THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 71:
ON THE HUNT

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast - a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 71: On the Hunt. In this episode, we're going to continue our look at the Norman settlement of England. We'll explore the events leading to the death of William the Conqueror. And we'll look at the reign of his son and namesake, William Rufus. The story of William's succession is also the story of a sibling rivalry. William's three sons fought with each other – and even with their father – for control of the Anglo-Norman kingdom. But one thing that William and all of his sons had in common was a love for hunting. And the importance of hunting is a constant theme in this story. In fact, hunting was so prominent and so important that it gave the English language lots of words and phrases. And many of those words and phrases may surprise you.

But before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can always reach me directly by email at kevin@historyofenglishpodcast.com. I'm also on twitter at englishhistpod.

One other quick note, I may take a short Christmas break to work on transcripts and other matters related to the podcast. So the next episode of the podcast will probably be released around the first of the year. So just a little heads up about that.

I know that many of you may wait for each upcoming episode with bated breath. The podcast can be very alluring. When a new episode pops up you pounce on it. It's frustrating when you expect a new episode to be released and it doesn't come. You start to feel hoodwinked. And eventually you get fed up. You're at the end of your tether. A great 'hue and cry' goes out for something to fill the void. So you go on the hunt for another podcast to listen to. Well, none of that may be true. But that is a quick sampling of some of the words and phrases that we have inherited from hunting jargon in the Middle Ages.

Bated breath; ***alluring***; ***pounce***; ***hoodwinked***; ***fed up***; ***end of your tether***; ***hue and cry*** – all of those phrases can be traced back to the language of the hunters. And those terms reflect how important hunting was for such a long period of time. Of course, hunting goes back to the earliest hunter-gatherers. And even after people adopted herding and farming, they still continued to hunt. It helped to supplement the diet because farming didn't produce a lot of excess. And of course, during the winter months, there were no crops to harvest. So hunting continued to be essential for the survival of many people well into the Middle Ages.

But during the Middle Ages, something else started to happen. For the wealthy, hunting became a sport. It wasn't really about survival, because they had more than enough to live on. For them, it was more about the excitement of the chase, and the pride that came with a successful kill. It was a way for wealthy nobles to prove their manliness to each other when they weren't leading men into battle. And frankly, many of them never actually fought in a battle. So hunting was an effective substitute to show how adept they were at stalking and killing an enemy.

Hunting emerged as the sport of kings and the nobles. But hunting was also essential for the survival of the peasants and the common man. There were only so many deer and wild boar to hunt. And there was only so much forest land available to the hunters. Prior to the Norman Conquest, the wooded areas were generally available to anyone who wanted or needed to hunt. So the nobles and the common people shared the same forests. But all of that changed with the arrival of William the Conqueror and his Norman successors.

When William arrived in 1066, he brought a new word with him – the word ***forest***. But that word didn't exactly mean what it means today. Before the Conquest, the Anglo-Saxons called the tree-filled regions beyond the fields the ***wudu*** – or ***woods***. So ***woods*** in an Old English word. And the Normans introduced the word ***forest***. So as is often the case in Modern English, we have two words meaning essentially the same thing – woods and forest – one came from Old English and one came from French.

Now today, the words mean essentially the same thing. But that wasn't the case during the time of William the Conqueror. ***Forest*** actually had a specific legal meaning that was much broader than just a wooded area. And to understand the original meaning of that term forest – we have to consider its history.

I actually mentioned the word ***forest*** back in Episode 21. In that episode, I noted that the original Indo-European language has the word ****dhwer*** which meant 'a door or doorway.' And that word passed into English as the word ***door***. The word also passed into Latin. But the original Indo-European 'D' sound shifted to an 'F' sound in Latin. And that produced the Latin word ***foris*** (f-o-r-i-s), which meant 'beyond the door' – 'outdoors.' So it meant 'outside.' And that Latin word ***foris*** produced the word ***foreign*** meaning 'things that are from elsewhere' – outside the house – as opposed to things that are 'domestic' or from inside the house. It also produced the word ***forum*** which was the Roman marketplace that was located outside in the open.

And it also produced the word ***forest***. But in order to understand the development of the word ***forest***, we have to consider another word that came in from French around this same time – the word ***park***. A ***park*** was an enclosed natural area – a game preserve with fixed boundaries – typically a hedge or fence or some other boundary. And that boundary was designed to keep the animals in and to prevent them wandering away or escaping. So the park was an enclosed natural area or preserve, and it still retains than meaning today. We still call a natural area with fixed boundaries a 'park' – like a city park. But during the Middle Ages, the 'park' was typically located in a wooded area. So the area inside the boundaries were the ***park***. And the areas 'outside' of the park were the large undefined wooded areas. So using that word ***foris*** meaning 'outside,' it produced the word ***forest*** meaning the wooded area outside of the boundaries of the park.

So when the Normans arrived in England, they brought the words ***park*** and ***forest*** with them. Now even though ***forest*** could mean an undefined wooded area, the Normans gave the term a specific legal meaning. They extended the definition to mean any land designated by the king as a hunting preserve. And that meant any land subject to special forest laws imposed by the king. And while those lands – or forests – included a lot of wooded areas, they also included a lot of

places that weren't wooded. Sometime the Norman ***forest*** included a farmstead – and even villages. So the meaning was much broader in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

All of this goes back to the Norman love of hunting. William and his successors wanted to be able to hunt while they were in England, and they didn't want anything to encroach on their sport. So they set aside large tracts of land as hunting preserves. And that meant that those areas were subject to special laws that prohibited anyone other than the king from disturbing those areas. But the lines were drawn so broadly that it included all the land within the designated areas. As I said, it included homes and manors and farmsteads and even villages.

The key to all of this is that anyone and everyone within those forest boundaries had to obey the very strict forest laws. Those laws essentially meant that the people couldn't touch anything in the restricted area. The 'forest' regions became protected game preserve. The land couldn't be disturbed. The intent was that the land be allowed to revert to its natural state.

Now it is important to understand that William didn't confiscate these lands. The barons and prominent land holders remained in place. William just imposed special restrictions on the use of the lands, and that basically prevented the barons and peasants from doing anything practical with the land.

Now if this had been limited to a few small areas here and there, it wouldn't have been a big deal. But the Norman kings couldn't resist declaring large portions of England as forests. Over the next century and half, about one-third of the country was designated as royal forests. And that included the entire county of Essex – east of London. And that meant these very restrictive laws were imposed on all of that land. And the laws applied to both the barons and the peasants. So these restrictions came to be hated by just about everybody.

To understand why these laws were so hated, we have to consider how important the woodland areas were at the time. Obviously, these regions had a lot of trees. And trees were important. People used the wood for timber to build houses and other structures. Bark from treess was used for tiles and roofing shingles. Wood resins were used for torches, pitch and glue. Leaves were used to stuff mattresses. In wintertime, the trees provided firewood. Acorns and beechnuts were used to feed pigs.

Wood ash was also an important commodity. It was an ingredient in a lot of products. When liquid was leached out from the burnt ash, it made ***lye*** from the Old English word ***læg***. Lye was used in soap and other cleaning materials going all the way back to the Germanic period. And in fact, the word ***lye*** is cognate with words like ***lather*** from Old English and ***lotion***, ***laundry***, and ***latrine*** from French. So ***lye*** was very important to the daily life of people in Medieval England, and it required access to trees.

When this liquid lye was boiled with lime, and left to evaporate in large iron pots, it left a residue known as ***pot-ash***. This was an older Germanic term found throughout the Germanic languages. The Dutch version of that term ***pot-ash*** was later borrowed in Latin, and that gave Latin the word

potassium to name the metallic element produced through that process. Of course, potassium passed into English, but the ultimate root of ***potassium*** is ***pot-ash***.

Anyway, the important point here is that people really depended on access to trees for a variety of products that were essential to daily life. Beyond the trees, the forest also produced berries, nuts and mushrooms that were used as food to supplement the diet. It also produced plants that were used as medicines. Of course, bees were found in the woods. And bees provided honey which was the primary sweetener during this period. Bees also produced wax used for candles.

And of course, the wooded regions were home to many wild animals. Everything from deer and wild boar – to foxes, and hares and badgers and squirrels. And once again, people relied upon access to those animals to supplement the foods grown on the farms, especially during the winter months when crops couldn't be grown.

So the forests provided many essentials – and access to those essentials was important to the day-to-day life of the people in countryside. But now William the Conqueror changed all of that. He declared large portions of England as protected 'forests.'

Under these new rules, a person who lived in or near a royal forest couldn't disturb the flora or fauna. The forest had to be maintained as a natural area. The people couldn't cut down or uproot trees. They couldn't even prune the branches of a tree. So their access to firewood and building materials became limited. And all of those other products like bark, and leaves and acorns and lye also became off limits. Since they couldn't cut down trees, they couldn't clear the land in the forests. So the land couldn't be used to grow crops. The people couldn't dig fish ponds. They couldn't divert streams to other locations for fishing or drinking water or irrigation. They couldn't put up fences or hedges. And most large animals like deer and wild boar were off limits. They could only be hunted and killed by the king. In some cases, the people were allowed to hunt small creatures that were considered pests – that included foxes, wolves, badgers and squirrels. They could also hunt hares and rabbits. And this is really where we get the distinction between hares and rabbits. Hares were native to Britain. And rabbits were native to the continent. So it was the Normans who introduced rabbits after the Conquest. So ***hare*** is an Old English word and ***rabbit*** came in with the Normans. They were technically two different animals, and peasants could hunt both. But beyond some of those small creatures, all of the big animals were protected.

These rules were brutally enforced. Anyone who violated them could be killed or castrated. So many of these newly designated forest areas quickly reverted to a natural state. And that is partly how the word 'forest' took its modern sense as a wooded area that is natural and undisturbed.

So you can start to see why these new laws were so hated. Most of the animals and commodities of the forest were now off limits. And remember, these rules could even extend to villages and farming communities within the designated forest areas. Sometimes farmsteads were simply torn down and the peasants displaced. All of this led to suffering and starvation – all for the sake of giving William lots of land for hunting. And there was no real check on William's ability to make these designations. So as I noted, even the barons came to resent these rules. And in fact, it

was one of the major grievances that led to Magna Carta about a century and half after the Conquest.

One of the largest forests designated by William was in the far south of England. It was close to Winchester – the old Wessex capital. And it was easily accessible from London as well. It was established around the year 1079, and it became a favorite for royal hunts. In order to make it an ideal preserve for deer, William cleared out many of the people in the region. Small hamlets and isolated farmsteads were simply wiped away. This forest was first recorded in the Domesday Book with the Latin term ***Nova Foresta***, which was literally the 'New Forest' because it was a brand-new forest at the time. The forest still exists to this day, and in fact, it became a National Park in 2005.

Now as I said, most of the people of England hated these new forests and the forest laws that were brutally imposed. Many people cursed William for the hardships caused by those new restrictions. And those curses may have worked because a surprising number of William's descendants actually died in that New Forest.

William had lots of children – girls and boys. But the boys were in line to inherit his kingdom. He had four sons. The eldest was Robert (or 'Robert' in English). The next was Richard (or 'Richard' in English). Then Guillome (or 'William' in English), commonly known as William Rufus. The youngest son was Henri (or 'Henry' in English). By the way, going forward, I will use the English names because that is typically how they are known in English history.

