



# Ancestor Talk

History's Mysteries & Genealogical Puzzles

Discover the Secret of the Past

Episode 1

*The Mystery of*

# ROANOKE ISLAND

STUDY GUIDE

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About the Author

About the E-book

# HEY, I'M MARY

Hi! I'm Mary Varner Zimmerman—a genealogist, content creator, and musician with a love for uncovering family stories and bringing history to life. With a background in STEM Education and Psychology, I blend creativity and curiosity in everything I do, from my Ancestor Talk Podcast to my whimsical art and uplifting music. Whether I'm tracing family roots or writing songs, I'm passionate about sharing joy, inspiration, and a little bit of magic with the world!

*Mary xoxo*

Unlock the mysteries of your family history with this engaging genealogy guide! From *Genealogy: 8 Steps to Tracing Your Maritime Ancestry* to the *Roanoke Colony Research Activity*, this eBook offers step-by-step processes, research tips, and interactive activities to help you uncover your ancestors' stories. Dive into *Suggested Maritime Research Resources* to expand your knowledge, explore theories with the *Roanoke Colony Mystery*, and wrap up with the *Present Your Theory Bonus Activity*. Plus, access essential *Roanoke Colony Mystery Online Sources* to deepen your research.

**READY TO HAVE FUN!  
LET'S DO THIS!**



**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

# *Welcome* **TO THE “MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND STUDY GUIDE”**

Welcome to the world of Genealogy! Where you will discover and solve mysteries in your own ancestor tree! Whether you are a new or seasoned genealogist, I hope that you will find this guide helpful in your genealogical research! As you journey through the book, I hope that you will have fun while learning new and exciting things about Genealogy! If you are new, please refer to my other e-book called: “A Beginner’s Guide to Genealogy!”

**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

In this E-book, you will learn how to trace your maritime ancestry using clear, step-by-step guides and essential research tools. You will dive into the mystery of the Lost Colony of Roanoke through engaging activities and critical thinking prompts, while discovering key online sources and historical resources. Whether exploring family history or unraveling historical mysteries, you will sharpen your research skills, present evidence-based theories, and gain a deeper understanding of how to uncover and interpret ancestral stories.

**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

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**GENEALOGY: THE MYSTERY OF ROANOKE ISLAND**

INSPIRATION

**ROANNOKE'S  
MYSTERY** *teaches*  
**US THAT EVEN  
LOST**

*stories* **CAN LIGHT  
THE WAY TO  
DISCOVERY~**

INSPIRATION

# CHAPTER



# NUMBER 1

**8 STEPS TO TRACING YOUR MARITIME  
ANCESTRY**

Step-by-  
Step

LET'S  
DO IT

## *What you will learn*

You'll learn how to trace your maritime ancestry step by step, using key resources like ship manifests, naval records, and passenger lists to uncover your family's seafaring history.

# 8 STEPS TO TRACING YOUR MARITIME ANCESTRY

Tracing your maritime ancestors opens up a whole new world of discovery and adventure in history. Did your ancestors work on ships? Did They serve in the Navy or live near the sea? The following steps will help guide you through their seafaring lives.

- **Step 1. Identify Your Maritime Ancestor**
  - Start by recording the basic information of your ancestor who had a connection to the sea.
    - Name of Ancestor:
    - Birth Date:
    - Death Date:
    - Occupation: (e.g., sailor, fisherman, navy officer, shipbuilder)
    - Country of Origin:
    - Maritime Connection: (What is their link to the sea? Did they serve in the navy, work on a merchant ship, or live near a port?)

- **Step 2. Explore Key Maritime Records**
  - Researching maritime ancestors requires digging into specific types of records. Below is a checklist of sources to search for your maritime ancestor:
    - Passenger Lists:
      - Check passenger lists for ancestors who may have traveled or worked on ships.
        - Example: Ellis Island Passenger Search, UK Passenger Lists

- Did your ancestor emigrate via ship? Where was their port of entry?
  - Naval or Military Records:
    - Look for records of your ancestor's naval service.
      - Example: Royal Navy records, U.S. Navy service records
    - Which branch of the navy did they serve in? Are there any service numbers or awards associated with their service?
  - Merchant Marine Records:
    - If your ancestor worked on a commercial ship, these records might hold valuable information.
      - Example: Merchant Marine records
    - Did they have a certificate of service? What type of ship did they work on?
  - Ship Manifests and Crew Lists:
    - These documents often contain information about sailors and crew members.
      - Example: Crew lists from the National Archives, ship manifests
    - What ship(s) did your ancestor work on? What were their duties?
- **Step 3. Record Details of the Ships They Worked On**
    - Once you've discovered your ancestor's maritime history, record the details of the ships they were associated with:
      - Ship Name:
      - Type of Ship: (e.g., merchant, naval, fishing boat)
      - Dates of Service:
      - Role on the Ship: (e.g., captain, deckhand, cook)
      - Port of Departure:
      - Port of Arrival:
      - Significant Voyages: (Did the ship travel to interesting locations? Record any historical voyages they participated in.)

