

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:15,606

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:15,606 --> 00:00:20,133

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily

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00:00:20,133 --> 00:00:31,151

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:31,151 --> 00:00:35,158

116 people landed on an island off the coast of North Carolina.

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00:00:35,158 --> 00:00:41,167

They established a foothold long before the Jamestown Colony was founded in Virginia,

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00:00:41,167 --> 00:00:44,172

before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

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00:00:44,172 --> 00:00:49,180

But the fate of the Roanoke settlement remains a mystery.

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00:00:49,180 --> 00:00:55,190

Is it possible for all these people, all these buildings, this entire community,

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00:00:55,190 --> 00:01:06,208

to disappear without a trace?

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00:01:06,208 --> 00:01:11,216

Great civilizations have flourished and then disappeared.

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00:01:11,216 --> 00:01:19,229

The culture of Egypt testifies to man's skill in engineering.

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00:01:19,229 --> 00:01:33,252

The ancient Greeks left us beauty, art, and architecture.

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00:01:33,252 --> 00:01:45,271

The Mayan pyramids paid tribute to a race that blossomed and then mysteriously disappeared.

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00:01:45,271 --> 00:01:51,281

Modern archeologists have used the remains to decipher how these civilizations began.

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00:01:51,281 --> 00:02:02,299

But there is an island off the Carolina coast that even today still hides the secret beginnings of America.

16

00:02:03,300 --> 00:02:08,309

The story begins in England, 1587.

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00:02:08,309 --> 00:02:16,322

Elizabeth has been queen for almost a quarter of a century.

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00:02:16,322 --> 00:02:22,331

Her favorite courtier is Sir Walter Rolly, a man of ambitious vision.

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00:02:22,331 --> 00:02:26,338

Sir Walter implores Elizabeth to allow him a bold venture,

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00:02:26,338 --> 00:02:33,349

establish a foothold in the new world which has until now been dominated by Spain.

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00:02:33,349 --> 00:02:49,375

With her approval, he gathers 116 men, women, and children to brave an ocean crossing.

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00:02:49,375 --> 00:03:07,404

A colony is established on Roanoke Island just off North Carolina.

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00:03:07,404 --> 00:03:12,413

Barely are some of the first houses up when a problem becomes apparent.

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00:03:12,413 --> 00:03:23,430

If the colony is to survive, more supplies are needed from England.

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00:03:23,430 --> 00:03:30,442

On a clear day in August 1587, Governor John White bids goodbye to his beloved daughter Eleanor,

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00:03:30,442 --> 00:03:37,453

to her husband Ananias Dare, and to his only grandchild Virginia Dare, nine days old,

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00:03:37,453 --> 00:03:43,463

the first English child born in this new land.

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00:03:43,463 --> 00:03:52,478

Every colonist is aware of the dangers of an Atlantic crossing for a man of White's age.

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00:03:52,478 --> 00:04:05,499

Meanwhile, the governor hides his anxiety about this handful of people being virtually defenseless.

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00:04:05,499 --> 00:04:12,510

They are extremely vulnerable. The threat of attack by unfriendly Indians who had already killed one of their people,

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00:04:12,510 --> 00:04:16,516

the specter of a long, cold winter.

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00:04:16,516 --> 00:04:29,538

Could the colonists plant enough food to ward off starvation? Will Governor White or anyone else ever see them again?

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00:04:29,538 --> 00:04:38,552

When Governor White arrived in England, he rushed about London, frantically trying to line up the necessary supplies at a ship with a voyage back.

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00:04:38,552 --> 00:04:47,567

He wanted to return to Roanoke as quickly as possible to ease the colonists' worry about being totally isolated.

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00:04:47,567 --> 00:04:50,572

The governor's timing could not have been worse.

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00:04:50,572 --> 00:05:05,596

England is gearing up for a war to the death with Spain, whose mighty armada is poised to strike.

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00:05:05,596 --> 00:05:17,616

Sir Walter Rolly beseeches the Queen to send supplies, but she will not release a single ship.

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00:05:17,616 --> 00:05:24,627

None of his pleading can force the Queen to change her mind.

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00:05:24,627 --> 00:05:34,643

Spain's King Philip has assembled the greatest fleet the world had ever known, 137 ships with 30,000 men aboard.

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00:05:34,643 --> 00:05:41,655

He hopes to crush the English Navy.

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00:05:41,655 --> 00:05:49,668

When the battle is joined in the English Channel, the unwieldy Spanish galleons are no match for the longer-range English ships,

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00:05:49,668 --> 00:05:57,681

whose captains include such famous seamen as Drake, Hawkins, Rolly, and Frobisher.

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00:05:57,681 --> 00:06:07,697

The Spanish armada is soundly beaten. The English don't lose a single ship. The Spanish more than 50.

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00:06:07,697 --> 00:06:15,710

Britannia now truly rules the waves.

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00:06:15,710 --> 00:06:31,736

Despite the victory, it is three years before Governor White can convince someone to take him back to Roanoke.

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00:06:37,746 --> 00:06:55,775

John White is gravely concerned. Surely by now, someone from the colony should have sighted the ships or heard the signals.

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00:06:55,775 --> 00:07:13,804

Cautiously, they approach the beach.

48

00:07:13,804 --> 00:07:21,817

After three long years and so many disappointments, White nervously awaits the realization of his dreams.

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00:07:21,817 --> 00:07:34,838

But where are his people?

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00:07:34,838 --> 00:07:47,859

Knowing the colonists would fear an attack by the Spaniards, White orders the piping of a familiar English tune to reassure anyone hiding in the woods.

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00:07:47,859 --> 00:07:57,875

The Spaniards are not afraid of the Spaniards.

52

00:07:57,875 --> 00:08:07,892

The Spaniards are afraid of the Spaniards.

53

00:08:07,892 --> 00:08:31,931

White pervades his thinking.

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00:08:31,931 --> 00:08:47,957

The trail inland is familiar, but empty.

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00:08:47,957 --> 00:08:56,971

As they move deeper into the woods, the landing party fears the possibility of an attack by Indians.

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00:08:56,971 --> 00:09:16,002

Governor White remembers that although the Indians were at first peaceful, a killing had created tensions that could well have flared into violence after he left.

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00:09:16,002 --> 00:09:33,030

The first sign of any habitation is not familiar to White. He finds a stockade. Presumably, it encloses the village. His hopes soar.

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00:09:33,030 --> 00:09:57,069

But as he enters the gate, he is stunned. There is no sign of life.

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00:09:57,069 --> 00:10:08,087

Eerie silence. The compound is overgrown. Nothing remains. Even the sturdy buildings are gone.

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00:10:08,087 --> 00:10:14,096

If the Spaniards had burned the buildings, where are the charred remains?

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00:10:14,096 --> 00:10:25,114

If the colonists had been ambushed, there should be bleached bones. Something to tell the tale. There is nothing.

62

00:10:45,147 --> 00:11:01,173

Finally, one sign. A carved word. Croatoan. Before the governor had sailed, everyone agreed that if the colonists were to move away, they would leave a clue.

63

00:11:01,173 --> 00:11:08,184

Did this word mean they had gone to nearby Croatoan Island?

64

00:11:08,184 --> 00:11:20,204

The search continues into the night. Three more letters, C-R-O, are found carved on a tree. But nothing to tell what happened.

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00:11:20,204 --> 00:11:36,230

Determined to go to Croatoan Island the following day, they return to their ship. A terrible storm comes up, driving them so far out to sea, they are forced to turn back to England.

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00:11:36,230 --> 00:11:48,249

Governor White's anguish is unbearable. He was so near to those he loved, but kept from them by a cruel sea.

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00:11:48,249 --> 00:11:59,267

Governor White later dies and is buried in England without ever learning his family and friends will one day be known as the Lost Colony of Roanoke.

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00:11:59,267 --> 00:12:10,285

What did happen to them? Did they go to Croatoan? In search of, explores the possible answers next.

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00:12:10,285 --> 00:12:20,301

The single word Croatoan that Governor White found would seem to indicate that the Lost Colony attempted a move to the nearby island of that name.

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00:12:20,301 --> 00:12:32,321

While the governor never lived to search there himself, others who did, in colonial as well as modern times, found no indication that the colonists had ever even been there.

71

00:12:32,321 --> 00:12:39,332

No buildings, no bricks, no tools, nothing.

72

00:12:39,332 --> 00:12:47,345

What happened to the Lost Colony? This has been a matter for speculation by laymen and historians ever since that time.

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00:12:47,345 --> 00:12:55,358

Author historian David Stick, who lives on nearby Cape Hatteras, has spent years trying to solve the riddle.