Now as I said, the second son was Richard, and in the year 1081, he was hunting in the New Forest. The New Forest was still brand new – only about two years old. And Richard was probably in the late teens at the time. And while on that hunting trip in the New Forest, young Richard died. The details of what happened are unclear, and historical accounts vary. But the most common version of the story is that he accidentally hit a tree branch while chasing a deer. He was thrown from his horse and died.

With Richard's death, that left William with three surviving sons – Robert, William Rufus and Henry. And they constantly fought with each other and their father. In fact, during the last few years of his life, William found himself at war with his eldest son Robert back in Normandy. And to understand these events, we have to return across the channel to Normandy.

After William conquered England, he became a king in his own right. So he was both King of England and Duke of Normandy. That made him one of the most powerful and important rulers in all of Western Europe. And this was a big problem for Normandy's neighbors in France.

To the southeast of Normandy was Paris and the region controlled by the King of France. The French king was named Phillip, and his kingdom was still technically limited to a small area around Paris. Even though he didn't have direct control over much territory, he was the king, and he had a lot of vassals throughout France. So he still had a considerable amount of power and influence. And he now saw William as his biggest threat. And he constantly looked for ways to create problems for William.

Normandy's other big rival was the region of Anjou to the southwest of Normandy. The conflicts between Anjou and Normandy had existed since the earlier Norman Dukes had expanded westward. That brought Normandy into conflict with Anjou.

Now between Normandy and each of this rival territories, there were buffer zones. These were disputed regions that often changed hands back and forth. Between Normandy and the French king's territory around Paris, there was the disputed region known as the Vexin. And between Normandy and Anjou to the southwest, there was the disputed region known as Maine. In fact, this region of Maine is the ultimate source of the name of the state of Maine in the United States. Early French settlers in North America named the region after this French province.

Well during the early reign of William as Duke of Normandy, he had conquered both of these disputed regions. So he controlled the Vexin and Maine, so that meant he controlled both of those buffer zones. And in Maine, he designated his eldest son Robert as the Count of Maine. But after 1066, as William's rivals rose up to challenge his power, he lost control of both regions. The Vexin was re-captured by the King of France. And a rebellion in Maine allowed it to secure its independence. So William no longer controlled either region.

That left his son Robert with the title of 'Count of Maine,' but the Normans didn't actually have any control there anymore. That meant that Robert had a title but no power. And what Robert really wanted was some power. He wanted a region to rule. So his only option was to wait until his father died, so he could succeed him. But as the years passed, his father must have seemed almost immortal. At a time when people tended to die very young, William lived for a long time. He was nearly 40 years old when he conquered England. And then he lived for another 20 years. As the years passed, his son Robert became more and more impatient. And the two didn't get along anyway.

And this is where Philip, the King of France, comes into play. Philip had re-captured that buffer region – the Vexin. And now he sought to play the young Robert against his father. Philip made an alliance with Robert, and he encouraged Robert to challenge his father's rule in Normandy. That actually led to open warfare between father and son.

William spent most the last decade of his life in Normandy trying to recover lost territories and occasionally fighting against his son. In the year 1087, William decided to launch an invasion into the Vexin to re-capture the region from Philip. At the strategic city of Mantes, William directed his men to burn everything to the ground. And they proceeded to do just that.

But in the process, the sky was filled with floating embers. And one of those embers landed beside William's horse. The horse became startled, and it threw William backwards so violently that he suffered severe internal injuries. The injuries were mortal, and everyone knew it, including William.

But it was a slow, lingering death. William was taken back to the Norman capital at Rouen. As William lay dying, he had time to make his final arrangements. Under Norman tradition, the duchy was supposed to pass to the eldest son when a father died. Of course, William's eldest son

was Robert. And he hated the prospect of leaving everything to the son with whom he had fought for years. But he felt that he had no choice but to leave Normandy to Robert since that was Norman tradition. So Normandy was left to Robert.

But Norman tradition didn't apply to England. So William felt no obligation to leave England to Robert as well. The next eldest son had been Richard. But Richard had died in that hunting accident in the New Forest several years earlier. So William designated his next son William Rufus as his heir in England. That left the youngest son, Henry. Henry didn't get a kingdom or a duchy. Instead, he had to settle for money – 5,000 pounds of silver to be exact. And that was a lot of money at the time.

Both of the younger sons were present at Rouen. William Rufus immediately set sail for England, while his father was still lingering on his deathbed. The plan was to get to England before his older brother Robert could claim the throne. Meanwhile, the younger brother Henry set about counting his silver – every single pound of it to make sure it was all there. This isn't the last time we'll hear from Henry. He will eventually succeed his brother William Rufus as King of England, thereby becoming Henry I of England. And that propensity to count every single pound will continue on after he becomes king. But we'll look at his story a little later.

On the 9th of September, in the year 1087, William the Conqueror took his last breath. It had been a long and violent life. But it had been a life that forever changed the history of England – and the history of the English language.

In the town of Peterborough north of London there was a great abbey. And the monks at that abbey continued to maintain a version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in English. The occasional entries in that book are some of the rare surviving writings in English in the years after the Norman Conquest. And for the year 1087, this chronicle includes a long entry commemorating the death of William.

When a prominent person died, it was common for the scribes to commemorate the passing with a poem. And the Peterborough Chronicle contains just such a poem to note the death of William. The poem was composed in rhyming verse, which you might remember was very unusual for Old English poetry. Rhyming was much more common in the Latin tradition. So this particular poem shows the heavy influence of Latin at the time.

