

**ABANDONED!**  
Towns Without People

# ROANOKE ISLAND

**The Town That Vanished**



by Kevin Blake

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**The Town That Vanished**



**by Kevin Blake**

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# Abandoned

It was the early morning of August 18, 1590, and John White's ship had just reached Roanoke (ROH-uh-nohk) Island. Three years had passed since he had left a struggling **colony** on the island. Now, White was finally back. He raced up the beach, **desperate** to see everyone again.



Roanoke Island



When White reached the colony, his heart sank. Everyone was missing, including his daughter and granddaughter. White searched for clues in the **abandoned** town. The colonists' boats were missing. Their homes were gone. Worries filled White's mind. Were the Roanoke **settlers** alive or dead? What happened to them?



Roanoke Island is on the eastern coast of North America, in what is now North Carolina. Roanoke's colonists were originally from England. John White was an artist. He also served as the colony's **governor**.



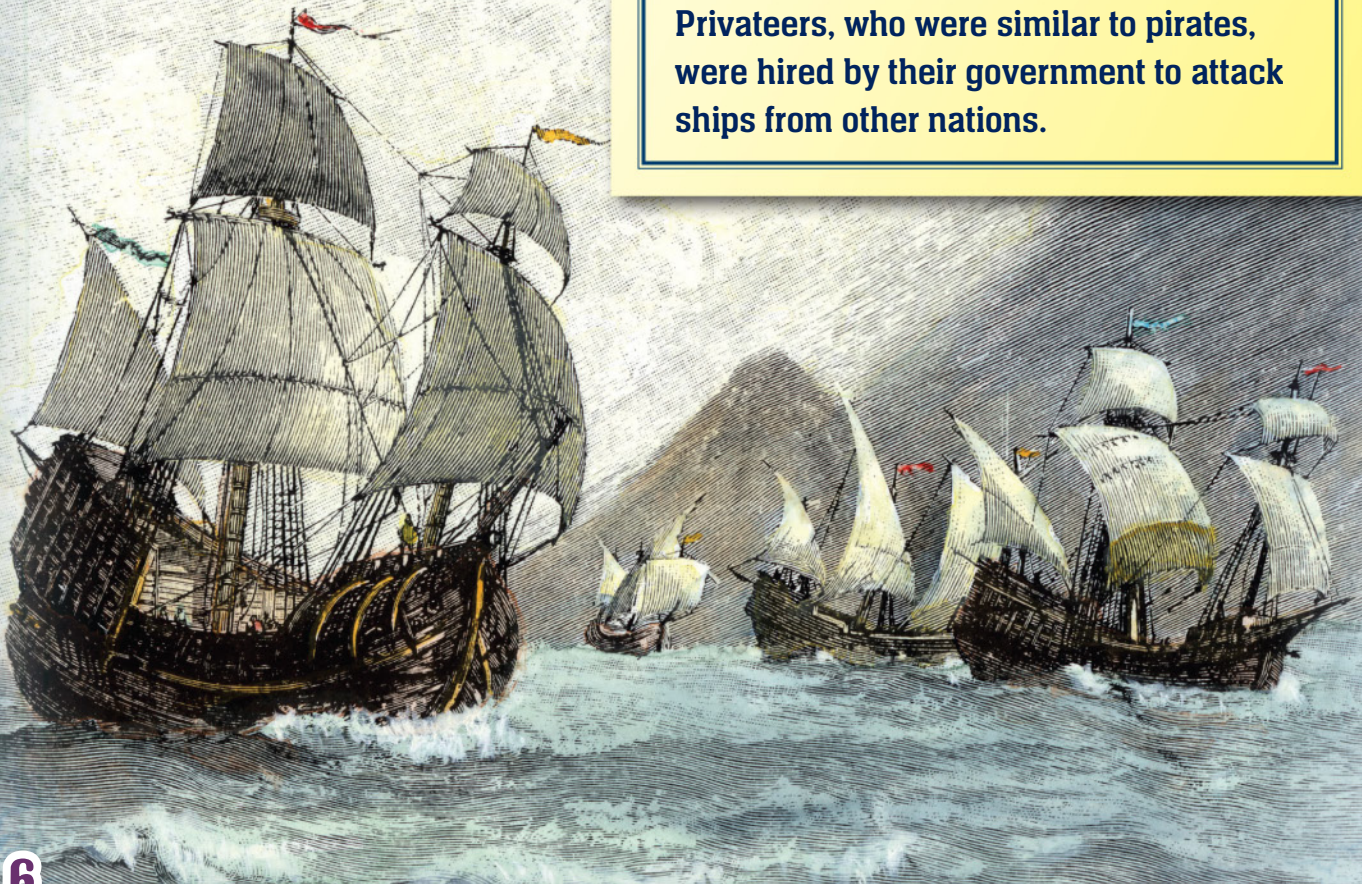
# England Versus Spain

Why would a group of people from England want to live on a tiny island across the Atlantic Ocean, thousands of miles from home? For Europeans in the 1500s, exploring the world meant a chance to find treasures. They hoped to build colonies and discover **natural resources**—such as gold—that could make them rich.

In the 1500s, explorers traveled the world by ship.



A ship could run into many dangers during the months it took to cross the Atlantic Ocean. A violent storm could sink the ship, or **privateers** might attack it. Privateers, who were similar to pirates, were hired by their government to attack ships from other nations.





Both Spain and England wanted to start colonies in new lands. The two countries were **rivals**. By the late 1500s, Spain had many colonies in South America and in the southern part of North America. Leaders in England wanted to compete with Spain. They planned to set up a colony on the eastern coast of North America—on Roanoke Island.



Roanoke is a small island—12 miles (19 km) long and 3 miles (4.8 km) wide.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Blake has written several books for children.  
He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife, Melissa, and son, Sam.



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# ROANOKE ISLAND

**The Town That Vanished**

On August 18, 1590, John White's ship reached Roanoke Island, off the coast of present-day North Carolina. White raced up the beach, looking for his family and more than one hundred other English colonists. Yet there was no trace of them. The colonists' boats were missing. Their homes were gone. White, the colony's leader, found a few letters carved into a tree and a wooden gatepost. What had happened while he was away? Had the colonists been attacked and killed by Native Americans or the Spanish? Were the carved letters clues to their whereabouts? Look inside to find out more about the Roanoke colony, including the different theories about what became of the colonists.

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**The Town That Vanished**

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