

## Video Transcript: Bone Biographies of Early Americans

Doug Owsley:	00:05	There's nothing that can tell you more about a past people than the skeletons.
Kari Bruwelheide:	00:12	We can name people that died 400 years ago and vanished from the record.
Doug Owsley:	00:20	The kinds of information that we can learn from the human skeleton represents information that you just simply can't find in the history books.
Narrator:	00:36	America is well known for reinventing itself. But despite constant renewal, our past is always present and sometimes found in unexpected places.
Newscaster:	00:46	Human remains found at this construction site last week have put a stop to ...
Narrator:	00:50	And when the past turns up in the form of human remains, a unique investigation is called for.
Doug Owsley:	00:56	Bones record events in a person's life. And we can read those. You just have to look closely.
Narrator:	01:04	This is real life CSI.
Narrator:	01:10	Forensic anthropologists use their training in body location and recovery, along with their expertise in skeletal biology and science, to identify remains and follow the clues that often solve crimes.
Narrator:	01:26	But sometimes their jobs lead them into the distant past, and the facts they extract from bones, can help bring history to life.
Kari Bruwelheide:	01:35	We're dealing with people and their stories, and this is information that just isn't included in the historic record.
Narrator:	01:46	European settlers arrived in the Chesapeake 400 years ago. Few personal accounts survive from that period, and little is known about the people who braved the unknown. Even the locations of their settlements were thought to be lost.
Bill Kelso:	02:01	By the time I got out here I was beginning to wonder, you know, if I could find anything at all. And started taking off just this

grass level, and underneath were some pieces of pottery right away.

- Narrator: 02:16 The new world's first successful English fort, thought to have washed into Virginia's James River centuries ago, was rediscovered in 1994, and the bones of the first settlers were unearthed. In Maryland, the discovery of unmarked burials in and around a forgotten brick chapel significantly added to colonial America's bone biography. Archaeologists, historians, and forensic scientists went to work.
- Narrator: 02:46 Burial sites were examined for cultural clues, documents were dug through to try to identify names and events, the bones were read. Using observation and the latest available tools of science, forensic anthropologists distinguish the young from the old, the rich from the poor, even the American from the European-born. Because in fact, dead men do tell tales.
- Narrator: 03:17 May 14, 1607. One hundred and four men and boys land on a small island deep within the Chesapeake Bay. The colonists called the island Jamestowne, named for their king. Among the settlers are gentlemen, soldiers, craftsmen, and laborers. They soon discover their island is inhospitable. They've arrived during a period of severe drought. The water is brackish and dangerous to drink. They are plagued by disease. And the New World's natives are suspicious. The settlers hurriedly barricade themselves behind a wooden palisade and struggle against the elements. After less than a year, only 38 of the original 104 settlers are still alive. The settlement survives only because boatload after boatload of new settlers join the struggle. But in time, the original James Fort vanishes.
- Narrator: 04:28 400 years later, James Fort is rediscovered. Along with thousands of artifacts, long-forgotten graves are unearthed and personal stories emerge. New evidence proves the settlers suffered brutal hardships. An arrowhead is lodged in the leg of a young boy's skeleton. But was this wound the cause of death? Or do clues in the bones and grave tell a different story? In contrast to the hastily dug grave of the boy, is an elaborate burial, found isolated outside of the fort walls. Can modern forensics reveal who this important individual was and why settlers would have risked Indian attack to dig a grave in plain view?
- Narrator: 05:15 As questions build, other colonial cold cases are cracked. Founded three decades after Jamestowne, St. Mary's City is the first city to establish religious freedom in America. For 61 years, St. Mary's is the capital of the Maryland colony. When the seat

of the government is moved, the town is abandoned and eventually disappears as the site reverts to farmland. Three centuries later, St. Mary's yields its secrets.

- Speaker 6: 05:45 Come on! Give me a word, just a letter, something.
- Narrator: 05:48 Beneath what was once an impressive brick chapel, three lead coffins are unexpectedly found. Normally used for royalty and the elite of Europe, the lead coffins are a puzzle to archaeologists. What would forensic anthropology tell them about these remains that historical documents could not?
- Doug Owsley: 06:09 The ribs are funny here. Do you see this kinda blossoming, this swelling?
- Narrator: 06:14 By 1670, 41,000 men, women, and children of differing classes and nationalities live in the Chesapeake region. Native populations decline, while new settlements spread. The new settlers are looking for opportunities to own land and grow tobacco. Many exchange labor for land. Others come not by choice, but by force.
- Narrator: 06:41 Bones uncovered on Maryland's Eastern Shore reveal the harsh realities involved in creating these new settlements.
- Doug Owsley: 06:48 I wonder if maybe what we're seeing in part is a reflection of upper-body heavy physical labor, but not so much in the legs?
- Narrator: 07:00 The settlers' lives are written in their bones. Each individual carries a personal narrative, a treasure trove of information waiting to be unlocked.
- Doug Owsley: 07:11 We can fill in those events of history. But we can fill them in with such great detail that goes far beyond what you have in any set of records. And it's the most amazing thing. It's where we come from, it's where we come from in terms of much of the history of our population. It's where we come from as a nation.
- Narrator: 07:30 Bone detectives are creating forensic files for 17th-century settlers, case by case, person by person, bone by bone. What messages will you uncover in the 17th-century bones you're about to investigate in this exhibition?