The poem begins with the lines: "Castelas he let wyrcean 7 earme men swiðe swencean." In Modern English, it reads, 'Castles he had built, and miserably oppressed the poor.' So that gives you some sense of how the Anglo-Saxons viewed William. And notice that the first word of the poem is ***Castelas*** – 'castles' – a Norman French word that was already so common in the language that it opened the poem.

The poem then says that William as king was very stark and rigid: "Se cyng wæs swa swiðe stearc." It says that he extorted many marks of gold – "manig marc goldes" – and many more hundreds of pounds of silver – "7 ma hundred punda seolfres."

It says that greediness he loved above all – “grædinæsse he lufode mid ealle.” And then we have the following lines:

He settled many deer parks
and he laid laws therewith;

He sætte mycel deorfrið
7 he lægde laga þærwið,

so that whosoever slew a hart or hind (that’s a male or female deer),
that man should be blinded

þæt swa hwa swa sloge heort oððe hinde,
þæt hine man sceolde blendian.

He forbade men from killing harts and also boars;
and he loved the tall deer as if he were their father.

He forbead þa heortas swylce eac þa baras,
swa swiðe he lufode þa headeor swilce he wære heora fæder.

Likewise he decreed that the hares should go free.
The rich men bemoaned it, and the poor men lamented.

Eac he sætte be þam haran þæt hi mosten freo faran.
His rice men hit mændon 7 þa earme men hit beceorodan.

But he was so stern, that he considered their hatred not at all;
for the king's will they must follow.

Ac he wæs swa stið þæt he ne rohte heora eallra nið,
ac hi moston mid ealle þes cynges wille folgian,

So as the Anglo-Saxon monks commemorated the death of William, we get a sense of how they viewed him. He was oppressive and he compelled everyone to follow his will. He exploited the resources of the England. But it is fascinating that poet focuses so much on those hunting preserves he created – the new royal forests. The poem says that William loved deer as if he was their father, and based on William’s difficult relationship with his children, he may have loved the deer even more. The poet also emphasizes that these forest restrictions were hated by rich men and poor men alike.

With respect the actual language of the poem, it is still decidedly Old English. The poet uses the word ***castelas*** – or ‘castles’ – but otherwise, the poem relies almost entirely on Old English words.

In describing the rich men and the poor men, the poet uses the phrases "rice men" and "earme men." "rice men" is obviously 'rich men' – both Old English words. And "earme men" is 'poor men' using the Old English word ***earme*** which meant 'poor'. The word ***poor*** is a Norman French word derived from the Old French word ***povre***. And it is found in some of the earliest Middle English texts. But here, the poet continued to use the traditional Old English term. But note that the phrase 'rich and poor' is a combination of Old English and Norman French. ***Rich*** from Old English and ***poor*** from French. And that's just an example of how mixed the two vocabularies became during the upcoming Middle English period.

I should also take note of the poet's words for the animals protected by William's new forest laws. He begins by referring to the forests or preserves as ***deorfrið*** – literally the 'deer peace' – the place where deer live in peace. That was the best way to describe the preserves in Old English. Now you might remember from an earlier episode that the Old English word ***deor*** – or 'deer' – didn't mean what it means today. In Old English, ***deor*** was a general term for a wild animal, so it could include deer, boar, foxes or any number of other wild animals. So it was common to refer to the hunt for 'deer' meaning wild game. But the most desired animal was the animal we know today as the 'deer.' So those were animals that were most often being pursued. And when people said that they were going to 'hunt deer,' they may have been using a general term, but they were usually referring to that particular animal. So over time, the word ***deor*** – or 'deer' – became restricted to the animal we know today as ***deer***.

Before the sense of the word ***deer*** shifted to a specific animal, that particular animal was called a ***heort*** or ***hinde***. ***Heort*** gave us the word ***hart*** (h-a-r-t). In Old English, it could be used as a general term for the animal, or it could be used specifically to mean a 'male deer.' That is how this particular poet used the term. By the way, the word ***hart*** is cognate with the word ***horn***, and both words come from an Indo-European root word that meant 'horn.' And just as the Indo-European word for 'horn' gave us ***hart***, the Indo-European word for 'hornless' gave us the word for a female deer which was ***hinde*** – or ***hind*** today. So ***hart*** and ***hind*** are the Old English terms. But again, as the sense of the word ***deer*** became restricted to this particular animal, those older words ***hart*** and ***hind*** largely disappeared.

Now what's interesting about the evolution of the word ***deer*** is that the same basic thing happened in Latin. So let's look at Latin for a minute. The word ***hunt*** is an Old English word. And the Latin equivalent was ***venari***. And that produced the Old French word for 'hunt' which ***venerie***. And that word actually passed into Middle English as ***venery***. So in Middle English you might go 'on a hunt' using Old English, or you might engage in ***venery*** using French. Well, the object of the hunt or venery was venison. Again, ***venison*** comes from the same root as ***venery***, and the original sense of ***venison*** was any wild animal that was hunted. So it could refer to a deer or a boar or even a rabbit. So at this point, the Latin word ***venison*** and the English word ***deer*** basically meant the same thing – any wild animal that was hunted.

But again, since the primary object of the hunt was the animal we know today as the deer – the sense of both words became restricted over time. And just as ***deer*** became restricted to that particular animal, the word ***venison*** also became restricted to the meat of that particular animal. So today we think of ***venison*** as the meat of the deer.

This relationship of ***deer*** and ***venison*** also reflects the nature of the French influence on English. At one time both words referred to the living animal. But under French influence, the French term came to refer to the meat of the animal prepared in the kitchen. So ***deer*** is the word for the animal, and ***venison*** is the word for the meat. This is the same thing that happened with ***cow*** and ***beef***. ***Cow*** is Old English, and ***beef*** is French. Both words originally referred to the animal. But over time, the French word ***beef*** became restricted to the flesh of the cow. The same thing happened with Old English ***pig***, ***swine*** or ***boar*** and the French word ***pork***. So why did the French words for the animals become restricted to the meat or flesh? Well, the answer may partly lie in the forest laws imposed by the Normans.