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00:12:55,358 --> 00:13:04,373

There have been many theories. One, probably the most prevalent one, is that they were attacked by the Spaniards.

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00:13:04,373 --> 00:13:15,390

The Spaniards, having settled in the West Indies with a number of colonies there, are known to have kept a close watch on their Ojic people and what they were doing, but they did not attack.

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00:13:15,390 --> 00:13:19,397

This has been proved by a thorough examination of the Spanish archive.

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00:13:19,397 --> 00:13:30,415

Another theory advanced by one of the leading historians of this area is that they built a vessel and sailed back toward England and were lost at sea.

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00:13:30,415 --> 00:13:44,437

This also is highly improbable. The treacherous waters and the vicinity of Cape Hatteras, known as the graveyard of the Atlantic, are not the type of waters in which you would want to begin a trip.

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00:13:44,437 --> 00:13:52,450

In a small vessel built by people who were not shipwrights, heading back across was no navigational equipment.

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00:13:52,450 --> 00:14:02,467

Today, approximately 1,000 people live on Roanoke Island and the Lost Colony remains a controversial topic.

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00:14:02,467 --> 00:14:12,483

The U.S. Park Service established a national historic site here and Ranger historian William Evans has definite opinions about the mystery.

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00:14:12,483 --> 00:14:16,489

I'm sort of torn between two theories as to what happened to the Lost Colony.

83

00:14:16,489 --> 00:14:31,514

One, I think that they either went south and lived on the outer banks for the friendly Hatteras Indians, became intermingled and absorbed into that colony and disappeared with that group when it died of smallpox generally in the 1700s.

84

00:14:31,514 --> 00:14:44,535

The both of the colony moved north towards the Chesapeake Bay, began to live friendly with a small tribe of Chesapeake Indians, but were violently massacred along with those Indians just before the Jamestown Colony arrived in 1607.

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00:14:48,541 --> 00:14:56,554

The theory that they lived with Indians is given credence by a story from the Journal of Captain John Smith of the later Jamestown Colony.

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00:14:57,556 --> 00:15:05,569

They enjoyed good relations with the local Indians through the efforts of Captain Smith, who took

the trouble to learn the Indians' language.

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00:15:05,569 --> 00:15:21,595

On a visit to Chief Powhatan, the father of Pocahontas, Smith was told of white people traveling with friendly Indians who were caught in an inter-tribal war.

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00:15:21,595 --> 00:15:28,606

All the whites were slaughtered, except for a group of seven, four men, two boys, and a young maiden.

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00:15:35,618 --> 00:15:55,650

The seven whites managed to escape.

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00:15:56,652 --> 00:16:13,680

These seven could have survived only by living among friendly Indians, and down through the years there have been Indians in North Carolina, some with blue eyes, who claimed to be descended from these first English settlers.

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00:16:13,680 --> 00:16:19,689

If they did, in fact, live among the Indians, how can we trace their movement?

92

00:16:20,691 --> 00:16:28,704

In 1937, a number of stones were found that led in a trail from eastern North Carolina to northern Georgia.

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00:16:28,704 --> 00:16:36,717

These stones were supposedly carved by Eleanor Dare as notes back to her father if he should return to look for the colony.

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00:16:36,717 --> 00:16:44,730

That told what had happened to the colony, that her husband Anna Nass Dare had been killed by the Indians along with her child, Virginia Dare.

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00:16:44,730 --> 00:16:53,744

And that she was being carried to North Georgia as an Indian princess to be married or to be given in marriage to an Indian cheat.

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00:16:55,748 --> 00:17:05,764

The musty basement of a small college for women may hold the long sought-after answer. Something has been stored here that has been all but forgotten.

97

00:17:06,766 --> 00:17:11,774

In search of cameras traveled to Gainesville, Georgia, to Bernal College.

98

00:17:12,775 --> 00:17:21,790

In 1937, a tourist in North Carolina uncovered a stone with words carved on it. He brought it to Bernal's history department.

99

00:17:22,792 --> 00:17:27,800

A \$500 reward was advertised for anyone who found additional stones.

100

00:17:28,801 --> 00:17:35,813

The school was besieged with stones and ended up with 47. Most were obvious fakes.

101

00:17:36,814 --> 00:17:41,822

A national magazine published a story claiming the stones were all fakes.

