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   Marjorie Hudson's book, *Searching For Virginia Dare: a fool's errand*, is the story of one person's fascination with the truth and legend that surrounds that mysterious 16th century English colony that begot, Virginia Dare, the first English child born in America. Hudson crafts her book with a mixture of straight history and historical fiction with shifts in time to the mid-1990's and the author's own personal journey through the coastal region of North Carolina in search of Virginia Dare's history and legacy. Hudson's book, ostensibly an investigation into a provocatively obscure historical figure, quickly becomes intermeshed with the author's own quest for self discovery.

   The author vividly depicts her exploration of small towns, forests and swamps in search of some remnant of Virginia Dare and her fellow lost colonists. She hopes for archeologists with new finds, historians with new facts and storytellers with new interpretations. Seeking insight from those persons who now inhabit the proximity of the colony, share a surname or legendarily descend from those early sixteenth century English settlers abandoned to a hostile and alien continent, the author soon sees parallels between Virginia Dare's life and her own. Each step into Virginia Dare's history is an occasion for the author to reflect on her own life, her childhood, parents, and her early adulthood as a roving hippy. This book is as much a story of searching for Marjorie Hudson via the vehicle of Virginia Dare. The author feels she, like Dare, was lost at a young age, wandering though a kind of wilderness, was threatened by dangers on the road, an plagued by uncertainty and the unknown.

   Hudson follows a number of threads, including the annual outdoor production of Paul Green's drama, "The Lost Colony," and the discovery of a gold ring near Hatteras Island, believed by some to be from one of the original colonists. The author interviews historians and storytellers, including lebame houston (sic) and Rosebud Fearing. She becomes fascinated with the circuitous journey of a statue of Virginia Dare that almost perishes at sea only to finally reside in obscurity (like Dare herself) within a lesser known North Carolina park. She is drawn to Sallie Cotton's 19th century dedication to Virginia Dare's place in history and with Cotton's story of the white doe which emerges as a metaphor for both Virginia Dare and the author.

   Hudson's style of mixing history with personal autobiography in *The Search for Virginia Dare* is reminiscent of a tradition of personal or confessional writing that goes back at least to Virginia Woolf and became popular with new journalists in the 1970's and the "personal critics" of the 90's.   Hudson's play with time and space seems more a playful divertimont than a tedious experiment in literary or historical construction. Her ambitions seem to be innocently attuned to spiritual reflection. One feel almost voyeuristically looking into the diary notes of a writer who cannot keep her diary separate from her field notes. It all ends up in the book, making the total more present and real in the end. The only shortcoming is perhaps the need for some editing of her long diversion into the history of the Lumbee Indians.

   This is Marjorie Hudson's first book. Her reputation is established with publications of fiction and historical essays in *Story* and *North Carolina Literary Review*, among others. Hudson provides a chapter notes and a selected bibliography, but no indexing. The book is a must purchase for large public libraries with North Carolina collections and may be of interest to academic libraries in North Carolina and surrounding states.

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