, but what appears to be a large X symbol.

425

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:08,000

On maps of the era, an X is often used to mark the location of a fort.

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00:34:08,000 --> 00:34:15,000

The question is, what does this image of a fort mean? Was it in fact something that was built on a previous expedition?

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00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:21,000

Or maybe it was an idea that simply never came to fruition. We don't know.

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00:34:21,000 --> 00:34:31,000

But obviously, John White knows about it. And in theory, when he comes back with his Roanoke colony as their governor, he might have told the colonists about the fort.

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00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:37,000

Could this be where they head when things turn ugly on Roanoke Island?

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00:34:37,000 --> 00:34:44,000

The X is about 50 miles west of Roanoke Inland, along the Albemarle Sound.

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00:34:44,000 --> 00:34:50,000

This goes right along with the passage in John White's journal where he instructs the colonists to go west in case of an emergency.

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00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:57,000

Did the colonists follow White's instructions? A team is quickly sent to excavate the area.

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00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:09,000

The dig site gets one of the coolest names you'll ever find in archaeology. They call it Site X, a reference to the pop culture idea of buried pirate treasure.

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00:35:09,000 --> 00:35:15,000

And it's not long before Site X unveils a treasure trove of new clues.

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00:35:15,000 --> 00:35:23,000

There are pottery shards and pieces of weapons dating back to the Tudor era. The exact period when this mystery begins.

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00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:29,000

English artifacts from the period of the Roanoke colonists definitely exist at this site.

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00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:36,000

The problem is, which English group did these artifacts belong to? They can't be dated precisely enough to tell.

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00:35:36,000 --> 00:35:44,000

They could be from the Lost Colony or the Walter Raleigh expedition or various other smaller teams that have visited the area before.

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00:35:44,000 --> 00:35:50,000

Archaeologists expand their search to a second location nearby. They name it Site Y.

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00:35:50,000 --> 00:36:00,000

At Site Y, there have also been finds of European artifacts, but again, the trouble is trying to tell whether they belong to the Lost Colony or to later English settlers.

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

They're not yet definitive. We need more evidence.

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00:36:04,000 --> 00:36:12,000

The First Colony Foundation continues their hunt through annual digs, led by historians, scientists and archaeologists.

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00:36:12,000 --> 00:36:21,000

And whatever they find is fully analyzed in a nearby laboratory. They're confident they know where the Lost Colony of Roanoke ended up, and it's right here.

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00:36:21,000 --> 00:36:26,000

Now they just have to prove it with that one elusive artifact that can establish the link.

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00:36:26,000 --> 00:36:36,000

We will know that we have a location with the Lost Colony when we find something that is irrefutably a personal effect of one of the Lost Colonists.

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00:36:36,000 --> 00:36:45,000

It has to be a necklace or a ring that might have an am or note or something that positively identifies it as a Lost Colony.

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00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:52,000

But until we find more evidence, more hard evidence, we're essentially looking for a needle in a haystack.

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00:36:53,000 --> 00:37:06,000

Croatoan, a strange word found in a strange place, carved into a tree near the abandoned Roanoke Colony in 1590.

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00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:10,000

But it may not be the only time this word is tied to tragedy.

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00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:21,000

Believe it or not, there's a theory out there that the word Croatoan turns up in several desperate places in history, not just with the Lost Colony, not by a long shot.

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00:37:22,000 --> 00:37:29,000

The theory speculates that when the colonists carve that word, it's not a simple message of their whereabouts.

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00:37:29,000 --> 00:37:38,000

It's a cry of fear, because in this case, according to the theory, Croatoan doesn't mean the friendly native tribe, or the name of an island.

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00:37:38,000 --> 00:37:43,000

It refers to some kind of supernatural force that is out for blood.

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00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:53,000

John White assumes that the carvings Croatoan and CRO means we've gone 40 miles south to live with our indigenous friends.

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00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:57,000

He goes home devastated, unable to find his daughter or granddaughter.

