

The baptism of Virginia Dare on Roanoke Island in 1587 . . . drawn by Artist Harry Grissinger.

## A "BIRTHDAY PARTY" for a GIRL who VANISHED 350 YEARS AGO

**A**MERICANS this summer are celebrating the birthday of a baby girl who was born 350 years ago on Roanoke Island, off the coast of North Carolina. Nine days after her birth the child, her parents, and the other members of the colony which had settled among these sand reefs and shifting inlets were lost to history.

The fate of Virginia Dare, sealed in 1587, has been made the subject of exhaustive study from which have grown many and varied theories. With the sole distinction that she was the first child born of English parents in America, Virginia has been immortalized in legend and song.

Her name identifies a modern highway; it is the trademark for many a commercial product. Special coins have recently been struck by the U. S. mint to commemorate her advent into this world. Probably no other girl baby has been so signally honored in this land and yet next to nothing is actually known about her!

Preparations for the event by which a nation pays homage to a courageous band have been under way for many months. The federal government has lent a hand by assisting in the reproduction of the log fort, dwellings, and chapel erected by the first English settlers on this continent.

This fort, resting on the original foundations, is a typical blockhouse of heavy pine with projecting upper story. Its sides are pierced as if for gun-fire. A palisade fence surrounds the structure.

The log houses such as the colonists built for themselves stand about under the oak and holly trees, the pines and the dogwood. These dwellings are chinked with Spanish moss. Their fireplaces and foundations are constructed of ancient ballast rock, recovered from the waters around the island. Some of it may have been dumped by the very ships that brought the colonists over from England.

Around the whole of the Fort Raleigh Reservation is a palisade whose entrance is flanked by two blockhouses. From it a path leads down to Colony Landing where tradition says that the settlers came on shore.



The entrance to the Fort Raleigh reservation, where the anniversary of Virginia Dare and the Roanoke Island settlement is being celebrated.

**T**HE restoration of this fortress, however, was based on something more substantial than tradition. The governor of the colony, John White, took home to England descriptions and drawings from which engravings, now extant, were made in London.

Two small ships, designed after the type in use during the sixteenth century, were built. Croatan Indians who, many contend, are descended from members of that Lost Colony, are taking part in a pageant that portrays its tragic story.

Paul Green, North Carolina playwright, author of "In Abraham's Bosom," and Pulitzer prize winner for 1927, arranged this pageant. The birthday celebrations will be held on Aug. 18, marking the culmination of historical re-enactments that began on July 23. That was the date on which John White's little vessels dropped anchor off Roanoke.

This island, about 10 miles long and two or three miles wide, lies off the Carolina coast between Albemarle Sound and Pamlico Sound. It is separated from the Atlantic Ocean by "the banks," long, narrow, sandy reefs which extend almost the entire length of this coast.

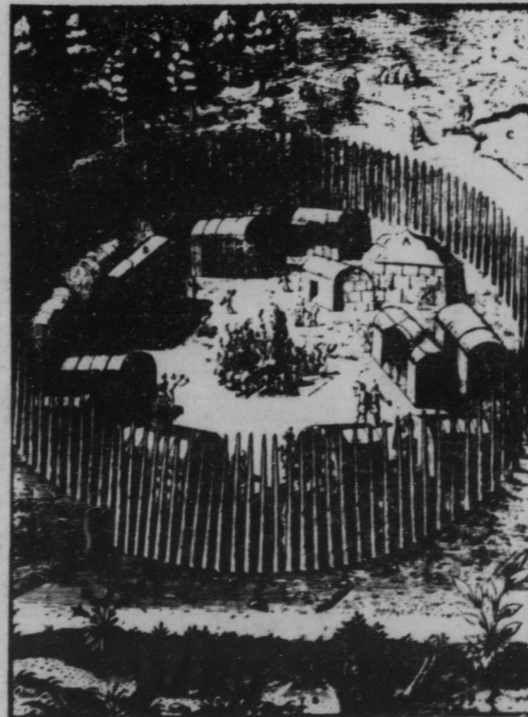
Until a few years ago Roanoke Island was isolated from the rest of the world, save for the few boats which touched there to serve the fisher folk who comprise its inhabitants. Now a modern paved highway, the Virginia Dare Trail, and bridges give access to the island from Elizabeth City, N. C., and Norfolk, Va.

Virginia Dare, the lost heroine of this story, entered life in a colony that was planted 33 years before the Pilgrims

landed at Plymouth, Mass., and 20 years before the Jamestown Settlement.

Her grandfather, John White, was governor of the colony which Sir Walter Raleigh had sent out in 1587 to build the "Citie of Raleigh" in Virginia. By Virginia was meant at that time all the territory on the American continent claimed by the British.

Records painstakingly kept by Governor White show that this band of 121



The English found Indian villages protected by stockades like this one, which furnished the plans for their own forts and palisaded villages.

colonists which landed in July of 1587 was the first to include women, and the first to contemplate a permanent settlement.

**Y**ET Sir Walter had sent his earliest expedition to Virginia in 1584. These men later returned to England, taking with them two Indian warriors, Manteo and Wanchese. Then followed two expeditions outfitted by Sir Richard Grenville. They took home with them Indian corn, sassafras, Irish potatoes, and tobacco, also wild turkeys, thus introducing American products to the civilized world.

John White remained in the colony only one month and five days, but he had two events of importance to record before he sailed for England.

"On the 13th of August," he wrote, "our savage Manteo, by commandment of Sir Walter Raleigh, was christened in Roanoke and called Lord thereof, and of Dasamonguepeuc, in reward of faithful service." This is the only instance of a peerage being conferred on the soil of the United States.

Manteo remained faithful to the colonists, but Wanchese became a bitter enemy. The names of these two Indians, however, have been perpetuated in the names of two villages on Roanoke Island, Manteo and Wanchese, where many of the visitors who come for the August celebration will stay. These communities have no large hotels, but people there are always willing to take in "comers and goers."

John White's other important entry reads: "On the 18th Eleanor, daughter of the Governor and wife of Ananias Dare, one of the assistants, was delivered of a daughter and the same was christened there the Sunday following, and because the child was the first Christian born in Virginia, she was named 'Virginia'."

John White set sail from Roanoke on Aug. 27, taking with him reports and drawings which have kept this story alive through the centuries. He was returning to act as a factor for the colony and to obtain provisions.

But war between England and Spain interfered with Governor White's plans. Not until April, 1588, was he able to embark for America, and then, meeting a Spanish fleet, he was forced to return to England. Finally, in March, 1591, he sailed again, this time arriving at Roanoke in August.

Not a soul was to be found upon the island. The walls of the stout palisade were intact, but all the houses had been torn down. Chests that had been buried in the sandy beach had been dug up and plundered. Only one clew was found. Graven upon a post at the gate to the fort was the word CROATOAN.