

The Lost Colony of Roanoke Island

During the late 1500's, Queen Elizabeth I of England and other English leaders decided that they wanted to establish colonies in North America.

Like the Spanish, the English were hoping to find limitless resources of gold and land. The English realized that the establishment of colonies was crucial to their development as a world power. So despite opposition from others, the English selected Walter Raleigh (RAH LEE) to organize the first English colony in North America.

The English's first attempt to establish this colony was met with opposition by Mother Nature. The English were not prepared for such a long and drawn out winter, so they had difficulty finding food. The first colonists were back in England after only a year.

Raleigh was not willing to give up on Roanoke Island. In 1587, he selected John White to lead more than a 100 men, women, and children to Roanoke Island. He hoped this second try would prove more successful than the first.

When the colonist first arrived they were excited and joyful about the journey and adventures that lied ahead. Men dreamed of riches and peace while women dreamed of nice homes and a loving family. All seemed well for the colonists especially with the birth of Virginia Dare. Virginia Dare was born in Roanoke Island on Aug. 18, 1587, the first birth recorded on an English settlement in the New World. The birth was a sign of good fortune for the colonists.

But unfortunately, the colonists were ill prepared for what lied ahead. Instead of planting crops and preparing for winter, the colonists decided

to search for gold. Supplies and aid ran out quickly. Diseases also become a concern for the struggling colonists. Many colonists needed medical aid for their medical condition.

So, soon after Dare's birth, her grandfather, artist and Gov. John White, returned to England for more aid and supplies. He arrived in November as England was preparing for war with Spain. With no ships to spare, White could not return until 1590. He would wait anxiously for three long years.

When he arrived at Roanoke Island, he found no trace of the settlers, including his granddaughter.

Their houses had been taken down and a defensive fence of wooden posts constructed. On one post was carved "Croatoan," the name of a nearby island. It was a signal the settlers had agreed to post if they left Roanoke Island, but missing was a Maltese cross, which would have told White trouble had forced the departure. His rusty armor lay in the sand, indicating the colonists had been gone for some time.

A lack of provisions and other limitations prohibited White from immediately sailing to Croatoan to search for the missing colonists. Several more attempts to find them between 1590 and 1602

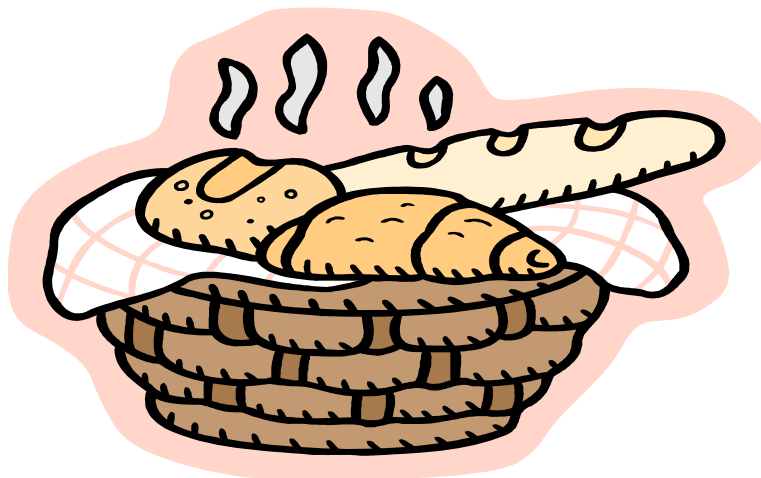
also failed, leaving nothing more than 400 years of speculation about their fate.

Today, your task is to figure out exactly what happened to the colonists of Roanoke Island by using the following archaeological clues.

The Croatoans are now known as a peaceful Indian tribe.



The colonists began to run out of food. Everything that they had brought from England had begun to rot.



The Colonists ran out of supplies so they sent John White back for more.



The Maltese Cross was missing from the scene.



John White found some rusted armor.



The Lost Colony of Roanoke Island

Names: _____

Directions: By using the clues that are in your packet, your group must figure out what happened to the colonists of Roanoke Island. Look at each clue carefully and think about its importance. After you have carefully looked at the clues, you need to form a theory within your GROUP about what happened to the lost colony of Roanoke Island. Your theory must include the following criteria:

1. A topic sentence or paragraph that describes what you believe happened to the colonists on Roanoke Island.
2. Use of the clues in your explanation as evidence to support your theory.

Write out your theory on the lines provided:
