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8 CROATAN INDIANS AND OTHERS

Half of writing history is hiding the truth.

—Capt. Mal Reynolds in the space Western "Serenity"

Fast forward to the 1500s. It is the first century when admixture is not only probable but provable. The old tribes and nations are now being completely transformed and reshuffled. In many locations less than one-tenth of the indigenous population survives. At some points whole native groups completely vanish. All Native Americans who survive the onslaught of the "scum of the Eastern Sea," as Tecumseh called whites, experience rapid, systematic admixture, violent cultural assault and traumatic identity loss.

In the first post-Columbian century, the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida are Spanish territory, part of the worldwide Hapsburg empire. The coast is contested in places by the English and French. It is beginning to be infested with pirates and freebooters. Simultaneously two other powers hold wild cards in the game of empire, Venice and the Turks. Both are foes of the Spanish and Austrians as are the English, Dutch and French. The Republic of Ragusa is a neutral and strategic player. From its central location on the Adriatic at Dubrovnik, this maritime city-state in Croatia enjoys the rare advantage of being able to trade freely in both directions, with the Ottoman East and Italian and Spanish West. Like Venice, however, it is an urban island republic dependent on trade, manufactures and finance, devoid of natural resources, without an agricultural hinterland of rural inhabitants to bolster its size or influence.

With a single turn of the page we are firmly in the domain of the written word. Everything now is about admixture. Our native voice for this period is

C. D. Brewington of a famous Lumbee family.¹⁹³ He wrote *The Five Civilized Indian Tribes of Eastern North Carolina* in 1952.¹⁹⁴ Brewington was a teacher and minister and served in the Croatan churches of Sampson and Robeson counties, the Lumbee heartland. He was a strong original spokesman for American Indian heritage, but he was more than that. He happened to be an Indian himself. The moral imperative he felt is in keeping with our policy of privileging native sources, of allowing descendants to speak with their own voices and evidence.

Brewington was quite certain that tribes in the mixed confederacy around Robeson County in North Carolina included descendants of the famous Lost Colony. He was also positive they had never intermarried with blacks. Of the Croatans or Croatoans, he says:

There is an abiding tradition among these people that their ancestors were the Lost Colony of Roanoke Island, amalgamated with the Five Civilized Tribes of Eastern North Carolina. It is impossible to point out one particular tribe of Indians as their sole ancestors. This tradition is supported by their looks, their complexion, straight black hair, their eyes, by the manners, customs and habits, and by the fact that while they are, in part, of undoubted Indian origin, they have no Indian language and know but little of Indian customs and habits (p. 15).

The five "civilized" Indian tribes with whom the Croatans "amalgamated" are named as the Cherokee, Tuscarora, Meherrin, Waccamaw and Saponi (Haliwah). The last two joined the Saxapahaw to form the Eno-Chicora Confederation. The Cheraw are related but distinct. They are called the Sara or Judah tribe by the Spanish and Portuguese. All are to be classed as Old Cherokees and distinguished from the more primitive Algonquian tribes along the coast. Of these, the Cohaire on a tributary of the Cape Fear are also important. They are of Iroquoian or Cherokee-speaking stock. Their name is found in New York state where the Tuscarora migrated after 1700 (Schohairie County). It means driftwood in the Tuscarora language. The tribe's name is synonymous with beaver-dams and the local term "wet ass" (p. 26). Brewington does not mention the Catawba, Creek, Shawnee, Uchee or Powhatan tribes.

¹⁹³ George Edwin Butler, *The Croatan Indians of Sampson County, North Carolina*; Gerald M. Sider, *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, Ethnicity, and Indian Identity in the Southern United States* (Cambridge UP, 1993); Adolph L. Dial and David K. Eliades, *The Only Land I Know: A History of the Lumbee Indians* (Syracuse UP, 1996).

¹⁹⁴ C. D. Brewington, *The Five Civilized Indian Tribes of Eastern North Carolina*, ed. Oscar M. Bizzell (Newton Grove: Sampson County Historical Society, 1994).



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CROAT TYPE: From left, a) Lumbee Indian educator C. D. Brewington (1925, Mutual Life Insurance Company of Baltimore, Maryland), b) Croatian native Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb (1898-1960, official Roman Catholic Church portrait ca. 1938), and c) the Cherokee Tathtowe, one of seven Cherokees who accompanied Sir Alexander Cuming to England to meet King George II in 1730 (see Chapter 10). Note Jewish curled sidelocks in front of the ears (payot) in the Cherokee man. All have similar physiognomy, skin and hair color, ears, noses, lips, chins, eyebrows and hairlines, even though they are separated by two centuries and an ocean apart.

The Hatteras Indians were observed by the English adventurer John Lawson around 1700. Lawson had as his guide Enoe Will, a Coree Indian born about 1630-1640 on Enoe Bay. Will reportedly asked Lawson to "talk in his book" (i.e., read his Bible) and "make paper speak." The Carolina coastal Indians had the tradition, he said, that "their ancestors were white people...and could talk in a book... and valued themselves extremely for their affinity to the English and were willing to do them all friendly offices." Many of these Indians had gray eyes and fair skin.

Croatoan was the name of an Indian village in 1585. It lay on the North Carolina coast at the time Raleigh's colonists were planted there, and the colonists were told to take refuge with the Croatoans if anything happened.¹⁹⁵ When Gov. John White sailed past on his return from England in 1590 he found the site was ransacked and deserted. The colonists were gone. Presumably, they joined the *Croatian* colonists nearby. By the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the same "Indians" were found further inland on the

¹⁹⁵ For an overview of the Roanoke colony, along with speculation that it may have included several Jews or Crypto-Jews, see Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman and Donald N. Yates, *Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), pp. 45-51. The surname and other evidence, however, probably does not rise to speaking of a Sephardic Jewish "settlement," as in Elizabeth C. Hirschman et al, "DNA Evidence for a Colonial Jewish Settlement" in *Ethnic Studies Review* 42/1 (Spring 2019), pp. 95-116; DOI: 10.1525/esr.2019.421008.

banks of the Neuse, Cape Fear, Lumber, Coharie and South Rivers in Sampson and adjoining counties, where they are living to this day, and nowhere else.

Early U.S. federal, state and county records list numerous surnames traced to the Lost Colony. Prominent are Dare, Harvey, Cooper and Berry. Other "Indian names" are claimed to be Jacobs, Goodman, Simmons, Ammons, Brewington, Mainor, Manuel or Emmanuel, Jones, Bledsole, Faircloth, Harding and Warrick. The counties where these mixed-blood peoples have a significant presence are: Sampson, Robeson, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Scotland, Richmond and Hoke in North Carolina, and Sumpter, Marlboro and Dillon in South Carolina. There they are sometimes called Red Bones.¹⁹⁶

Lumbees have genetic, genealogical and cultural similarities to Melungeons, but we must hew close to our theme.

Firewater and Flamenco Indians

C. D. Brewington may not look Indian, and the name seems perfectly Anglo-Saxon, but the Brewingtons were accounted to be "the largest of any Indian family in Sampson County." According to "Sketch of the Brewington Family," the name is "a pure English word, which means a brewer of drinks, and we would also add, one that likes such drinks after they have been made, which is one of the characteristics that followed this family for several generations." The name was adopted by an Indian and did not originate with a white man:

This name was first given to an Indian who was considered by the white settlers of what is now Sampson County as an excellent maker of "fire water," as the Indians called it. They called him Bill Brewington. His Indian name was dropped, and he was taught the language of the English.¹⁹⁷

Bill Brewington, who lived in the eighteenth century, was apparently of Coharie extraction. His wife was a "Cherokee Indian" named Jane. They had a daughter, we learn, Hannah Brewington, born about 1776. The oldest residents described her "as being a true specimen of the original Cherokee . . . of a copper-reddish hue, with prominent cheekbones, straight black hair and black eyes." She bought land in Clinton in 1807, but "her people lived on the banks of Coharie, without any need of buying, as the land was held in common by the Indians of those days." Hannah married an orphan from the Coharie named White Simon, a servant and evidently free person of color

¹⁹⁶ Butler, pp. 21-29.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 76.

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or untaxed Indian. He was remembered as half Indian, half white. Their children were given the Brewington surname because White Simon had no last name. Raiford Brewington, a venerable figure in the county, was their son. He married Bashaby Manuel (Emanuel).

So Brewington is a double false lead. Do not look for it on the lists of colonists. But the name remains quintessentially Lumbee:

The Brewington family for seven generations with one or two exceptions, have not intermarried with persons of negro [sic] blood, and have retained their racial status to a remarkable degree (p.79).

Vital records demonstrate that since their appearance in the eighteenth century the Brewingtons intermarried only with other old core Lumbee families like Jacobs, Goodman, Strickland, Jones, Bledsole, Simmons, Emmanuel, Ammons and Chavis. C. D. Brewington married Bessie Chavis, a cousin. Sometimes a Brewington married a Brewington. The common denominator was always Croatan. Was that the same as Croatian? Or are the vast majority of historians and anthropologists correct in saying that the word carved on the tree in Roanoke was an Indian word referring to the Croatoan-Croatan Indians of Algonquian culture living on a neighboring island on Cape Hatteras?

