

A Meek Cold Case Mystery



CSI: ROANOKE

**America's First
Mystery**

CSI: Roanoke Final Report



Agent: _____
Agent: _____
Agent: _____
Agent: _____

Period: _____

Part One Directions: As a group go through each piece of evidence. Answer the questions in boxes below about each exhibit.

<p>Exhibit A – Croatoan Carving Describe what John White found when he returned in 1590:</p> <p>What assumption can you make about where the colonists went based on this exhibit?</p>	<p>Exhibit B – Lack of A Cross What did the it mean if a cross had been carved in a tree at Roanoke?</p> <p>Since there was no cross carved what did John White assume about the Roanoke Colony?</p>
<p>Exhibit C – Chief Manteo BG How did Manteo treat the Roanoke Colonists?</p> <p>Where did Manteo live?</p>	<p>Exhibit D – Autopsy Report Does the autopsy report support or not support the idea that the colonists at Roanoke were attacked?</p> <p>Why?</p>
<p>Exhibit E – Map of Roanoke According to the map, what dangers would the inland present to the colonists?</p> <p>Looking at the map, what is a benefit of the Roanoke Island location?</p>	<p>Exhibit F – John White’s Diary Does John White believe that the colonists were attacked? Why or why not.</p> <p>What does John White believe happened to the colonists?</p>

Exhibit G – John Lawson Diary

How does this piece of evidence explain what happened to the colonists?

Exhibit H – Tree Rings

How might this exhibit explain why the colonists may have left Roanoke Island?

Part Two Directions: As a group, read through the five theories of what happened to the colonists. As you read through each one, discuss whether you think it is a likely possibility. Consider the points below each theory. Then complete the chart below by listing which exhibits support that theory as well as any exhibits that contradict that theory. Write “none” in any unused box.

Theory:	Exhibits that Support It	Exhibits that contradict it:
Theory A: The colonists were killed by hostile Indians.		
Theory B: The colonists moved to Croatoan Island.		
Theory C: They shipwrecked on their way to Croatoan.		
Theory D: They ran out of food and moved inland.		
Theory E: They ran out of supplies, so they built small boats to sail back to England.		



FBI Background Report

Agent Reporting: Agent Smith

Date: Summer, 1590

Location: Roanoke Island, North Carolina

Weather: Humid, 87 F

Summary:

More than twenty years before the first Englishmen landed in Jamestown, groups of colonists tried three times to found a permanent colony at Roanoke Island, off the coast of present-day North Carolina.

In 1585 the first colony on Roanoke was established by 108 men. Many of them died and the rest were taken back to England when Francis Drake visited the settlement and found them starving. The month after these colonists had left; a relief ship filled with supplies for Roanoke arrived on the island. Finding no one there, they returned to England, but left 17 men on the island to protect England's claim to North America.

In July of 1587 John White led 117 men, women, and children in a third attempt to establish a permanent colony. When they landed at Roanoke, they found no trace of the 17 men who had been left there the previous year. White was elected their governor and his grandchild, Virginia Dare, was the first English child born in the new world. They soon realized that they would need more supplies because it was too late in the year to plant crops.

Governor White returned to England for supplies, but could not return to the colony because England was in naval war with Spain at the time. He did not return to Roanoke until 1590—three years after he had left. White found no colonists on the island. One of the few clues to this mystery was the word CROATOAN carved on a tree. He was never to discover what happened to his family and the other colonists of Roanoke.

Historians have never solved the mystery of the Roanoke colonist's fate.

End Report

Exhibit A: Croatoan Carving



In 1590, three years after he left, John White returned to Roanoke and found the settlement deserted and surrounded with a high palisade (wall) of large trees, describing it as “very fort-like.” On one of the tree trunks was carved the word “CROATOAN.” Croatoan was a local Indian tribe led by Chief Manteo. They were known to live on a nearby island called Croatoan Island. The letters “KRO” were also found on another trunk nearby.

Exhibit B: Lack of A Cross

White had told the settlers that if they were FORCED to leave the colony, they should carve a cross above their destination, but no cross was found.

White wanted to explore the surrounding islands, including Croatoan, but his ship had lost its anchor on the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. White sailed back to England without ever having explored other islands or the nearby mainland.



Exhibit C: Chief Manteo Background

Manteo was a Croatoan Indian, the chief of a local tribe that befriended the English explorers that landed at Roanoke in 1584. In 1585 the English returned to Roanoke, arriving too late in the year to plant crops and harvest food, and Manteo helped the colonists to make it through the harsh winter. He traveled to England on two occasions, in 1584 and 1585, and was among those who sailed for the New World in 1587 along with Governor John White and his colonists, who founded the failed settlement later known as "The Lost Colony". On Sunday, August 13, 1587, Manteo was christened on Roanoke Island, making him the first Native American to be baptized.



When John White returned to find Roanoke gone in 1590 he was unable to visit Croatoan Island, where Chief Manteo lived. We have no idea what happened to Manteo after that date.



