

THE ENTERPRISE

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Lost Colony Center to bring stone thought to be key to Mystery of Dare

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The Enterprise

WILLIAMSTON—The Lost Colony Center for Science and Research is holding a symposium that will feature the infamous Elenor Dare Stone, which is supposedly the last message for the Lost Colony.

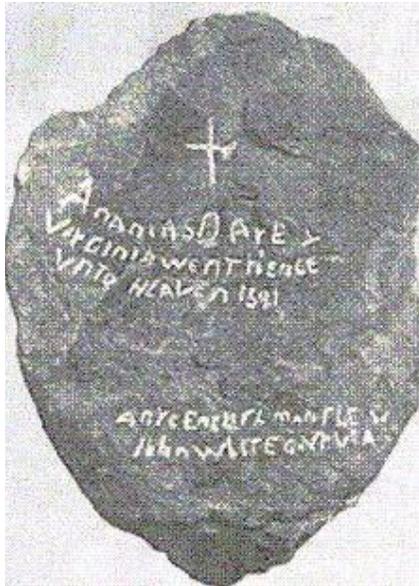
The stone was found in the mouth of a creek four miles north of Edenton many years ago and has writing on it that appears to be a message from Eleanor Dare to her father, John White.

The stone says that Virginia Dare's grave is located four miles from where the stone was found. So far, researchers have not been able to determine if the stone is a genuine artifact or an elaborate hoax.

Many people believe that the stone truly contains a message from Elenor Dare. So many people belie this, Fred Willard, director of the center said, that a copy of the stone was made and taken to the world's fair.

"I will never know whether this stone is authentic or not, but I hope that it is," said Willard.

The stone is reported to



weigh 21 pounds, four ounces and was discovered by a traveling salesman from California. The original stone was turned over to a member of Emory College (Georgia), who was the son of the Brenau College (Georgia) president. The stone has been housed at Brenau since it's discovery.

The stone is returning to North Carolina and will be available for view in the Holiday Inn parking lot from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Sept 7. This part of the symposium is free for the public.

The center is also looking into DNA research to help connect people in the Piney Woods area near Jamesville and the Chocowinity area to the lost

colonists and the Native Americans that they could have assimilated into.

An overwhelming response to the center's dive into DNA research has come from all over the world.

"We've got people flying in from Germany who will be coming to Williamston," said Willard. "It's just captured the imagination...worldwide."

He said he also has people coming to the center's DNA symposium from several states including California and Oklahoma.

The symposium will be held at the Holiday Inn in Williamston Sept. 7-9.

The three-day event will include explaining what the center does and why it was created, learning how DNA research can help the center, and finding the paths of genealogy in family groups.

Willard said the center's supporters had hoped to see at least 50 people come to it's symposium. So far, 68 people have already signed up.

The symposium will cover the three main areas of research the center is looking at to support it's hypothesis that members of the Lost Colony joined the Croatan Indians and

moved inland over time.

To support this theory, the center is using genealogy, archeology and DNA testing.

Local genealogist and center board member Jennifer Sheppard heads the genealogy sector of the center's research.

"DNA is no good without the genealogy," said Willard. "Genealogy gives up the place to look."

Following family lines can help the center identify those people who may be decedents of the lost colonists.

The center is also actively involved in archaeological excavations relating to the Lost Colony.

Willard heads the genealogy sector of the center's research.

Using satellite imaging, the center is investigating potential dig sites that be related to the Lost Colony.

The newest aspect of the center's research is DNA research.

Roberta Estes, renowned DNA expert and genealogist, and other people who work with DNA research are scheduled to attend the center's symposium and speak on how DNA research works.

The center is currently trying to get people who may have descendants of the Croatan Indians and the Lost Colony to have their DNA tested.

"The first thing we're going to do is track the mutations of the DNA and then match it back to people who are living today," said Willard.

He explains that further down the road, the center hopes to match those people to living relatives in England and to Native American skeletons that have been excavated from North

Carolina's coast.

Reservations are still available for the symposium.

To join, mail a check for \$149 to Lost Colony Center for Science and Research, 741 Springs Road, Washington NC, 27889.

The price includes three days of sessions, two lunches and a one-year charter membership in the Lost Colony Helix Foundation and private Helix Foundation Newsgroup.

Make hotel reservations for the event by calling the Holiday Inn at 7923184.

"This is the most important unsolved mystery in North America," said Willard. "I totally believe this because of the amount of response we've had."

For more information on the center and it's research, see it's website at www.lostcolony.com.