Animals like deer and wild boar could no longer be hunted by Englishmen in many parts of England. They could only be hunted by the king and a few prominent barons who had the king's permission. So that meant that the meat of those animals was largely restricted to the kitchens of prominent Normans, so many Englishmen continued to use their traditional English words to refer to the animals just as they always had. But when the meat was cooked, they used the French term used by the Normans because, in much of England, the Normans were the only ones with access to that meat. Again that is a bit of a generalization, but you can start to see how the distinction between the animal and the meat would have arisen in that context.

By the way, the same Indo-European root that gave us the words ***venery*** and ***venison*** also gave us the word ***venerate***. If you 'venerate' something, you admire it and hold it in high regard. And that linguistic connection shows how important deer were to Medieval hunters. The same root word also gave us the name of the goddess ***Venus***, as well as the word ***venereal***, as in a venereal disease. Again, ***Venus*** and ***venereal*** had to do with desire, specifically sexual desire. So if your sexual desires lead you on a different kind of hunt – a different kind of 'venery' if you will – you might end up with a 'venereal' disease. So be careful. As we've established, hunting can sometimes be dangerous.

Now I noted, the words ***deer*** and ***venison*** originally had a broader meaning. They could refer to any kind of wild animal. But as those words became more restricted to the animal we know today as deer, English speakers had to find a replacement term with the more general sense of any wild animal. And for that word, they turned to French and borrowed the word ***beast***. Again, the original meaning of ***beast*** was any wild animal. But in the 1600s, a new word was borrowed into English directly from Latin, and that was the word ***animal***. And over time, the popularity of that word tended to push aside the word ***beast***. And the sense of the word ***beast*** became more restricted to a menacing creature.

Now I noted that the word ***hunt*** is an Old English word. And French had the word ***venery***, which was quite common in Middle English. But English also borrowed another word from French to describe the hunt. That was the word ***chase***. I noted in an earlier episode that the words ***chase*** and ***catch*** were originally the same word. ***Chase*** was the version of the word from standard Old French with its 'ch' sound, and ***catch*** was the version from Norman French with its hark 'k' sound at the beginning. Over time, the words became distinct in English. First you 'chase' something, then you 'catch' it. But both words came into English around this time because both

words appear in some of the earliest Middle English documents. And both word related to hunting.

The reason why a hunt was often called a 'chase' is because of the way early hunts were often conducted. Let's take royal hunt for example. The hunting party would find a clearing in the woods and the king and his closest attendants would take cover near the clearing. The other men in the hunting party would track down the deer in the forest. When they found the deer, they would blow a horn to signal that they had found it, and then they would chase the deer back towards the clearing where the king and his attendants were waiting. As the deer approached, the king and his attendants would take aim with their bows and try to kill it. But sometimes the animal would run between the various men in the hunting party. In the confusion, a shooter might miss the deer and hit one of the other hunters by mistake. These types of accidents were very common. So lots of people died on the hunt. In addition, some of the animals, like wild boar, were also very dangerous by themselves. If cornered, they could easily kill a hunter with their horns. So hunting accidents were a common cause of death even among the family of the king, as we have already seen.

Now in addition to the words that we've already explored, a few other French word related to hunting entered English during the Middle English period.

One of these words was the word ***retrieve***. Today, the word has a general sense. It can refer to the process of finding and bringing back any object. So I might ask you to retrieve my keys or retrieve my hat. But the word ***retrieve*** was originally used to describe the process whereby dogs would find lost game and bring it to the hunter. That why those dogs were sometimes called ***retrievers***. Again, the sense of the word has become more general over time.

Along the same lines as retriever, we also have the word terrier. ***Terrier*** comes from the Latin word ***terra*** meaning 'earth or land or soil.' Back in Normandy, hunters would hunt badgers, but badgers would dig tunnels and hide in mounds of dirt. These mounds were called ***terriers*** based on that Latin word ***terra***. One type of dog was particularly good at digging into terriers and getting the badgers. This type of dog was called a 'chien terrier' – literally an 'earth dog.' And over time, the name was shortened to just ***terrier***.

And speaking of dogs, the word ***scent*** entered English during the early Middle English period. It was used as both a noun and a verb, but originally it was always used as a hunting term. A dog might track an animal's scent. In its verb form, you might say that the 'dog scented the animal.' Over time, the word ***scent*** has acquired a more general sense as any type of odor or smell.

Another hunting term that came in around this time was the word ***relay***. Again, it was originally a hunting term, though that connection has largely been lost over the centuries. It originally referred to a pack of dogs used in a chase or hunt. ***Relay*** literally meant to 'leave behind.' And while hunting, a pack of fresh dogs would be brought in to replace a pack of tired dogs. This new pack was called a ***relay***. And the word was also used as a verb to describe the process of sending those dogs in pursuit of an animal. Over time, the meaning has been extended to any situation where one thing takes over for another. So you might have a relay race, or you might have a relay

switch which shifts between one circuit and another circuit. But again, ***relay*** is an early borrowing from French, and it originally referred to a pack of rested dogs brought in to replace a pack of tired dogs.

And speaking of hunting dogs, another early borrowing from French was the word ***leash***.

Now so far, I've focused on the hunt for wild game using horses and dogs. But what about the hunt for birds – like ducks, quail, pheasants and other fowl? Well, that was much more difficult in the era before guns. Many of those birds flew beyond the range of arrows. But there was a way to catch those birds. And that was to use a trained hawk or falcon to seek out other birds and catch them. This type of hunting was called ***falconry***, and it became very popular with the noble classes. Just about every baron and lord had a trained falcon or hawk.

