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"(Re)presenting and (Re)constructing the Past (HPAR5012, HPAR6012)"

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Assignment #2: Project Submission

As a student from the United States of America, the story of Roanoke's Lost Colony is shared in history classrooms across multiple age levels. We have discussed this tragic yet intriguing mystery for years, so I decided that I wanted to further my knowledge in exactly what happened to Roanoke and its lost colony throughout this project.

The story of Roanoke's Lost Colony began in 1587. In 1587, approximately 110-120 English settlers sailed from England to what was Roanoke Island but is now Dare County, North Carolina, in the United States of America. These settlers were one of the first groups to include women and children, as the individuals who traveled to Roanoke Island wanted to immigrate to the land. They did this in order to begin their new lives and start families on the land.

Due to a lack of resources, those who were in this group of settlers (the colonists) asked their leader, John White, to return to England to gather supplies. John White later returned to the island in late 1590. He wasn't able to return immediately as England and Spain were at war at the time. Once he returned, however, his fellow colonists had disappeared. The only trace they left behind were a tree with the letters "CRO" carved into it and the word "CROATOAN" carved into a wooden fort fence post.

The story of Roanoke's Lost Colony is definitely quite mysterious, so I began researching the story itself. During my time in the "(Re)presenting and (Re)constructing the Past (HPAR5012, HPAR6012)" module at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Lampeter

Campus, I took into account what sources would be reliable and accurate to complete this project. I read multiple papers from universities, I looked into archaeological research, etc.

For example, I took into account the information produced by The Croatoan Archaeological Society, Inc. This organization states that they are “a 501c3 nonprofit organization, founded in 2009, whose primary purpose is to explore the history of Croatoan, modern-day Hatteras Island, via the methods of archaeology, while making it their utmost priority to protect the interests of the native people and property owners. It is also their mission to educate the public/community about Hatteras Island's hidden history found in the layers of time.” They completed digs at the site where the Roanoke Lost Colony’s fence post and tree stump were located. These two pieces left behind by the colonists are critical in the research. So, for the artistic part of the presentation, I created the iconic tree stump from Roanoke’s Lost Colony. I made this stump in “Minecraft”, which is a popular game in which those using the platform can create things using blocks made of different materials. I made the “CRO” tree using oak wood since the original tree was an oak tree. After I created the base of the tree, I carved the wood where the colonists did. I also added the letters “CRO” to replicate the original tree. The photos of my artwork can be found in the presentation from this module.

Regardless, there are many theories about what could have happened to Roanoke’s Lost Colony, but there are three that are the most popular.

The first theory is that the settlers joined the Croatan Native American tribe. Croatoan Native Americans lived in the coastal parts of what is now the state of North Carolina in the United States of America. They were a relatively small tribe that was said to have had some

members become “allies” to the colonists. Archaeologists believe that the colonists moved to the mainland with the Native Americans in order to survive.

The second theory is that the settlers were attacked by the Croatoan Native American tribe while waiting for John White to return. The Croatoan Native Americans were said to have possibly harmed the colonists. Some researchers support this theory as the Croatoan Native Americans were known for hunting. Although this is true, the European settlers were also known for instigating attacks on the Native Americans (regardless of tribe). Both the European settlers and the Native Americans, regardless of what tribe they were in or where they came from, would do what they had to do in order to survive. Although this theory could have happened, it is believed that the Croatoan Native Americans were a small tribe, so many believe that it is unrealistic as there were more European settlers in comparison to the amount of Native Americans in the area. There is also an idea that this theory is rooted in racism due to the idea that Native Americans were “savages” as said in many of the settlers’ diaries in different areas of what is now the United States of America.

Finally, a third theory about what happened to the lost colonists in Roanoke is that they may have passed away due to the fact that they were left without resources. After conducting my research, it is said that John White took three years to return to the Roanoke colony. Since the settlers didn’t have enough resources to survive without the return of their leader, it is said that they could have died off.

As mentioned previously, I took into account the research published by the Croatoan Archaeological Society Inc. After completing field studies, they stated that “Parts of swords, rings, writing slates, gun parts, and glass were found in the same layer of soil as Native American pottery and arrowheads.” After studying the digs taken place by the Croatoan

Archaeological Society Inc., “Theory #1” is the most likely to have actually happened. This is because this theory has evidence to back up the idea that the colonists joined the Croatan Native Americans.

This story is still shared today through a variety of media. Whether it be books or films, there is one mode of media that really stuck out to me. There is an outdoor drama production titled “The Lost Colony”, which is about Roanoke’s Lost Colony. The production was written in 1937 in North Carolina. It is still performed today.

Regardless of where someone is from, this story is still as mysterious as the colonists' disappearance back in 1587. Although no one knows exactly what had happened to these individuals, their story still lives on today. People can still visit what was the Roanoke colony in what is the modern-day state of North Carolina to learn more about these people and what could have happened to them.

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