# Continued....

- **Step 4. Family Maritime Traditions or Stories**
  - Does your family have any stories, legends, or traditions related to the sea? Write them down. Even oral histories passed down through generations can offer clues about your ancestor's life at sea.
    - Family Story 1:
    - Family Story 2:
  - Were any heirlooms passed down that relate to the sea?
- **Step 5. Search for Maritime Grave Sites**
  - Many maritime ancestors were buried near the coast or had unique grave markers that tell stories about their life at sea. Look for cemeteries near ports or historical naval cemeteries. Write down:
    - Burial Location:
    - Grave Inscription: (Is there any mention of their maritime career on their gravestone?)
    - Are There Any Nearby Maritime Cemeteries?
- **Step 6. Investigate Maritime Museums and Historical Societies**
  - Maritime museums and historical societies often have specific records and exhibits that can help you learn more about your ancestor's life at sea.
    - Look for Maritime Museums to Visit or Contact.
      - Example: National Maritime Museum, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
    - Have you found any artifacts or exhibits that could relate to your ancestor's experience?
    - Search for Historical Societies with Maritime Collections
      - Example: Mystic Seaport Museum, Maritime History Society
- **Step 7. Additional Research Notes**
  - As you trace your maritime ancestry, keep track of your research discoveries here:
    - Important Dates or Events:
    - Connections to Historical Events:
    - (Was your ancestor involved in any major maritime events such as wars, migrations, or shipwrecks?)
    - Sources Consulted:
    - (Keep a list of books, websites, and archives you've checked.)
- **Step 8. Final Thoughts and Next Steps**
  - Now that you've uncovered the maritime connection, what's next? Do you need to investigate further in certain areas?
  - Do you plan to visit a specific maritime location related to your ancestor?
  - Have you discovered other family members connected to the sea?







# Become A Supporter

Are you passionate about uncovering family mysteries and exploring history's greatest puzzles? At Ancestor Talk, we dive deep into historical events, unsolved mysteries, and genealogical research, helping you connect with the past in meaningful ways.

If you love what you've read in this eBook, imagine the exciting discoveries we can continue to make together! By supporting Ancestor Talk, you're helping to bring more episodes, interactive content, and research resources to fellow genealogy enthusiasts.

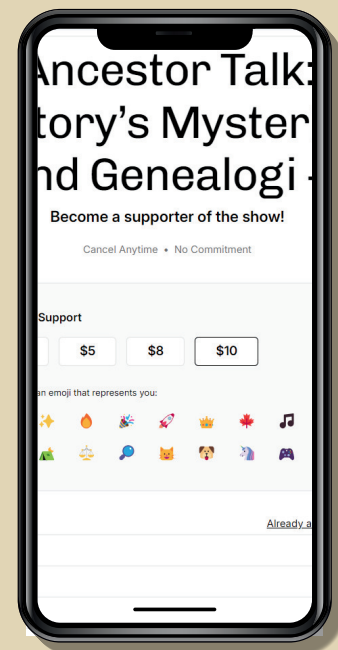
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**ROANOKE'S  
VANISHED VOICES  
REMINDE US THAT EVEN  
IN**

*Mystery*

**THE PAST WHISPERS**

*Truths*

**WAITING TO BE  
UNCOVERED~**



# CHAPTER



# NUMBER 2

## ROANOKE COLONY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

LET'S  
DO IT

### *What you will learn*

You'll explore the mystery of the Roanoke Colony through research prompts and critical thinking questions, helping you analyze theories and historical sources to deepen your understanding of this famous disappearance.

# ROANOKE COLONY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

## Unraveling the Mystery of the Lost Colony”

The disappearance of the Roanoke Colony remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in American history. Use this worksheet to dive into the theories and research surrounding the Lost Colony, while developing your critical thinking and research skills.

### Step 1: Gather Basic Information

Start by researching the basics of the Roanoke Colony. Use reliable websites, books, and other historical sources.

