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The North Carolina Booklet.

GREAT EVENTS IN
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY.



Virginia Dare,

No 1 May 1901

—BY—

MAJOR GRAHAM DAVES.



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VIRGINIA DARE.

On the eastern shore of North Carolina, in the shallow sounds enclosed by long sand banks, which bound the coast, lies a little island twelve miles long and three miles broad.

This is Roanoke—the scene of the first English settlement in this country, and the birth-place of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in America.

How much of romance, and yet more of history—"a romance of the real"—clusters around the sad story of this young girl! Out of the unfortunate expeditions, of which she, in some sense, may be said to have been the first fruits, grew the schemes of colonization at Jamestown and at Plymouth a score of years later. The seed were sown at Roanoke, were fertilized by the sacrifice of the settlers there, but took enduring root first at Jamestown.

Associated with the humble, and almost unknown colonists of Roanoke are the names: Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen; Raleigh, the *preux chevalier*, soldier, statesman, poet, historian; Sir Richard Grenville, sailor, soldier and martyr; Sir Francis Drake, Admiral and circumnavigator of the Globe. Truly our little Virginia Dare was in goodly company.

Of chroniclers, too, she, her companions and their acts, had no lack.

There were Arthur Barlowe, who commanded a ship in the first expedition; Lane, the governor of the first colo-

nists ; John White, governor of the second colonists, the grandfather of Virginia Dare, whom he was destined to seek in sorrow and never find. Their accounts, and those of others also, are full and their stories well told. They are still on record, and have been published by the Hakluyt Society. It is a noteworthy fact that the history of these colonies which came to naught, and of a locality now so little known, should be so fully recorded and preserved in every detail—much more so than that of other localities of far greater importance, now of much prominence, whose origin and early history are often obscure and uncertain—sometimes almost unknown.

It was in a stirring era, too, in the history of the world, and one of romantic incident and adventure, that the little waif, Virginia Dare, first saw its light. The dreaded Spanish Armada—foiled in part by Drake and Raleigh, so intimately connected with the colonists of Roanoke—was preparing for its descent upon the coasts of Britain ; the appeals and groans of the Christian martyrs who twenty years before perished for their faith at the stake at Smithfield, Oxford and elsewhere, still echoed through the land ; Bacon and Shakespeare, all unconscious of their future fame, were in their lusty youth ; “The Faery Queen” was taking shape in the prolific brain of Spencer ; Sir Philip Sidney was soon to die at Zutphen ; Frobisher had returned from his Arctic discoveries, and Drake from his voyage around the world ; the horrible butcheries of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew at Paris, had heightened religious enmity to the fiercest intensity, to which the good Prince of Orange was soon to for-

feit his life, a murdered victim ; and the lovely Queen of Scots was ere long to lay her beautiful head upon the block in expiration of the plottings and sins of others, of whom she was the tool—perhaps the willing tool.

The Anglo Saxon and the Spaniard were entering upon the long struggle for supremacy at sea and upon this continent, which may be said to have been ended by ourselves but a short time ago, after more than three hundred years, by the expulsion of the latter from Cuba and the other West Indies. Surely little Virginia was born in troublous times, and her sad fate was not the least pathetic incident of that stormy period.

There were two expeditions to Roanoke before the birth there in 1587 of Virginia Dare, some account of which may be of interest. The first was one of discovery and exploration only. It consisted of two small ships, the "Tyger" and the "Admirall," commanded by Captains Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe, to the latter of whom we owe the account of the voyage and of its results. He says to Sir Walter Raleigh :

"The 27th of April, in the yere of our redemption 1584, we departed the West of England with two barkes well furnished with men and victuals. * * * The 10th of June we were fallen with the Islands of the West Indes. * * * The 2nd of July we found shole water, wher we smelt so sweet and so strong a smel, as if we had been in the midst of some delicate garden abounding with odoriferous flowers, by which we were assured that the land could not be farre distant."

* * * "The 4th of July we arrived upon the coast,

which we supposed to be a continent, and we sayled along the same 120 miles before we could find any entrance, or river issuing into the sea. The first that appeared unto us we entered, and cast anker about three harquebuz-shot within the haven's mouth: and after thanks given to God for our safe arrivall thither, we manned our boats, and went to view the land next adjoyning and to take possession of the same in right of the Queene's most excellent Majestic. * * * Wee came to an Island which they call Roanoke, distant seven leagues from the harbour by which we entered: and at the north end thereof was a village of nine houses, built of Cedar and fortified round about with sharp trees." * * * We were entertained with all love and kindnesse, and with as much bountie as they could possibly devise. We found the people most gentle, loving and faithfull, voide of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the golden age."

A handsome tribute to our Hatteras Indians, who afterwards, probably, had not much cause to return the compliment.

These Indians differed in no way from the other natives of America except that they had a few *iron* implements, and that among them were noticed children with auburn and chestnut colored hair. It was learned later that twenty-six years before this time, a ship manned by white men had been cast away at Secotan, and that some of the crew had been saved. After a time these men attempted to escape in a small boat, and were drowned. These were the only whites ever seen before the arrival of the English—but some six years after this time another

vessel had been wrecked on this coast, and all the crew perished. From parts of this wreck driven ashore the natives had obtained nails, spikes and edged tools. But for this explanation, this presence of iron would have perplexed the archaeologist. The account of the natives, their kindness and hospitality, of their easy life, and of the abundance of fruit and grain, fish and game in these inland waters is familiar to us all. Like all natives, they longed to purchase the swords and knives of the white men, but above all, they desired to obtain the kettles and pans to use as shields in battle. The King's brother was most kind, repaying the English liberally in melons and fruit, and each day he sent to the new-comers presents of "fat bucks," conies, hares and fish.

They visited the Indian village on Roanoke. "When we came towards it," the record runs, "standing near unto the water's side the wife of Granganimeo the King's brother came running out to meet us very cheerfully and friendly—her husband was not then in the village. Some of her people she commanded to draw our boat on shore for the beating of the billow: others she commanded to carry us on their backs to dry ground; and others to bring our oars to the house for fear of stealing. When we were come to the outer room, having five rooms to her house, she caused us to sit down by a great fire, and after took off our clothes and washed them, and dried them again, some of the women washed our feet in warm water, and she herself took great pains to see all things ordered in the best manner she could."

The adventurers remained in that region about two

months and made many explorations. In September they returned to England, taking with them two of the Indian Chiefs, Manteo, who ever remained the faithful friend of the English, and Wanchese. Their names are retained as the names of two villages on Roanoke Island to-day. Their arrival home, and the glowing accounts the adventurers gave of their discoveries, aroused the utmost interest. The new found country was called Virginia in honor of the "Virgin Queen," and the Atlantic coast of North America was divided into three regions, with boundaries very ill defined, claimed by France, England and Spain, and called Canada, Virginia and Florida. A large part of Virginia, which included Roanoke Island, was afterwards by the patent of Charles I to Sir Robert Heath in 1629, and by the charters of Charles II in 1663 and 1665 to the "Lords Proprietors," set off as Carolina, so named from the Latin name, Carolus, of the two Kings. The name, therefore, Virginia, first applied to Roanoke Island and the parts adjacent, originated in what is now North Carolina, and if Virginia be, as she is often called, the "Mother of States," North Carolina may be said to be her own grandmother.

The next year (1585) a large expedition, under command of Sir Richard Grenville, a cousin of Raleigh's, was fitted out. There were seven "ships" in the fleet—if the small crafts composing it can be so called, the largest of them being of "seven score tunnes" burden—which carried 108 men who were to be settled as a permanent colony on Roanoke Island. The fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 9th of April, 1585, and on July 3d Wingina, the Indian Chief, was notified of its arrival at Roanoke. Manteo and Wanchese returned with this fleet.

On August 25th Sir Richard Grenville, "Our Generall, weyed anker, and set sails for England." On his return the colony was left in charge of "Master Ralph Lane," and with him was "Master Philip Amadas, Admiral of the Country," who had commanded one of the ships in the first expedition. The names of the colonists are all known, a list of which may be seen in Vol. I of Hawks' History of North Carolina. These colonists founded a village near the north end of the Island, and constructed a fort, principally an earthwork, called by Lane "The new fort in Virginia." The outlines, ditch and parapet of this fort are still perfectly distinct, and its angles and sally port are now marked with granite blocks. It is now, and has been for a long time, appropriately called "Fort Raleigh."

Lane has left a most interesting account of the doings of his colonists during their stay on Roanoke Island, and of his own explorations. They remained there but one year, having become home-sick, discouraged and disheartened, and sailed in June, 1586, on the fleet of Sir Francis Drake for England, where they arrived on the 27th of July. They had scarcely gotten out of sight of the Island when a ship despatched by Raleigh, freighted with provisions and supplies of all kinds, arrived there, and, finding no one, went back to England. About a fortnight later Sir Richard Grenville arrived with three ships similarly equipped. Finding the Island abandoned, "yet unwilling to lose the possession of the countrey," he "determined to leave some men behind to reteine it: whereupon he landed fifteen men in the Isle of Roanoke, furnished plentifully with all manner of provisions for two years, and so departed for England."