102

00:17:42,824 --> 00:17:48,834

Embarrassed, the college put the stones in a basement where they've been gathering dust for more than 40 years.

103

00:17:50,837 --> 00:17:57,848

The first stone may be authentic according to the present head of the history department, Dr. James Sutherland.

104

00:17:58,850 --> 00:18:06,863

The stone reports to tell the story of what happened to the lost colonists of Roanoke.

105

00:18:07,865 --> 00:18:12,873

And here you can see much better the wording on the stone.

106

00:18:13,874 --> 00:18:21,887

It says that Ananias Dare and Virginia went hence unto heaven 1591. Any Englishman show John White, Governor Virginia.

107

00:18:22,889 --> 00:18:37,913

17 months after the original find, a man from Atlanta, a stone mason and a stone hauler, found a series of stones near Greenville, South Carolina along the Saluda River.

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00:18:38,915 --> 00:18:46,928

The fourth stone that he found is supposed to be the other stone mentioned on the reverse side of the original.

109

00:18:46,928 --> 00:18:59,949

This stone does contain the names of 17 dead, 15 on the back with Ananias and Virginia Dare on the front side making a total of 17.

110

00:19:00,951 --> 00:19:04,957

I believe that the stones that were later found were obviously fraudulent.

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00:19:05,959 --> 00:19:08,964

The evidence seems to certainly support that belief.

112

00:19:09,965 --> 00:19:16,977

However, this original stone, to my knowledge, has never been directly disproved.

113

00:19:17,978 --> 00:19:25,991

The Smithsonian Institute examined this original stone and could not find anything fraudulent.

114

00:19:26,993 --> 00:19:31,000

Experts cannot agree on the authenticity of any of these other stones.

115

00:19:32,001 --> 00:19:40,014

It is intriguing to think that one of these stones could be, like the Rosetta Stone of Egypt, an important link, a key to our past.

116

00:19:47,026 --> 00:19:53,035

Today's Roanoke Island has its legend of the ghost of Virginia Dare, the grandchild of Governor White.

117

00:19:54,037 --> 00:20:02,050

Legend has it that beautiful Virginia was betrothed to a young Indian hunter, but she was also loved by a very jealous medicine man.

118

00:20:03,051 --> 00:20:07,058

To prevent her from marrying his rival, he changed her into a deer.

119

00:20:08,060 --> 00:20:14,069

Later, unaware of the change, her true love shot and killed the deer with an arrow.

120

00:20:15,071 --> 00:20:25,087

There are those who say the ghost of Virginia Dare, sometimes a deer and sometimes a young maiden, appears in these woods on moonlit nights,

121

00:20:26,089 --> 00:20:33,100

trying but unable to tell us the answer to the mystery of what happened to the lost colony of Roanoke.

122

00:20:34,102 --> 00:20:49,126

It would seem that a cruel fate was against the colony from the beginning, or at the very least, it suffered from a series of unfortunate coincidences.

123

00:20:51,129 --> 00:20:55,136

First, the lack of planning that did not properly supply them.

124

00:20:56,138 --> 00:21:04,151

Then, the stubborn queen who would not spare a single ship to help a tiny colony 3,000 miles away.

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00:21:05,152 --> 00:21:14,167

Then, whatever event it was that caused the colonists to leave Roanoke, the storm that drove Governor White's ship away,

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00:21:15,168 --> 00:21:18,173

and the probable slaughter of most of the remaining colonists.

127

00:21:19,175 --> 00:21:30,193

And finally, if at least some of the darestones are real, that none of them were found for 350 years.

128

00:21:31,194 --> 00:21:39,207

It would seem that fate definitely was against the unfortunate lost colony of Roanoke.

129

00:21:40,209 --> 00:21:54,232

Coming up next, 20th Century with Mike Wallace reports on the impact of DNA fingerprinting and brings you an exclusive interview with O.J. Simpson Trial Attorney Peter Neufeld.

130

00:21:55,233 --> 00:22:01,243

Then, weapons at war marches into the horror of the Western Front with the young Americans they called the Doughboys.

131

00:22:02,245 --> 00:22:10,258

And later tonight, Vanishing Act Week begins on History's Mysteries with an investigation into the disappearance of Teamster Kingpin Jimmy Hoffa,

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00:22:11,259 --> 00:22:13,263

at 8 here on the History Channel where the past comes alive.