Goodliest Soile under the Cope of Heaven in

"Goodliest Soile under the Cope of Heaven"

by William S. Powell [2], 2006

"Goodliest Soile under the Cope of Heaven" is the phrase used by Ralph Lane [8], leader of one of Sir Walter Raleigh [6] s Roanoke voyages [5], to describe the coastal region of North Carolina. Lane penned the description in a letter to Richard Hakluyt the elder on 3 Sept. 1585. The oft-quoted phrase, which is sometimes rendered incorrectly as the "Goodliest lande under the cope of heaven," is revered by North Carolinians as a romantic and fitting expression of the natural beauty of the state.

An extract of Master Ralph Lanes letter to M. Richard Hakluyt Es. quire, and another Gentleman of the middle Temple, from Virginia.



12 the meane while you shall understand, that since Sir Richard Greenuils de parture from vs, as also before, we have discovered the maine to be the goodless toyle under the cope of heaven, to abounding with sweete trees, that bring such fundry rich and pleafant gummes, grapes of fuch greatneffe, pet wilve, as France, Spaine not Italie have no greater, fo many lotts of Apothecarie ofugs, fuch feverall kindes of flare, a one kind like filke, the fame gathered of a graffe,

is common there, as graffe is here. And now within thele few dayes we have found here Maiz of n Guinie wheate, whole eare pecideth come for bread 400, byon onceare, and the Cane maketh pery good and perfect lugar, allo Terra Samia, other wife Terra figillata. Belides that, it is the roodlieft and most pleating Territorie of the world: for the continent is of an hune and unknowen greathelle, and very well people and towned, though favagely, and the climate to wholfome, that wee had not one licke fince we touched the land here. To conclude, if Virginia had but horfeg and tine in some reasonable proportion, I dare affire my felfe being inhabited with English, no reasone

Part of a letter to Richard Hakluyt by Ralph Lane, dated September 3, 1585. Image from The Third and Last Volume of the Voyages, Navigations, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, 1600.

David B. Quinn, ed., The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590, vol. 1 (repr., 1967).

Additional Resources:

Lane, Ralph. "An Extract of Master Ralph Lane's Letter to M. Richard Hakluyt, Esquire, and Another Gentleman of the Middle Temple, from Virginia. Explorations, Descriptions, and Attempted Settlements of Carolina, 1584-1590. Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History. 1948. p.33https://archive.org/stream/explorationsdesc00corb#page/32/mode/2up [7]

Stick, David. Roanoke Island: The Beginnings of English America. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1983. p.94.

"Lane Colony Letters and Reports." N.C. Department of Public Instruction.http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/curriculum/socialstudies/middlegrades/discovernc/3discovernc/3discoverncoanokeisland.pdf [9]

"The Settlement at Roanoke: What problems did the settlers face? Source 1." Durham University Museums and Special Collectionshttp://www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/Roanoke/CS1s1large.htm [10]

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Part of a letter to Richard Hakluyt by Ralph Lane, dated September 3, 1585. Image from The Third and Last Volume of the Voyages, Navigations, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation London. 1600. p.254-255. From "The Settlement at Roanoke: What problems did the settlers face? Source 1." Durham University Museums and Special Collections https://community.dur.ac.uk/4schools.resources/Roanoke/default.htm [6]

Precolonial period (pre-1600) [11] Slogans, slang, and sayings [12]

Authors:

Powell, William S. [13]

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[14]

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