The Croatian theory has been substantiated by Adam Eterovich. In a book published in 2003, this one-man cultural mission summarizes the case for Croatan Indians being identical with Croatians, or Croats. The same nationality, he reminds us, is sometimes represented in documents as Hungarian, Venetian, Austrian, Turkish, Italian-Venetian, Schiavon, Slavonian, Illyrian, Dalmatian or from the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik). We can bullet point his findings as follows:

- John Cabot, the discoverer of North America, had ties to Venice and Ragusa as well as England. His true name was Giovanni Caboto. He sailed for Venice and then England, for Henry VII, Elizabeth's grandfather. About twenty percent of Cabot's crew was Croatian.
- Verrazzano, who discovered New York and may have had Croatian or Dalmatian roots, called the surrounding region New Dalmatia in 1524. In the 1540s, a cape near the port of Charleston was named Saint Blas after the patron saint of Dubrovnik in Croatia.
- Spain would not allow on her ships Jews, Greek Orthodox, Protestants or Moslems, except as galley slaves. Dalmatians and Croatians, on the other hand, were prized, not only because of their navigation skills and knowledge of the seaman's life but because they were Roman Catholics.

- "Sir Walter Raleigh and Nikola Gozi-Gucetich held meetings in 1585 in London, prior to the voyage, with the admiral Lord Charles Howard of Effingham. Croatoan Island was first called My Lord Admirals Island in honor of Lord Howard of Effingham. Nikola Gozi-Gucetich of Dubrovnik was the second largest foreign banker in England. His nephew, Paolo Gondola-Gundulich, wrote letters to a friend in Florence from London of Drake and Raleigh in Virginia and other voyages. The Dalmatian-Croatian colony had a Fraternity in London. They probably were venture capitalists in a number of English voyages of exploration."¹⁹⁸

- At the Lost Colony, "cante-cante" meant to sing and dance (as in flamenco dancing, *cante*, which came from Andalusian Gypsies), "cipo" was mullet (Italian, used of the Adriatic fish genus), and "sat" was time (Croatian *sati* "hours").

- Place-names in North Carolina of Croatian derivation include not only Croatoan Sound and Croatoan Island but Croatamonga and Croatamung Island.

- Cape Hatteras variants are Hatarask, Hotoras, Hatorask, Hatorsack, Otterasco and Ottorasko. The last mentioned was the earliest name given to the island south of Port Ferdinando. Southward from it was Croatoan.

There are many other signs, says Eterovich. Gray eyes and blondish hair was noted among Indians in the region. What is atypical of Indians, however, is typical of Croats. "Gray eyes and light hair is found in Croatia in great numbers and not found in any other Mediterranean people." We can confirm this from a trip to Dubrovnik in 2009. Our taxi driver had the requisite gray eyes and blondish hair, but we also noticed a lot of the same in Venice. There is a reason the main embankment, where the Doge's Palace is located and gondolas tie up for St. Mark's, is called the Riva degli Schiavoni (Quay of the Slovenes). Slovenes was just another designation for Croats or Croatsians. That was the beginning of their eastward domain.

Interestingly, one Roanoke and Lumbee name is Goss, evidently coming from Gozi, a patrician family in Dubrovnik and Venice. Additionally, Gandy/Gundy appears to be a rendering of Croatian Gundić.

More coincidences are cited by others:

¹⁹⁸ Adam S. Eterovich, "Croatia and Croatsians and the Lost Colony 1585-1590," online book notice at <http://www.croatianhistory.net/etf/colon.html>. The book was published in 2003 by the Ragusan Press.

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- The name of the island called
- Marco Polo's ancestral home
- Several Croatsians Columbus both mean

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¹⁹⁹ George J. P. "Croatsians," *Journal of American Dependent* <http://www.southatlantic.edu/>

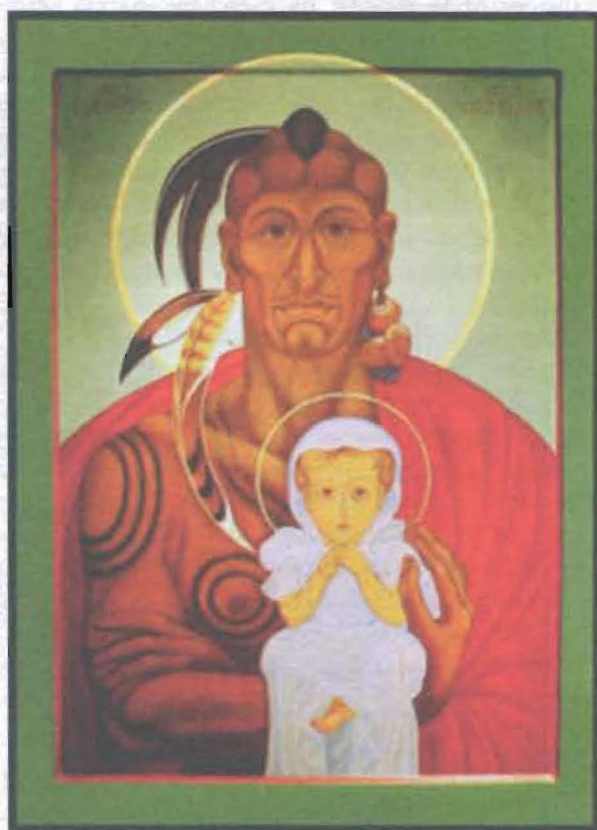
- According to British admiralty records, a majority of mariners and pilots on the king's or queen's ships were foreigners, with Ragusans usually listed first, Venetians second.
- The name of Long Island corresponds, it is said, to the Croatian island called Dugi Otok (=long island).
- Marco Polo was allegedly a descendant of Croats (Marko Pilich). His ancestral house on Korcula Island is pointed out to tourists.
- Several Croat nationals appear among the crew members of Columbus in 1492, notably Martin de Aragua and Pedro de Arague, both meaning "of Ragusa."