- What year was the Roanoke Colony founded?
  - Answer:
- Who led the settlers to Roanoke Island?
  - Answer:
- What was the purpose of the colony?
  - Answer:
- What mysterious event occurred when Governor John White returned in 1590?
  - Answer:

### Step 2: Research the Leading Theories

Several theories have been proposed to explain the disappearance of the settlers. Research these popular theories and record your findings.

- Theory 1: The Colony Moved to Croatoan Island
  - Summary of the Theory:
    - Key Evidence Supporting This Theory:
  - Challenges to This Theory:
- Theory 2: The Colony Assimilated with Native Tribes
  - Summary of the Theory:
  - Key Evidence Supporting This Theory:
  - Challenges to This Theory:

- Theory 3: The Colony Was Killed by Hostile Forces
  - Summary of the Theory:
  - Key Evidence Supporting This Theory:
  - Challenges to This Theory:
- Theory 4: Starvation or Disease
  - Summary of the Theory:
  - Key Evidence Supporting This Theory:
  - Challenges to This Theory:

### Step 3: Analyze Historical Sources

Choose one or more historical sources related to the Roanoke Colony. This can be a primary source document, an article, or a historical account. Use the following questions to reflect on the reliability and importance of the sources.

- What is the source? (Describe the type of document, article, or artifact.)
  - Answer:
- Who created it? (Was it written by someone from the time period or a modern historian?)
  - Answer:
- What perspective does the source represent? (Is it biased toward one theory, or does it provide a balanced view?)
  - Answer:
- What new information does this source provide?
  - Answer:
- Do you find this source reliable? Why or why not?
  - Answer:

# Continued...

## Step 4: Critical Thinking Prompts

Use these questions to help you analyze the different theories and think critically about the disappearance of the Roanoke Colony.

- Which theory do you find the most convincing and why?
  - Reflection:
- What evidence do you think is missing or needed to prove this theory?
  - Reflection:
- Do you think the truth behind the Lost Colony will ever be discovered? Why or why not?
  - Reflection:
- What do you believe were the biggest challenges faced by the Roanoke settlers that could have led to their disappearance?
  - Reflection:

## Step 5: Explore Additional Research Tools and Websites

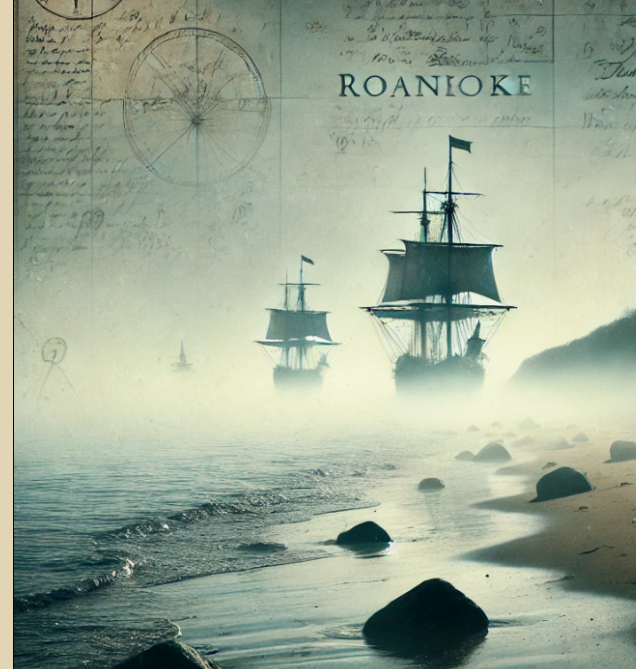
Here are some trusted websites and archives you can explore to further research the Roanoke Colony and its mysteries:

- National Archives: [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)
- Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)
- The Lost Colony (Official Site): [www.thelostcolony.org](http://www.thelostcolony.org)
- National Geographic on Roanoke Colony: [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

