What Happened on Easter Island?

In 1972, an archaeological expedition led by the British archaeologist Terence G. Gann excavated the site of Cerro de la Mesa, a large obsidian quarry on Easter Island. The expedition discovered a series of stone tools and artifacts that provided evidence of human activity on the island as early as 1000 AD.

The discovery of these artifacts suggested that the island was inhabited by Polynesian migrants who had arrived on Easter Island around the 13th century. This evidence contradicted previous theories that the island had been uninhabited before the 18th century.

Further research revealed that the native inhabitants of Easter Island, known as Rapa Nui, had a complex culture that included intricate stone statues and communal structures. However, by the 18th century, the population had declined dramatically, and the island was largely abandoned.

The reasons for this decline are still not fully understood, but it is thought that factors such as over-exploitation of natural resources, disease, and inter-village conflict may have contributed to the island's decline.

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in studying the history and culture of Easter Island, with a focus on understanding the island's unique landscape and the people who once called it home.

The population of Easter Island is now around 10,000 people, with around 90% of the population living in the capital city, Hanga Roa. The island is known for its stunning volcanic landscape and its large moai statues, which are carved from volcanic rock.

Easter Island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is recognized for its unique cultural and natural heritage.