As long ago as 1960 the question was raised, "Were Some Croats Present at the Discovery of America?" In the pages of the *Annual Review of the Croatian Academy of America*, George J. Prpic described how the obscure little merchant state of Ragusa "realized achievements that bordered on the miraculous" in the seafaring history of Europe.¹⁹⁹ Its merchant marine enjoyed a world reputation, its banks and financial instruments were blue-chip, its leaders models of sagacity and morality. They abolished slavery in 1416, one of the first governments to do so, and sacrificed enormous profits in later centuries by refusing to ship African slaves to America. One of their citizens sailed with Columbus to the New World and returned with a fortune, building a showpiece in Dubrovnik known as the Palace of Ronda. The city-state operated its own seafaring "argosies," or treasure ships, and built hundreds of large transoceanic vessels for Spain at Dubrovnik and at shipyards on the peninsula of Pelješac.

Ragusa signed a commercial treaty with Spain in 1494 and "now more than ever developed its seaborne trade... soon the first emigrants from there sailed for the New World." According to records in the Dubrovnik archives, Croats started emigrating to ports of call in the West Indies, South America and Mexico "in the decade following 1510." On all sides except the sea, Dubrovnik was surrounded by Turkish territory "from whence thousands of refugees fled to this small island of prosperity." It is known that the families Basiljević, Divović and Skrabonja "were among the first Croatian immigrants to America," and in 1520 two brothers Mate and Dominko Konkendović spent thirty years in Mexico, bringing home some 13,000 gold ducats. Significantly, there was a Ragusan colony in London large enough to merit its own cemeteries.

¹⁹⁹ George J. Prpic, "Early Croatian Contacts with America and the Mystery of the Croats," *Journal of Croatian Studies* 1 (1960), based on his Ph.D. diss. *The Croats in America*, Department of History, Georgetown University (1959), available online at: <http://www.studiacroatia.org/jcs/01/0103.htm>.

Over time, the search for Croatians by North Carolina historians narrowed to two known wrecks, one in 1558 near Secotan, 26 years before the first Virginia colony, and another in 1564 involving the nearby island of Ocroake, which appears to be from the Croatian. We believe the name of the friendly Croatoan Indian Manteo commemorates the Croatian presence. Manteo, which has no meaning in any Algonquian Indian language, seems most likely to come from Croatian *mantija*, cognate with Spanish *manto* and Italian *manto* or *mantello*. All mean "cloak, mantle." The word was used at this time especially of the thick woolen cloak worn as a status symbol by Ragusan merchants and senators. *Mantija* began as the name for a piece of occupational clothing but soon took on pejorative connotations, as in our expressions "cloak and dagger operation" and "under the mantle of peace." Did a Croatian merchant give a local Indian a *mantija*, and that word became his name, Manteo? Manteo without a doubt appears to be a Croatian word, not Spanish, Italian or English.



Icon created by Cheryl Hendrick for the feast day of Manteo and Virginia Dare (August 18). All Saints Episcopal Church, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.



*Merchant's cloak from a costume-book published in Venice in 1664, *Habiti Antichi: Raccolta di Figure*. "Almost all Italian merchants wear them, the pure wool ones being for the highest classes." The woodcuts are claimed to be by "the Great Titian" (d. 1576) and his associate Cesare Vecellio (d. 1601) but were in fact by the German artist Christoph Krieger, who died in Venice in 1590. The style is therefore of the sixteenth century.*

Brian Wilkes' Story

Brian Wilkes is a Croatan descendant with the Cherokee surnames Cooper and Hair and familiar Croatan/Lumbee surnames Martin and Strickland in his family. He has worked as a schoolteacher, newspaper, radio and television journalist and university lecturer as well as serving as a high-tech troubleshooter for a major telecommunications company. For the past decade or more he has operated his own publishing companies. These include the SpeakCherokee.com online language program that has helped hundreds of students. He lives in Pinckneyville, Illinois.