## Step 6: Final Thoughts

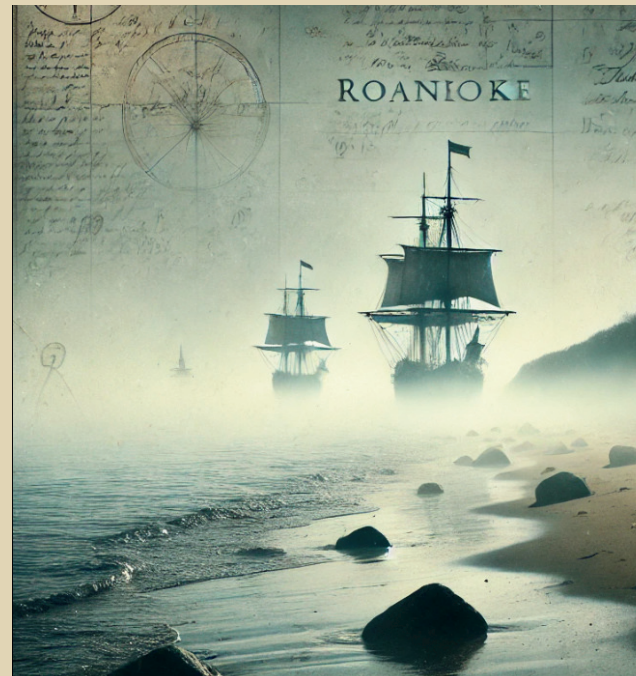
Summarize your findings and personal reflections on the Lost Colony of Roanoke.

- What is your final conclusion on what happened to the Roanoke Colony?
  - Answer:
- Which piece of evidence or research stood out to you the most?
  - Answer:
- What other historical mysteries would you like to explore?
  - Answer:



## Bonus Activity: Present Your Theory

Prepare a short presentation or essay outlining your theory of what happened to the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Use the evidence you've gathered to support your argument and consider alternative viewpoints.





**ROANOKE  
REMINDS US  
THAT EVEN IN**  
*uncertainty*  
**THE SEARCH  
FOR**  
*answers*  
**KEEPS  
HISTORY  
ALIVE.**



# CHAPTER



# NUMBER 3

**MARITIME RESEARCH  
RESOURCES**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

*What you will learn*

This chapter provides essential resources and tools to help you trace your maritime ancestry, guiding you through key websites and archives to uncover your family's seafaring history.

# Maritime Research Resources

- **National Archives – Maritime Records**
  - <https://www.archives.gov/research/maritime>
- **Mystic Seaport Collections Research Center (USA)**
  - <https://research.mysticseaport.org/>
- **Ancestry.com – Passenger Lists and Immigration Records**
  - <https://www.ancestry.com/>
- **Findmypast – Merchant Navy Records**
  - <https://www.findmypast.com/articles/world-records/full-list-of-united-kingdom-records/education-and-work-records/merchant-navy-seamen-merchant-marines>
- **Fold3 – U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Records**
  - <https://www.fold3.com/publication/896/us-wwii-navy-marine-corps-and-coast-guard-casualty-list-1946>
- **FamilySearch – Seafarers and Maritime Records**
  - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1762440>
- **Understanding Maritime Terminology**
  - <https://www.aapa-ports.org/advocating/content.aspx?ItemNumber=21500>



# Mapping the Possible Routes

Using an online map or a simple printout, trace the potential routes settlers may have taken if they left Roanoke Island. This activity will help you visualize the geographical challenges they faced and consider different theories of relocation.

- **Step 1:** Mark Roanoke Island on your map as the starting point.
- **Step 2:** Research the location of Croatoan Island (modern-day Hatteras Island) and draw a possible route they might have taken.
- **Step 3:** Explore inland routes that settlers may have taken towards mainland North Carolina or beyond. Mark these paths on your map.
- **Step 4:** Consider natural obstacles like rivers, mountains, or dense forests that may have influenced their travel decisions. Mark these features and reflect on how they would affect survival.

After mapping the routes, compare the evidence of the settlers' potential movements. Which route seems most plausible based on the research? Could the settlers have traveled further than we expect?

# CHAPTER



# NUMBER 4

**PRESENT YOUR THEORY**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

*What you will learn*

You'll have the opportunity to develop and present your own theory about the Roanoke Colony mystery, using evidence and research to support your conclusions.

# Present Your Theory

**Prepare a short presentation or essay outlining your theory of what happened to the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Use the evidence you've gathered to support your argument and consider alternative viewpoints.**



When you have completed your documentation, I would love for you to send me a synopsis explaining your theory! I am excited to hear your view! You can email it to me at:

maryvarnerzimmerman@magicalcrownpublishing.com  
or send it to me through the “Contact” section of the  
Magical Crown Publishing LLC website at:  
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INSPIRATION

**ROANOKE REMINDS  
US THAT EVEN IN**



*Mystery*

**THE SEARCH FOR  
ANSWERS**



*Connects*

**US TO THE PAST~**

INSPIRATION

# **“What Would You Do?”**

## **Decision-Making Activity**

**Imagine you were Governor John White returning to Roanoke in 1590 to find the colony deserted. Based on the evidence you see (or don't see), what would you do next? Choose one of the following options and explain your reasoning.**