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00:37:57,000 --> 00:38:05,000

But we can assume that he has some degree of hope that maybe they were able to survive and perhaps even thrive with some help of the locals.

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00:38:06,000 --> 00:38:20,000

But John White might be very troubled to learn what allegedly unfolds over the years, because according to some reports, the next time Croatoan shows up in history, it appears to be a dire warning.

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00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:24,000

The word seems to resurface in 1849.

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00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:29,000

Shortly before his death, the great author Edgar Allan Poe goes missing.

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00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:36,000

He eventually shows up in a state of total delirium, and what happened to Poe remains another great historical mystery.

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00:38:36,000 --> 00:38:44,000

But something at that time causes him incredible distress that may have even driven him mad or may have contributed to his death.

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00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:50,000

Allegedly, one of the last coherent things he says is the word Croatoan.

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00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:57,000

There's another story about the word tied to an alleged incident in 1888.

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00:38:57,000 --> 00:39:07,000

The old West Outlaw, Black Bart, is a notorious stagecoach robber, and he's eventually brought to justice and serves four years.

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00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:13,000

But before he gets out, it's rumored that he carves the word Croatoan into the wall of his cell.

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00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:18,000

And after his release in early 1888, he's never seen or heard from again.

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00:39:18,000 --> 00:39:24,000

Is this word somehow killing people, making them disappear? What's going on?

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00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:27,000

The parallels don't end there.

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00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:33,000

In 1921, a ship called the Carol A. Deering crashes off the coast of North Carolina.

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00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:37,000

The entire crew goes missing, not found dead, just totally missing.

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00:39:37,000 --> 00:39:43,000

The ship was found abandoned, and the word Croatoan was apparently written in the logbook.

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00:39:43,000 --> 00:39:51,000

Ambrose Beers is a famous horror author who disappears in 1913 or 1914 on his way to Mexico.

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00:39:51,000 --> 00:40:00,000

But one rumor has it that the last bed he was known to have slept in had the word Croatoan carved into one of its posts.

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00:40:00,000 --> 00:40:02,000

And this is a doozy.

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00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:09,000

Amelia Earhart famously disappears during an ill-fated flight over the Pacific Ocean in 1937.

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00:40:09,000 --> 00:40:14,000

But the Croatoan theorists believe that she leaves behind a journal with the word scribbled in it.

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00:40:14,000 --> 00:40:19,000

It's unclear how or when this rumor started, but it continues to be widely reported.

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00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:24,000

Could there be an ominous link between these incidents?

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00:40:24,000 --> 00:40:28,000

In the mythology of the colonists' Native American neighbors,

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00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:37,000

Croatoan is the name of a vengeful spirit that inhabits their island and punishes those who displease him.

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00:40:37,000 --> 00:40:43,000

He can transform them into animals, trees, or rocks, or just kill them.

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00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:46,000

Is this what those other historical references mean?

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00:40:46,000 --> 00:40:55,000

Is there some vengeful spirit called Croatoan that has been out there transforming and killing people over these past 400 years?

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00:40:55,000 --> 00:41:05,000

Of course, the idea of an evil spirit associated with the word Croatoan causing all these problems is regrettably still a legend.

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00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:12,000

Besides, if the spirit did transform the lost colonists, why did it then bother to dismantle their houses?

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00:41:12,000 --> 00:41:20,000

Much more likely, the colonists flee on their own, but what happens to them next is still anyone's guess.

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00:41:22,000 --> 00:41:32,000

It's the oldest missing person's case in America, and yet today, there are more people dedicated to solving it than ever before.

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00:41:32,000 --> 00:41:37,000

They're searching land, sea, and even DNA to find the answer.

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00:41:38,000 --> 00:41:43,000

Perhaps one day soon, the lost colony of Roanoke will finally be found.

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00:41:43,000 --> 00:41:49,000

I'm Lawrence Fishburne. Thank you for watching History's Greatest Mysteries.