Wilkes' Croatan ancestors migrated inland to the Robeson/ Sampson/ Hoke area of North Carolina, then into the Cheraw District of South Carolina, where they recorded it took them about five years to be accepted by the Cheraws, then across the border into Georgia by 1800. "In 1910, the Croatan community was declared Cherokee and renamed by the NC government," he tells us, "and the main remnant group was merged into the Lumbee Nation in 1956." His own research confirms much of what Brewington and others have written about the Croatans:

There is a tradition that the Croatans descended from Roanoke colony survivors and were of two factions: one that intermarried with local Indians but not Africans, and one that intermarried only within their own European group. They anticipated the return of their ancestral people from across the ocean (Gov. White's delayed re-supply voyage?), and wanted to be recognizable as descendants of English settlers when they met. They also continued speaking an archaic form of English in 1701, using the Saxon "-en" suffix to pluralize nouns rather than the modern "s." Thus the plural of house was housen, not houses. They also used the archaic "locklier" rather than "locksmith", the source of the common Lumbee surname Locklear. While my documented genealogy goes back to Hungarians, Slovenes, Serbs, and Croatians (among other ethnicities), it had never occurred to me until DNA Consultants' blog posts that the DNA matches for these might reflect pre-Jamestown North American populations.

A Dalmatian legend tells how ships from Dubrovnik sailed westward around 1540 with a large number of refugees fleeing from the Turkish army. There was nowhere for them to go but abroad. Wherever such Slavic multitudes ended up we can be sure they immediately tried to revive their traditional way of life. This includes *zadruga*, a social institution practically inborn in South Slavic peoples. Generally embracing one extended family or clan, the *zadruga* held property, herds and money in common. Its members shared the fieldwork, proceeds therefrom and tribute or military service owed to the overlords, which during the war-torn years of the sixteenth century

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were often various, changing and in conflict. Usually the oldest patriarch ruled and made decisions for the family, though at times he would delegate this right at an old age to one of his sons. Because the system was patrilocal, a girl left her parents' *zadruga* when she married and joined that of her husband. Within the *zadruga* all members worked to ensure that the needs of every other member were met.

Can we link any of these old Croatian lifeways to the Lumbee? Is the *zadruga* behind their much-remarked upon custom of owning and working land in common long after land grants and severalty came to be the rule? Is frequent cousin-marriage and fierce clannishness because of these ties? Do the Croatoan Indians, Cohaire, Tuscarora and others manage to survive where other tribes fail because they can easily count on local fighting men to form a tightly organized, mercenary-free, well-disciplined army?

A final thought is that there may be a trace of Croats on the Carolina coast under our very noses. As pointed out at a Congressional hearing in 1957, the Croatian author Vlaho Vlahović (d. 1872) weighed in on the controversy in one of his books with the following testimony:

The oldest known grapevine in America, still producing delicious grapes, is located on the island close to the spot where the lost colony is believed to have landed. Governor White noted that this grapevine was bearing abundant fruit in 1590, which supports my contention that those preceding the Colonists could have been Croats.... Transporting grapevines is a custom with Dubrovnikian and Dalmatian navigators.... When a Dubrovnikian or Dalmatian sailor embarked on a long voyage he frequently took with him seedlings, roots, and plants, especially grapevine cuttings. These he would sow or transplant into the soil of whatever country he visited. When returning home he would bring back seeds, shrubs, and strange fruit trees.²⁰⁰

The first historical record of the presence of Croats in North America—the inscription “Croatoan” carved in Elizabethan letters on a post at Roanoke—has moldered away. But the grapevine of a Croatian mariner lives on. According to Douglas Schar, an herbalist, botanist, doctor, and health journalist, the “big grapevine” on the Outer Banks is famous in botany circles. It was longed owned by the Baum family, as follows:

1723 Peter Baum
1772-1833 Abraham Baum
1772-1839 Maurice Baum

²⁰⁰ Prpic (see n. 7 above), citing *Congressional Record*, Appendix (April 8, 1957), p. A2798, and *Zajedničar* (newspaper of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America, in Croatian, Pittsburgh, Pa.), June 12, 1957.

1813-1898 Solomon Baum

1858 Abraham Baum

1869 Mahalaj Baum had married Ghauey Meekins in the 1840's, and when she died, it passed to the Meekins family²⁰¹

We suggest that with names like Abraham, Maurice (Moses), Solomon and Mahala, the Baums and probably also Meekinses were Crypto-Jewish. Croatian, Jewish and Italian genes from across the Atlantic continue to propagate and bear fruit in North Carolina, noticeably in the Cherokee and Lumbee.

