

## English Settlements on Roanoke Island

### First Attempt

Roanoke Island was first seen by Europeans when two English explorers sailed by in 1584. They thought its location and characteristics would make it good for settlement. They returned to England with this information.

Queen Elizabeth of England then gave a friend of hers, Walter Raleigh, the right to claim all lands in and around Roanoke and the nearby mainland.

In 1585, one hundred men set sail for Roanoke. They arrived too late to plant any crops. This meant they had to rely on the supplies they brought. These were not enough. Native Americans helped them with food.

The leader of the group was Ralph Lane. He had little respect for Native Americans and ended up killing the Roanoke chief. Now Native Americans were unwilling to help them with food.

The settlers managed to build a small fort and a few houses. They named the colony, which included the surrounding area "Virginia."

In 1586 Sir Francis Drake sailed to the area. The settlers begged him to take them along with him back to England, which he did. One week later a supply ship landed on Roanoke. Fifteen men stayed behind on the island from this ship.

### A Second Attempt

Walter Raleigh decided to try again to begin a settlement. This time there were 150 people that sailed from England. A major difference from the first group of settlers was that this group included women and children. Their leader was John White. He was called a "governor." He was a good artist and made many maps and illustrations of the area.

The group arrived on Roanoke Island on July 22, 1587 and went to find the fifteen men who had stayed behind two years earlier. They did not find them. Settlers began making improvement to the houses that were already there and building new ones.

The Native Americans of the area were more hostile this time. Only one group was friendly. This group was the Croatoans.

Before long a baby was born. She was named Virginia Dare. She became the first English settler born in the New World. Her mother, Eleanor Dare, was the daughter of John White.

At the end of August the settlers decided they needed more supplies so Governor White took the fleet of ships and several sailors home to England to get food and supplies. He and his men wanted to get back as soon as possible but a war broke out between England and Spain. This made it impossible for him to return at the time.

Finally in 1590, White and some sailors were able to return to Roanoke. They arrived in August of that year but found no one. They found clues to a puzzle that has still not been solved: They found the letters **CRO** carved on a tree. They found armor covered with rust. They found that the houses had been taken down and the area had been surrounded by trees and other things made into a tall fence that looked like a fort. Carved on another tree was the word **CROATOAN**.

John White went to what had been a secret hiding place where he had buried chests and heirlooms. Nothing was left but books without covers, ruined drawings and ruined maps.

White and his men decided to sail to an island where the Croatoans lived to search there. Heavy storm winds blew the ships eastward. The winds continued to blow making it impossible to reach the island. The winds did not give up and White and his men sailed home to England.