- Option 1: Follow the clues to Croatoan Island.**
- Why do you think this is the best choice? What do you hope to find there?**
  
- Option 2: Return to England to gather more supplies and reinforcements.**
- What advantages does returning offer? What are the risks of waiting longer?**
  
- Option 3: Search for the colony inland, away from the coast.**
- Do you believe the settlers would have moved further inland? Why or why not?**

**Reflect on your choice and what might have happened if John White had made a different decision. How could his actions have changed the course of history?**



# CHAPTER



# NUMBER 5

**ROANOKE COLONY MYSTERY  
ONLINE SOURCES**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

*What you will learn*

You'll explore trusted online sources to deepen your research on the Roanoke Colony. These resources will help you investigate historical records, uncover new theories, and gain insights into one of history's greatest unsolved mysteries.

# **Roanoke Colony Mystery Online Sources**

**The First Colony Foundation:**

**<https://www.firstcolonyfoundation.org/>**

**Fort Raleigh National Historic Site:**

**<https://www.nps.gov/fora/index.htm>**

**PBS: Discovering New Clues About about the Lost Colony of Roanoke**

**<https://www.pbs.org/video/discovering-lost-colony-roanoke-island-whp4eg/>**

**The History Channel:**

**<https://www.history.com/news/archaeologists-find-new-clues-to-lost-colony-mystery>**

**The National Archives:**

**[https://search.archives.gov/search?affiliate=national-archives&sort\\_by=&query=roanoke+disappearance](https://search.archives.gov/search?affiliate=national-archives&sort_by=&query=roanoke+disappearance)**

**Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/search?query=Roanoke+Colony>**



INSPIRATION

**ROANOKE SHOWS  
US THAT SOME**

*mysteries*

**ENDURE, BUT THE**

*search*

**FOR TRUTH  
ALWAYS LIGHTS  
THE WAY  
FORWARD~**

INSPIRATION

# Activity

# ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

LET'S  
DO IT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCA

## Online Scavenger Hunt: Uncovering Clues

Use trusted online sources to answer the following questions and gather evidence about the Roanoke Colony. This scavenger hunt will help you explore key websites and dig deeper into the historical mystery.

- Find the year the first settlers arrived at Roanoke.
  - Hint: Check the National Archives or Library of Congress websites.
- What was the name of the Native American tribe closely connected to the Roanoke settlers?
  - Hint: Research the Croatoan or Secotan tribes.
- Discover a theory about the colony's disappearance and find a source that supports it.
  - Hint: Explore National Geographic or Smithsonian online archives.
- Look up an artifact recently discovered that is tied to Roanoke's history.
  - Hint: Check recent archaeology reports from the Lost Colony website.

SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT





# REFLECTION

As we explore the mystery of the Lost Colony of Roanoke, we are reminded of the power and intrigue that historical research holds. While we may never fully uncover what happened to the Roanoke settlers, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding enriches our connection to the past.

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**DIG DEEPER, AND SEEK ANSWERS, NOT JUST FOR HISTORICAL EVENTS BUT FOR THE STORIES WITHIN OUR OWN FAMILIES.**

---

Every mystery we encounter encourages us to ask more questions, dig deeper, and seek answers, not just for historical events but for the stories within our own families.

Consider how your own genealogical journey mirrors this quest for truth. Like the lost clues of Roanoke, your family history may contain puzzles, gaps, or forgotten stories waiting to be discovered. Let this mystery inspire you to keep searching—whether in archives, records, or conversations with relatives—and find the hidden threads that tie you to your ancestors. Reflect on the lessons you've learned, not only about the past but about the persistence and dedication it takes to uncover your family's story.

**What questions remain in your own genealogical research? How can you continue to piece together the stories that have shaped who you are today?**

*Organizing*  
**STUDY CALENDAR**

**NAME:**

**DATE:**

DAY  
**01**

DAY  
**02**

DAY  
**03**

DAY  
**04**

DAY  
**05**

*Thank you*

# **CONCLUSION**

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!  
YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE MYSTERY  
OF ROANOKE ISLAND STUDY GUIDE!**

**I hope you enjoyed your journey!  
Come visit us at Magical Crown  
Publishing for More Fun  
Activities!**

See You Soon!

*Mary xoxo*

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