Nothing daunted by the failure—a very costly one—of this first attempt at colonization Sir Walter equipped another expedition in the year following, which, however, he intended to settle on the waters of the Chesapeake instead of at Roanoke. This expedition was entrusted to the guidance of John White, the grandfather of Virginia Dare, who we will let tell his own story :

“ In the yeere of our Lord, 1587, Sir Walter Raleigh intending to persevere in the planting of his Countrey of Virginia, prepared a newe Colonie of 150 men to be sent thither, under the charge of John White, whom he appointed Governour, and also appointed unto him twelve Assistants, unto whom he gave a Charter, and incorporated them by the name of Governour and Assistants of the Citie of Raleigh in Virginia. Our Fleete being in number three saile, the Admirall a shippe of 120 Tunnes, a Flieboat and a Pinnesse, departed the 26 of April from Portsmouth. *

* * * About the 16 of July we fel with the maine of Virginia, and bare along the coast, where in the night, had not Captaine Stafford bene carefull, we had all bene castaway upon the breach called the Caps of Feare. The 22 of July we arrived at Hatorask : the Governour went aboard the pinesse with forty of his best men, intending to pass up to Roanok forthwith, hoping there to finde those fifteene men which Sir Richard Grenville had left there the yeere before. * * * The same night at sunne-set he went aland, and the next day walked to the North ends of the Island, where Master Ralfe Lane had his forte, with sundry dwellings made by his men about it the yeere before, where we hoped to find some signes of our fifteene men. We

found the forte rased downe, but all the houses standing unhurt, saving that the neather roomes of them, and also of the forte, were overgrowen with melons, and Deere within them feeding: so wee returned to our company, without hope of ever seeing any of the fiteene men living." The fifteen men, as was afterwards learned, had been massacred by the Indians.

The colonists having landed upon the Island went actively to work to rebuild Fort Raleigh and to make homes for themselves. They consisted of ninety-one men, seventeen women and nine children, the names of all of whom are preserved. In the former colony there had been neither women nor children and they gave to this one a character of stability and permanence that had been lacking in the first. From a similarity of their names with those of the men, it would appear that at least ten of the women were married, and for a like reason that six of the children were with their parents.

Shortly after the arrival of the settlers there occurred two events, or perhaps more properly three, of interest and importance not merely to the little community, but in their relation to the history of this country. These events are thus related in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, Vol. III:

"The 13 of August our Savage Manteo was christened in Roanoke, and called Lord thereof and of Dasamonguepeuk, in reward of his faithfull service. The 18, Elenor, daughter to the Governour, and wife to Ananias Dare, one of the Assistants, was delivered of a daughter in Roanoke, and the same was christened there the Sunday following, and because this child was the first Christian born in Virginia, she was named Virginia."

These baptisms were, so far as is known to this writer, the first celebrations of record of a Christian Sacrament within the territory of the thirteen original United States. The baptism of Manteo, and his being made Lord of Roanoke were by order of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the latter, it is believed, is the only instance of the conferring of a title of nobility upon a native American. By the Indians "Elenor Dare," the first mother of the white race known to them, is said to have been called, in their figurative and descriptive way, "The White Doe," and her baby, the little Virginia, the first white infant they had ever seen, "The White Fawn;" and there is a pretty tradition that "after her death her spirit assumed that form—an elfin Fawn, which, clad in immortal beauty, would at times be seen haunting like a tender memory, the place of her birth, or gazing wistfully over the sea, as with pathetic yearning, for the far-away mother land. Another tradition is that in that sweet form she was slain by her lover, a young Indian Chief, who had been told that if he shot her from ambush with a certain enchanted arrow it would restore her to him in human form.

Soon after the birth of Virginia, her grandfather, Gov. White, returned to England to obtain supplies for the colonists:

"The 22 of August the whole company came to the Governour, and with one voice requested him to return himselfe into England, for the obtaining of supplies and other necessities for them; but he refused it, and alleaged many sufficient causes why he would not. * * * At the last, through their extreame intreating constrayned to return, he departed from Roanoke the 27 of August."

On the 16th of October he arrived on the Irish coast, and coming to England straightway made efforts to carry succor to his people, but never again did he look upon the faces of his daughter, or his grand-daughter, or of any of their companions. England was in the midst of her bitter contest with Spain and the Invincible Armada, and had sore need at home for every man and ship. There was neither time nor means to be devoted to an obscure little company thousands of leagues away in an unknown land beyond the stormy Atlantic. Three years elapsed before White returned to Roanoke, and when he came he found it deserted, and the settlers gone—whither? No one was left to tell and their fate was enshrouded, and will ever remain, in mystery pathetic. The dead past will not give up its dead. Let White himself tell the sad story:

“The 20 of March the three shippes, the Hopewell, the John Evangelist, and the little John, put to sea from Plymouth. * * * * The 15 of August we came to an anker at Hatorask, and saw a great smoke rise in the Ile Roanoke neere the place where I left our Colony in the yeere 1587. * * * * The next morning our two boats went ashore and we saw another great smoke; but when we came to it we found no man nor signe that any had been there lately.”