Now the use of falcons was extremely popular throughout the Middle Ages. In fact, this was generally considered to be the most noble type of hunting. Trained hunting birds like falcons and hawks were status symbols. It was very expensive to train a bird, so only the wealthiest people could afford one. So it became a symbol of nobility. Nobles would often walk around with their birds on their arm, and they would take their birds just about everywhere.

There are even reports that some bishops and abbots took their birds with them to church. And if you look at paintings from the Middle Ages, you will see that knights and nobles are often depicted with hawks or falcons on their arms. That was just a way of indicating that the person was a noble or other prominent person.

Now today, it is difficult for us to imagine how popular falconry was at one time. When guns were invented and became widespread, that rendered falcons unnecessary. And most people stopped keeping falcons and hawks for hunting. But we can get a sense of how popular falconry once was by looking at the English language. Lots of common words and expressions can be traced back to this type of hunting. So let's explore some of those terms. And let's begin with the process of training a bird.

As I noted, a good falcon was expensive because it took a great deal of time and expertise to train the bird to hunt. The training of a young bird began by tying a leash to the bird's legs, and then tying the other end of the leash to a perch.

At this point, the bird was tethered to the perch. So it couldn't really fly way. The bird was restrained or 'abated' using the French word ***abate***. In Middle English, the word ***abated*** was sometimes shortened to just ***bated***. So a tethered bird was said to be 'bated.' In the 1500s, Shakespeare picked up this usage. It was Shakespeare who coined the phrase 'with bated breath' in Merchant of Venice. He used the phrase to mean 'with restrained breath,' as in holding one's breath. And from there, the phrase 'with bated breath' became a common English expression. But ultimately, it can be traced back to a 'bated' or restrained bird.

Now sometimes, a young untrained bird would attempt to fly away, but it couldn't since it was tethered to the perch. The young bird would struggle against the tether becoming more and more

frustrated before eventually realizing that it could not fly away. That led to the phrase ‘I’m at the end of my tether’ to mean that my frustration level has peaked, and I can't take it anymore. Some scholars think the phrase ‘at the end of my tether’ later led to phrases like "at the end of my rope" and "at the end of my leash." They all mean the same thing.

Now once the bird was accustomed to being tethered, it was then introduced to the hood. The hood was a piece of leather that covered the bird’s eyes, but left an opening for the beak. So it was literally a hood that covered most of the bird’s head. The hood served a couple of purposes. First, it covered the bird’s eyes, so it forced the bird to train by using its other senses. So it had to rely on its sense of taste, hearing and touch.

The hood also tended to calm the bird by blocking out any distractions. A hawk’s eyesight can be 10 times better than a human’s. So the bird would sometimes get distracted by a target way off in the distance that the trainer couldn’t even see. So again, the trainer wanted to get the bird to focus a specific target that was close by. When the hood was placed on the bird, the bird couldn’t see the far off target anymore. It had to rely on its other senses, like its sense of hearing. So the hood was a way of deceiving the bird – pulling its focus away from one target to another. In that situation, the bird was said to be ‘hoodwinked.’ And that led to modern expression ‘hoodwinked’ to mean the process of tricking or deceiving someone.

The next step in training the bird was to get the bird accustomed pursuing a target and then returning to the trainer. The trainer would take a piece of meat and tie wings to it. The wings were usually the wings of the bird that was to be hunted. The trainer would then remove the bird’s hood and let the bird go after the feathered meat. When the bird became accustomed to the meat, the trainer would tie a string to it and whirl it in the air so the bird would learn to pursue a target in flight. Through this process, the bird came to associate feathers with feasting. Eventually, the bird could be untethered and allowed to fly around on its own. As soon as the trainer pulled out the piece of feathered meat, it caught the bird’s attention and the bird would return to the trainer.

Now this piece of meat with feathers attached had a very specific name in French. It was called a ***lure***. And we still have that word today – spelled ‘l-u-r-e.’ And since the bird was attracted to the lure, it was said to be ***alluring***. Over time, the word ***alluring*** has come to describe anything tempting or enticing. But ***lure*** and ***alluring*** both began with falconry.

Sometimes, the falcon became accustomed to the lure, and it stopped pursuing it. In those cases, the trainer would actually use a decoy bird – a stuffed bird that looked real but wasn’t. That would entice the falcon back to the perch or net. The stuffed bird was often a pigeon, and it was often attached to a stool or perch. This type of decoy was called a ‘stool pigeon.’ Over time, it came to mean any type of decoy. In later centuries, the police would sometimes use an informer to catch criminals. That was another type of decoy. And in the 1800s, American English applied this term ‘stool pigeon’ to those police informers.

Now once a falcon was accustomed to the lure, the trainer introduced the falcon to live birds. The first live birds introduced were usually partridges and snipes. The snipe was a very common bird

in England. It was considered a delicacy, but it was very difficult to catch because it was so quick. Now falcons could be trained to catch them. But when guns were introduced in the 1500s, it became much easier to kill snipes. Even so, the hunter had to be concealed in the brush to get a good shot. That led to the term ***sniper*** meaning a concealed gunman. But originally it meant someone hunting a snipe.

Now when the falcon pursued a particular bird, it would track it down and grab it in flight. The falcon would use its claws to grab and hold the bird. The heel claw of the falcon was its talon. But the other claws were called 'pounces' using a French term. The word ***pounce*** is actually related to the word ***punch***. And the connection between those words is that the 'pounces' were claws that 'punched' holes in things. Well, the meaning of the word ***pounce*** meaning 'a bird's claws' shifted over time to refer to the process of seizing something with claws. And that gave us the modern sense of the word ***pounce*** meaning to seize or attack something.