Dare Stones

One link between the lost English colonists of 1590 and the following century is Virginia Dare. Did the first white child born in Virginia perish sometime between her birth on August 18, 1587, followed a few weeks later by her grandfather John White's sailing for England, and his landing on a deserted Roanoke Island on August 16, 1590 on his return, or did she live on as one of the survivors? Most historians favor the first version of American history. Some imagine she died as a baby with a tomahawk embedded in her skull, and in the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina she and Manteo have been elevated to the status of martyrs.

Maybe the Lost Colony was never lost. A tablet discovered by L. E. Hammond in Chowan County, North Carolina in September 1937 is engraved with a record signed by Eleanor Dare, Virginia's mother, daughter of John White. It describes slaughter of the entire colony save seven:

Ananias Dare & Virginia went hence Vnto Heaven 1591
Anye Englishman Shew John White Govr Via

Father soone After yov goe for Englande wee cam hither/
Onlie misarie & Warre tow yeere/ Above half DeaDe ere
tow yeere more from sickeness beine foyre & twentie/
salvage with message of ship vnto vs/ small space of
time they affrite of revenge ran al awaye/ wee bleeve
yt nott you/ soone after ye salvages faine spirts angrie/
suddiane murther all save seaven/ mine childe—ananias
to slaine wth mvch misarie--/ bvrie al neere foure myles
east this river vppon small hil/ names writ al ther on
rocke/ pvtt this ther alsoe/ salvage shew this vnto yov
& hither wee promise yov to give greate plenty presents

E W D²⁰²

²⁰¹ Douglas Schar, personal communication, Feb. 24, 2020. One also thinks of the Viennese Jewish writer Vicki Baum (1888-1960).

²⁰² Robert W. White, *A Witness for Eleanor Dare: The Final Chapter in a 400 Year Old Mystery* (San Francisco: Lexikos, 1991), p. 230

In other words, Eleanor Dare wanted anyone who found the inscription to let her father, the governor of the colony, know that soon after he went back to England in 1587 the colonists removed themselves from Roanoke. After two years of nothing but war and misery, and after two more years of sickness, with a false report having been received of White's ship sighted, half the colonists were dead. They were then fallen upon by the Indians in a rage and murdered, all but seven. These the survivors buried upon a small hill four miles east with memorial stones. "My child and Ananias, too, slain with much misery."

That seven colonists survived seems to be echoed by Secretary William Strachey's intelligence at Jamestown in 1610:

...at Ritanoe, the Wewroance (king) Eyanoco preserved 7 of the English alive—fower men, twoo boyes, and one young Maid, who escaped and fled up the River of Choanoke—to beat his copper."²⁰³

The Choanoke find was followed by other inscriptions coming to light over the next couple years. These are all currently preserved in a collection at Brenau College in Gainesville, Georgia, a few miles north of Atlanta.

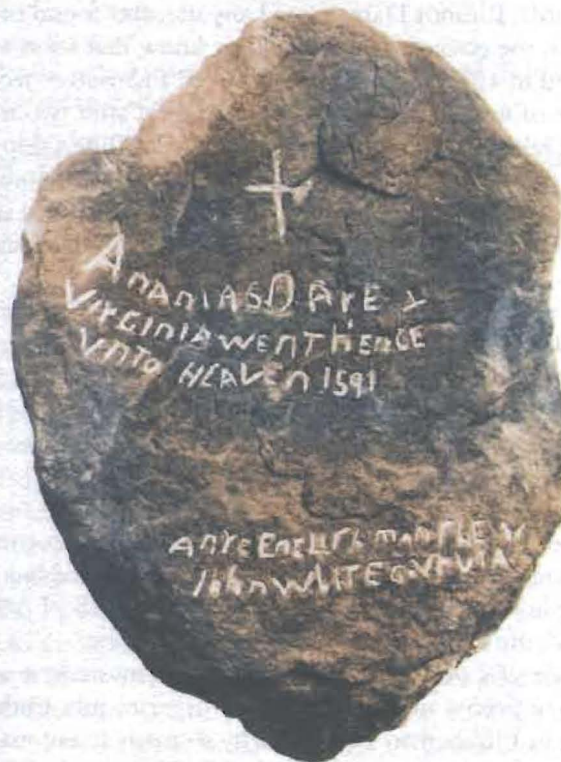
Wait, weren't the Dare Stones proven to be forgeries?

As the author of a detailed monograph on the mysterious stones points out, it must have been a diabolically clever forger to mix truth with lies in such a fashion, in Elizabethan English. Why so many iterations of the same fantastic tale, scattered across several states? "The simplest forgery is the best." No gloating hoaxer has ever come forward, and no forgers have ever been exposed. The story is much like that of ninth-century Latin and Hebrew texts on the Tucson Artifacts excavated in the 1920s, branded by academic authorities as "manufactured history."²⁰⁴ Both finds turn American history as conventionally conceived on its ear.