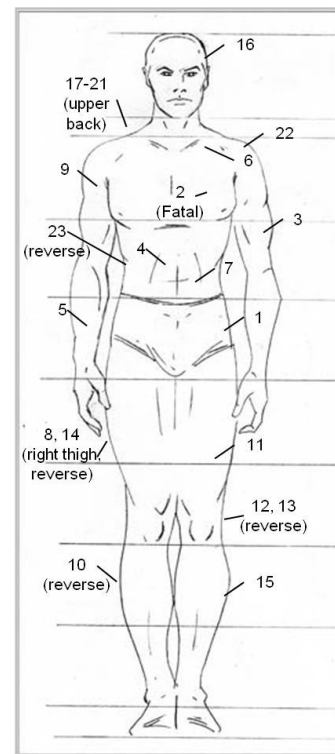
Exhibit D: FBI Autopsy Report

Summary:

When John White returned to Roanoke Island he found no skeletons or corpses anywhere. There was no indication of any attack or battle. Since that time no bodies have been discovered so there is no autopsy report available.

Because of the lack of forensic evidence, it is impossible to determine if disease played any part in the colonist's disappearance.

No skeletons or corpses of European origin were found on nearby Croatoan Island, but it is highly unlikely that such remains would still exist after all these years, even if Europeans had lived on that island. John White was unable to explore Croatoan Island so it is impossible to know if any colonists' remains were present there.



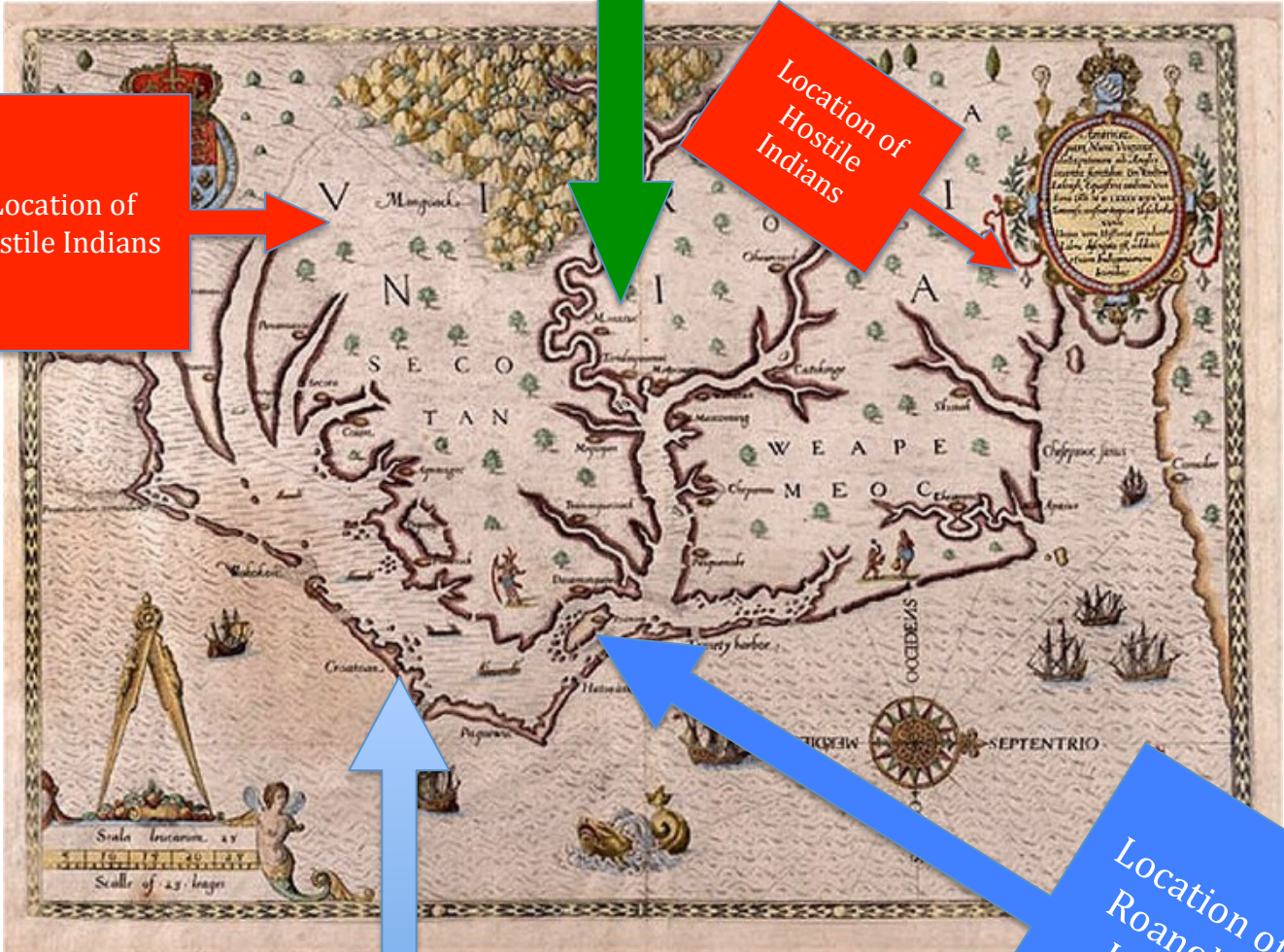
End Report

Exhibit E: Map of Roanoke and Surrounding Area

Mainland North Carolina
(Inland)
(Called Virginia in 1590)