Now when falcons caught their prey, they would return it to the trainer. They weren't supposed to eat it. The falcons were actually fed at specific feeding times. But you didn't want to feed the bird immediately before going hunting. When a falcon ate and had a full stomach, it didn't want to fly at all. So it was basically useless until it got hungry again. A full falcon that didn't want to hunt was said to be 'fed up.' In other words, it was fully fed.

Over time, the phrase 'fed up' has passed into general usage to mean that a person has had enough and has reached the point where he or she doesn't want to do something anymore.

Sometimes, the falcon would eat too much and be 'fed up.' And sometimes, they would drink too much, which produced the same result. A falcon's drinking bowl was called a 'bows.' The words ***bows*** and ***bowl*** may be related, but I can't find any confirmation of that. Anyway, the process of bird drinking from a 'bows' was also called 'bows.' So it became a verb. And that verb came to refer to the process of drinking too much. The pronunciation later shifted to ***booze***, and it came to refer to the process of drinking too much alcohol or getting drunk. You might go 'boozing' and drink too much – just like a falcon would 'booze' and drink too much water. Today, the word ***booze*** has become a noun referring to the alcoholic drinks that a boozer might consume.

Now once a bird was fully trained, it could be taken out on the hunt. The bird had to be secured to its owner or handler. The bird would sit on the handler's protruding index finger. But the bird had to be leashed so it wouldn't fly away. Sometimes, the handler would hold the leash between his index finger and thumb. In that case, the bird was said to be 'under the handler's thumb' meaning 'under control.' And that led to the phrase, 'under my thumb' or 'under your thumb' to mean 'under control.'

Sometimes, the handler would extend the leash around his hand and wrap it around his little finger, and that led to the phrase 'wrapped around his little finger' again meaning 'under control.'

Sometimes, the falcon was carried around on a mobile perch. Another word for the perch was the ***cadge***. And the person who carried around the cadge was called the ***cadger***. It was usually an older hunter who had become too old for regular hunting activities. So it became his job to carry

the cadge. So the ‘cadger’ was usually an old man. Over time, the pronunciation shifted from ‘cadger’ to ‘codger.’ And that gave us the modern word ***codger*** as in an ‘old codger.’

Some etymologies also link the word ***cadger*** with the word ***caddy*** – a person who carries a golfer’s bag at a golf course.

Now speaking of an old codger, we get another common English word from an old hawk. It was always better to train a hawk or falcon when it was young. But sometimes, an adult hawk would be caught during migration. An adult female hawk caught in the wild was called a ***haggard***. Since they were usually caught at the end of a migration, they were usually thin and tired having made a long journey. Over time, the word ***haggard*** became an adjective describing a person or animal that is thin and tired or worn out.

When falcons were not hunting, they were allowed to rest. They would sleep. And when they would awaken, they would shake their feathers. Many scholars think this is the origin of the phrase ‘shake a tail feather’ or ‘shake your tail feathers’ to mean wake up or start moving.

There was actually a French word for a bird shaking its feathers when it awoke. That word was ***reuser***. And that produced the word ***rouse***, as well as the related word ‘arouse.’ Again, ‘rouse’ and ‘arouse’ were originally terms used in falconry.

So all of that means that this particular type of hunting gave us ‘bated breath,’ ‘at the end of my tether,’ ‘hoodwinked,’ ‘lure,’ ‘alluring,’ ‘stool pigeon,’ ‘pounce,’ ‘fed up,’ ‘booze,’ ‘under my thumb,’ ‘wrapped around my little finger,’ ‘codger,’ ‘haggard,’ ‘rouse,’ ‘arouse’ and ‘shake a tail feather.’ So you can start to see how important falconry was in the Middle Ages.

And as I noted, this was the favorite type of hunting for many nobles. And trained falcons were a sign of nobility. But like other forms of hunting, it was increasingly restricted by the expansion of the royal forests. And as we saw earlier, both the nobles and the peasants hated the expansion of those royal preserves.

With the death of William the Conqueror, his son William Rufus was now the king of England. And William Rufus continued to designate new royal forests. But that was only one source of tension between the new king and his nobles. As we know, most of the wealthy barons of England were French. After the Conquest, they received large land holdings in England. But many of them still had holdings in France as well. And as long as William the Conqueror was the ruler of Normandy and England, that was not a problem. But now England and Normandy had different rulers. William’s eldest son Robert was Duke of Normandy, and his middle son William Rufus was king of England. So those barons had divided loyalties. They were technically vassals of both rulers. That created lots of conflicts, especially if Robert claimed the English throne as the eldest son. They were also inclined to support Robert since Norman tradition favored the eldest son. They also resented the many fees that were being imposed and collected by William Rufus, which they considered excessive.

All of this led to a revolt by several of the prominent barons in England. They threw their support to Robert in Normandy. They marauded and plundered parts of the country. But Robert never crossed the channel to support their rebellion. So the uprising started to fall apart.

William Rufus secured his position in England by appealing to the people. He promised leniency in the enforcement of the forest laws. He also promised to repeal or reduce some of the taxes he was collecting. Over time, he garnered the support of the fyrd or militia, and he finally defeated the rebellious barons. Many of the rebels were exiled, and their lands were confiscated.

So William Rufus was finally able to secure his position as his father's successor in England. But he wasn't able to maintain the popular support of the people, and he probably didn't care because he didn't really need that support it as he moved forward.

William Rufus was a fascinating figure. Whether he was a good king or a bad king is difficult to say because he was good in some ways and bad in others. Politically and militarily, he was shrewd and very successful. But he was also a tyrant. He lived an extravagant lifestyle and he bled the country dry to support that lifestyle.