In 1939, there were twenty-four stones in the museum of Brenau College. College officials convened a number of scientists and historians on October 21-22 for the purpose of discussing them. Presiding was Samuel Eliot Morrison, the professor at Harvard who had just written the maritime history of New England and was soon to publish a series of classic books on Columbus, Portuguese voyages of discovery and related subjects. No more august figure could be imagined. At the close of the conference, Morrison was placed in charge of appointing a committee of five with himself as chairman to publish conclusions, "if any," and a verdict on the stones.

²⁰³ White, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ See Donald N. Yates, *The Merchant Adventurer Kings of Rhoda: The Lost World of the Tucson Artifacts* (Longmont: Panther's Lodge, 2018).



One of the Dare Stones, Brenau University.

In the meantime, what was evidently a “hit job” appeared in a popular New York magazine. Titled “Writ on Rocks: Has America’s First Murder Mystery Been Solved?” it was by-lined by the “reporter,” Boyden Sparkes. It made mince-meat of the whole affair in a long critical essay that seemed to leave no stone ... well, unturned.

Sparkes attacked the discoverers as bumptious amateurs and money-hungry adventurers. He questioned the style, sense and age of the inscriptions and concluded that the small Baptist girl’s college used the collection as a pretext for “publicizing the school” to get a Hollywood movie offer. Some commentators suggested he had been richly paid to put an end to a rival historical pageant in North Carolina before it even got started. If that was its true purpose, Sparkes’ foray into American colonial history certainly had a resounding effect. Paul Green’s outdoor costume musical “The Lost Colony” premiered on Roanoke Island on July 4, 1937. The extravaganza had biblical amounts of hoopla behind it, as well as ample state and federal funding, and went on to become the longest-running, biggest grossing spectacle in the United States. As of Summer 2019, more than four million visitors had seen

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It was not the first time North Carolina was to win out over Georgia in manipulating history. Green's production inspired "Unto These Hills," the outdoor drama that introduced a Hollywood version of Cherokee history to millions of people beginning in 1950. By the 1960s, every American recognized that the Cherokees were the biggest, oldest and most wronged Indian tribe in the East.

But what about Professor Morrison's blue-ribbon committee? Oddly, even Sparkes acknowledged things started out looking a bit dicey:

Last fall thirty-four scholars, headed by Dr. Samuel E. Morison [sic], of Harvard, president of the American Antiquarian Society, journeyed to Brenau and after two days' study pronounced that "the preponderance of evidence points to the authenticity of the stones."²⁰⁵

It has long been customary in American letters to describe a trip from Boston or New York to the backwoods of Georgia as a "journey." But the prejudice in this case was of a deeper nature. Mark Twain once remarked, "There are many humorous things in the world, among them the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages." In the suppression of the Dare Stones, the battle lines were drawn between conflicting versions of history.

Morrison, the acclaimed specialist and popular writer on the discovery of America—like the champion of the Tucson Artifacts at the University of Arizona, Byron Cummings, known as the Father of Southwest Archeology—never backed away from his verdict that the Dare Stones were authentic, of national importance. They completely rewrote colonial history. Readers today can choose between taking the opinion of an academic and popular hero, a Rear Admiral who retraced Columbus' voyages with his own ship and won two Pulitzer Prizes, or a forgotten hack from Madison Avenue.

What the Dare Stones Tell Us

Not well known is that 26 of the Dare Stones were found by farmers in the Nacoochee Valley or Upper Chattahoochee Valley long at the center of the former kingdom of the Apalache before "the" Dare Stone was stumbled upon by a tourist near Roanoke Island. Archeologist Robert Wauchope, a recent graduate of Harvard at the time, urged the farmers to take them to Brenau for safe-keeping and evaluation. He actually turned up two more himself while excavating bona fide archeological sites in an official capacity. The public never was told any of this. Wauchope was whisked away to a better-paying job in North Carolina and sworn to secrecy for 20 years about

²⁰⁵ Quoted in White, p. 250.

the Georgia finds. Supposedly, he started writing a report in 1959. It was released in 1966, but not to the general public. It was Wauchope who arranged for Morrison and others from Harvard to inspect the stones at Brenau.²⁰⁶

The Dare Stones are genuine. They provide incontrovertible evidence that sixty-four of the Roanoke colonists died or were murdered by the Indians. After the massacre of seventeen colonists including Virginia and her father Ananias Dare in 1591, the remaining seven, guided by "four goodli men," headed southwest. "Goodly" indicates they were civilized, if not Christians. The Apalache kingdom, among all other Indian nations, had accepted Christianity.