Location of
Hostile Indians

Location of
Hostile
Indians



Location of
Croatoan Island

Location of
Roanoke
Island
(Colony
Location)

Exhibit F: John White's Diary

When John White returned to Roanoke in 1590, he wrote the following:

We passed toward the place where they were [supposed to be], but we found the houses taken down, and the place very strongly enclosed with a high palisado [wall] of great trees...and 5 feet from the ground in capital letters was carved the word CROATOAN without any cross or sign of distress.

And this is what White thought had happened to the colonists:

...I greatly joyed that I had safely found a certain token of their safe being at Croatoan, which is the place where Manteo was born, and the Savages of the land our friends.

Exhibit G: John Lawson's Diary

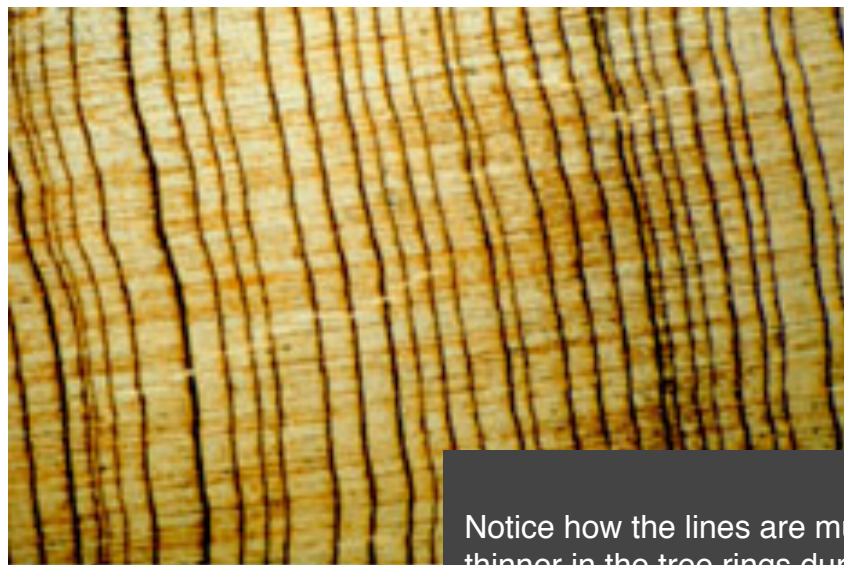
In the early 1700s, John Lawson, a surveyor of the Carolina colony, visited Croatoan Island. He reported encountering Indians there with gray eyes who knew what books were. He wrote:

“They tell us that several of their ancestors were white People, and could talk in a Book [read], as we do; the Truth of which is confirm'd by gray Eyes being found frequently amongst these Indians, and no others. They value themselves extremely for their friendship to the English...”

Exhibit H: Tree Rings

Recent study of tree rings in giant bald cypress trees on Roanoke Island show that the worst drought conditions in the past 800 years may have occurred during the years the “lost colonists” lived there. Rings estimated from around the 1580’s were very narrow, indicating poor growing conditions.

Note: The width of a tree ring indicates how much a tree has grown in a particular growth season.



Lost Colony
Drought:
1587-1589

Notice how the lines are much thinner in the tree rings during the years the colonists were trying to grow crops at Roanoke.

Possible Theories

Theory A

The colonists were killed by hostile Indians.

Points to consider:

- Many of the Indians were friendly while John White was there in 1587
- Why did they write CROATOAN?
- Why was there was no white cross carved on a tree to show danger as agreed?
- Where were the bodies?
- Why was there no sign of battle?

Theory B

The Roanoke colonists moved to Croatoan Island and lived with the Indians. They later intermarried with the Indians, became part of the tribe, and moved inland when the Indians did.

Points to consider:

- Why was there no trace of full-blooded English?
- Why would they leave Roanoke Island when they knew that White was coming back (his family was there)?
- John Lawson's Diary
- What does the CROATOAN message have to do with this?

Theory C

They shipwrecked on their way to Croatoan Island.

Points to consider:

- This area was very dangerous for sailing. It was known as the "graveyard of the Atlantic"
- They only had one regular sized ship with them. It could not have held over 100 colonists, their supplies, and equipment
- If they sailed close to shore, it is unlikely that no one would have survived and made it to shore.
- Why leave when they believed White would return?

Theory D

They ran out of food and moved inland.

Points to consider:

- It would be difficult to transport their possessions.
- Indians would be hostile to the colonists for taking over more land – the colonists would know this
- Why did they write CROATOAN?
- Why leave when they believed White was returning?

Theory E

They ran out of supplies, so they built small boats to sail back to England.

Points to consider:

- Even the most desperate men would see how foolish this plan is
- Why did they leave the CROATOAN message?
- Why did they leave when White was bringing them supplies?