When White left Roanoke to return to England for supplies, it had been agreed that in case the colonists left the island in his absence they should leave some sign to indicate whither they had gone, and if their leaving was under duress, or in distress, the sign of the cross should also be affixed, thus +.

White continues: "The 17 of August our boats were prepared againe to go up to Roanoke. * * * * Toward the North ende of the Island we espied the light of a great fire thorow the woods: When we came right over against it, we sounded with a trumpet a Call, and afterwards many familiar English tunes and Songs, and called to them friendly; but we had no answer; we therefore landed and coming to the fire we found the grasse and sundry rotten trees burning about the place. * * * * As we entered up the sandy banke, upon a tree in the very browe thereof were curiously carved these faire Romane letters, C. R. O: which letters we knew to signifie the place where I should find the planters seated, according to a secret taken agreed upon betweene them and me, at my last departure from them, which was that they should not faile to write or carve on the trees, or postes of the dores, the name of the place where they should be seated; and if they should be distressed, that then they should carve over the letters a Crosse in this forme +, but we found no such sign of distresse. We found the houses taken downe and the place strongly enclosed with a high palisado of great trees, with cortynes and flankers very Fortlike, and one of the chief trees at the right side of the entrance had the barke taken off, and five foot from the ground, in fayre Capitall letters, was graven CROATOAN, without any crosse or sign of distresse."

The colonists had evidently gone to Croatan, as we now have the word, the home of Manteo, the friendly Chief, the banks and islands of our coast, extending from Hatteras to Beaufort harbor; but none of them was ever seen of white

men again. They "died and made no sign;" though it is believed by many, and with considerable reason, that their descendants may still be found among the Croatan, or, more properly, Hatteras, Indians of Robeson county. White does not explain satisfactorily why he did not seek his daughter at Croatan, which was not very far away. He says :

"The season was so unfit, and weather so foule, that we were constraied of force to forsake that coast, having not seene any of our planters, with losse of one of our ship-boats, and seven of our chiefest men. * * * * The 24 of October we came in safetie, God be thanked, to an anker at Plymouth. * * * Thus committing the reliefe of my discomfortable company, the planters in Virginia, to the merciful help of the Almighty, whom I most humbly beseech to helpe and comfort them, according to His most holy will and their good desire, I take my leave."

Raleigh himself had never visited our shores, where in failure and disaster had ended all his efforts at settlement in this land, and where his unfortunate colonists passed from the domain of history into the domain of the unknown.

And little Virginia Dare, what of her? Did she die in infancy, and does her dust, mingled with the soil of her birth-place, blossom there into flowers that blush unseen? Did her little feet join in the wandering of the settlers from Roanoke to Croatan? Did she grow to womanhood in their second home, and did her life end in tragedy amid the darkness which enshrouds the fate of the Colony? From the deep abysm of the past comes no answer. Yet a faint echo, a possible trace of the lost White Fawn, comes to us which may have reference to her, and with it the record closes forever :

In his first volume of "The History of Travaile," Wm. Strachey, Secretary of the Jamestown Colony, writing in 1612 of events that occurred in Virginia in 1608-10, says:

"At Peccarecemmek and Ochanahoen, by the relation of Machamps, the people have howses built with stone walles, and one story above another, so taught them by those English who escaped the slaughter at Roanoke, at what tyme this our Colony under the conduct of Captain Newport landed within the Chesapeake Bay, where the people breed up tame turkies about their howses and take apes in the mountains, and where, at Ritanoë, the Weroance Eyanoco preserved seven of the English alive, *fower* men, two boys and one *young mayde*, who escaped the massacre, and fled up the river Chanoke." (Chowan.)

This "young mayde" may well have been Virginia Dare, who, at the time mentioned, would have been about twenty-one years of age. The extract is of interest, also, as showing that the existence, and even the location, of certain of Raleigh's colonists were well known to the Jamestown settlers. Indeed both John Smith and Strachey make mention of scattered parties of those colonists several times, and the Virginia Company writes of some of them as "yet alive, within fifty miles of our fort, * * * * as is testified by two of our colony sent out to search them, who, (though denied by the savages speech with them) found crosses * * * and assured Testimonies of Christians newly cut in the barks of trees." Here the veil of mystery falls around the White Fawn and her companions probably never to be raised.

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