Thirteen stones found by William Eberhart in Greenville County, South Carolina in the 1930s (nos. 2-14) continue the chronicles. One is the memorial of "Dyonis Harvie wife & Dowter, Wil Dye, spend love, 1591, Myrthered bye salvage." The last traces of the party are recorded on stones 15-47, found in Hall County and Fulton County, Georgia, in Apalache Country. Before Eleanor Dare died in 1599 (no. 25), we learn that the seven survived "here" from 1593, "here" being "a great salvage lodgement," whose king took Eleanor "tow wyfe" (no. 26). In 1598, word is that "we have sent many savages to look for you" (no. 27). In 1598, Eleanor beseeches her John White to have her daughter with the savage king "goe to englande" (no. 28). In 1599, she sickens and dies. In the years down to 1603, someone else carves the memorials. The stones record the deaths of William Wythers, Robert Ellis, Henry Berry, Thomas Ellis, Griffin Jones, James Lassie and Agnes Dare, the half-blood daughter of the Indian king and Eleanor.²⁰⁷

West Country Connection

Giving a daughter the name of Agnes provides a strong clue to the ethnicity of the Dares. There is a christening record of an Agnis Dare, possibly a relative of Ananias Dare, Eleanor's husband, in Lyme Regis, Dorset, October 15, 1554. Her father was Thomas Dare (about 1530-1580), merchant and goldsmith. Thomas Dare came from an ancient West Country family that has been documented in records back to 1265.²⁰⁸ The surname also appears as Deere, Dere and Deor, after the animal or a form of "beloved." Ananias Dare was cut from the same cloth as the earliest English explorers and privateers, the Drakes, Raleighs, Hawkins, Gilberts and

²⁰⁶ Personal communication from Richard Thornton, Feb. 13, 2020.

²⁰⁷ For transcriptions of nos. 1-47, see Haywood J. Pearce, Sr., "The Dare Stones," in the *Bulletin of Brenan College*, Appendix B in White, pp. 229-240

²⁰⁸ See John Dare message board Re: John E. Dare of Newport, Monmouth, Wales by doubleDare posted Jan 2, 2008 at <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/boards/surnames.dare/313.1/mb.ashx>.

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Grenvilles.²⁰⁹ It would make sense for him to marry Eleanor White, the daughter of an artist, lay minister and politician.

Like many of the Welsh, including the Tudor Queen Elizabeth herself, these Dares were probably of Jewish or Crypto-Jewish descent.²¹⁰ In this period, however, and probably ever since the era when English Jews were proscribed in the thirteenth century, they identified as staunch Protestants. According to the author of a Dare timeline, the years between 1500 and 1700 were their heyday. It was a time when Lyme Regis with “its merchants and sea captains trading with the Mediterranean, West Indies and Americas,” was a major English seaport, even more consequential than Bristol or Liverpool. John William Dare, who left a will in 1542, was a merchant of Madras, India. In 1563, Thomas Dare was elected mayor of Lyme Regis. And in 1588 the decisive battle with the invading Spanish Armada took place within sight of Lyme Regis.

What motives might a forger have had to fake the Dare Stones and plant them in scattered locations across three different states? We cannot imagine. But we *can* imagine why the Eleanor Dare inscriptions might have sounded alarms in the historical establishment in 1938. It was a time when a narrow WASP elite tightly controlled academia, education, government and the media, and it would have been relatively easy to squelch a national origin story that included the following elements:

- A strong woman who heroically led the remnants of a failed European colony through the perils of the North American wilderness and inadvertently recorded their names and exploits for posterity.
- Indians who were quite civilized, and Christian to boot.
- A system of trade paths and, in effect, postal service, or at least communications, that reached across tribal territories from the Carolina coast to the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- A king among the Indians who lived in a glittering metropolis in what is now north Georgia and took an Englishwoman for his wife, producing the first half white, half Indian child born in the territories that became the United States.

What if word of this early start to North American history had gotten out at the time? If Indians, or at least some of them, were civilized, it completely undermined the rationale for destroying or removing them. Indians were fully human and not to be despised or injured. If they had already been converted

²⁰⁹ On whom, see Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman and Donald N. Yates, *Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), pp. 7-24.

²¹⁰ See Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman and Donald N. Yates, *The Early Jews and Muslims of England and Wales* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2014), pp. 154-62.

to Christianity, they were not heathens occupying an undiscovered land. Under Spanish and Portuguese rule, they did not need to be read the Requerimiento (notification of conquistadors to convert or die).²¹¹ Their domains had already been reached by some "Christian prince" (as we will see shortly, French Protestant missionaries). If they had kings, the aristocracy of Europe had to recognize them, a dilemma that actually did face James I with Pocahontas. Finally, the thought that an Indian male could happily "take to wife" an Englishwoman in holy matrimony and have legitimate issue undoubtedly caused many white people no end of anguish. It was supposed to go the other way.

²¹¹ See "Spanish Requirement of 1513," Wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Requirement_of_1513.

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