In an era when almost every king ruled as a openly Christian king, William Rufus didn't. He seemed to have no interest in religion at all, and he openly quarreled with the Church. And that is partly why history has not been kind to him because church scribes tended to write the history of the period. And whether they wrote in English, Latin or French, it didn't matter. They all painted William Rufus as a depraved tyrant. And that image became the popular view of him by later historians.

His legacy is shaped by the fact that he tried to generate revenue and money from any source he could. When it came to payments owed to him by his vassals, he demanded every pound. Whereas his father had shown some leniency in regard to those payments, William Rufus demanded those payments without exception. Sometimes he demanded payments that were arbitrary and excessive. When a vassal died with an underage heir, William Rufus took possession of the estate and milked it dry before the heir became an adult. And when a bishop or abbot died, he left the position vacant. Without a serving bishop or abbot, William Rufus could collect the monies owed to the church or the abbey in their absence. This even included the archbishop of Canterbury. When Archbishop Lanfranc died in 1089, William Rufus left that position vacant for 4 years. And during that time, he collected the rents owed to the diocese.

And that was why the monks and other church officials despised him. As I noted, they got to write the history of the period. William of Malmsbury wrote a very influential history of England in Latin during this period. He wrote of William Rufus that he 'feared God too little, and man not at all." [Gesta Regum, Vol. 1, p. 555.] He described the king's courtiers as being effeminate. He said they had soft bodies like women and made effeminate gestures. He also said that the king's attendants didn't behave as nature had intended them to. The other great historian of the period, Orderic Vitalis, wrote that William Rufus "... had no lawful wife. But he gave himself insatiably to obscene fornications and frequent adulteries."

It was noted that William Rufus wore his hair very long in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. It was a style detested by the Normans because that thought it looked effeminate. It was noted that William Rufus didn't wear traditional Norman clothing. Instead, he wore the clothes that were the style of the day.

Now later historians have read between these lines and concluded that William Rufus was probably either gay or bi-sexual. And I note this because he never married or showed any interest in getting married. And he never had any children. So there was no natural heir to succeed him.

Now I noted that William Rufus was a fascinating figure because, despite the picture painted by church scribes, he was actually a very effective military leader. He put down the initial rebellion by the barons. He also ventured into Wales and seized land from the Welsh princes in the border regions. He forced the Scottish king to pay homage to him. So no one threatened him in Britain. But what he really coveted was Normandy. He wanted to rule over both sides of the Channel as his father had. But his brother Robert had inherited Normandy.

In 1091, four years after he became king of England, William Rufus invaded Normandy. He crushed Robert's forces, and he forcing Robert to cede part of eastern Normandy to him. The two brothers later made up. But William Rufus still wanted control of the rest of Normandy. And he got his opportunity in the year 1096. That opportunity came in the form of the First Crusade.

Jerusalem had recently fallen to Muslin invaders. And the Pope asked the prominent knights of Europe to come to the Near East to liberate the city. Robert decided to join the Crusade. And in 1096, he made plans to head to Jerusalem. But it was going to be an expensive venture, so Robert needed money to fund the forces he intended to take with him. And since he was going to be gone, he needed someone to rule Normandy in his absence. William Rufus was a potential solution to both problems. He had the money to pay for the expedition, and he had the expertise to govern Normandy.

So Robert went to his William Rufus and made him an offer. If William Rufus would loan him 10,000 marks, William Rufus could have control of Normandy while Robert was away on the Crusade. But Normandy would revert back to Robert when, and if, he returned alive. William Rufus thought that was a pretty good deal, and he loaned Robert the money. Robert headed to Jerusalem, and William Rufus took control of Normandy as well as England. But in order to raise the money to give to Robert, William Rufus had to levy a massive tax on the whole of England. So the resentment against him continued to grow in England.

William Rufus now had effective control of both England and Normandy, just what he had always wanted. He then set about recovering the disputed region of Maine in the southwest. And he was able to take it back. So by the year 1100, he ruled over as much territory as his father had, and he actually ruled over a larger area when we consider that he was able to recover Maine for Normandy. So his 'empire' was just as broad and substantial as that of William the Conqueror.

But back in England, his lust for power and money had alienated much of the population. As I noted, the Church had turned against him. The people resented his taxes and lavish lifestyle. And the nobles also resented those taxes and the many other payments which he demanded. And they also resented the continued expansion of the royal forests.

Like his father, William Rufus loved to hunt. And he continued to implement the harsh forest laws. The men who enforced those laws were generally hated and despised. They became almost a law unto themselves. They often acted as judge, jury and executioner – literally. Sometimes they would accuse a person of poaching the king's deer, and they would punish the offender on the spot – sometimes with execution.

The people were expected to contribute to the strict enforcement of the forest laws. If peasants or villagers witnessed someone poaching deer or otherwise violating the forest laws, they were expected to shout as loud as they could to get the attention of the forest officials. Old French had two words that meant 'to shout or wail.' One word was ***huee*** and the other was ***crier***, which survives as the word ***cry***. Both words came into early Middle English. And they were combined into the phrase 'hue and cry.' And the phrase 'hue and cry' has its origins here in the royal forests of England after the Norman Conquest. It was the term used to describe the ruckus to be raised when people caught an offender in the royal forest.

But here's the thing. The people despised these forest restrictions. They had more sympathy for the poachers than the king. So they often turned a blind eye to poachers. When forest officials suspected that laws had been broken, they would hold an inquest. The surviving records from those inquests are filled with the accounts of villagers and peasants who swore that they 'knew nothing' and 'recognized nobody.'

The fact is that the forest officers were a hated class. And the people who got away with poaching the king's deer became local heroes. This is background for the legends of Robin Hood that were about to take shape in the 1200s. In fact, one of the earliest ballads about Robin Hood describes him as a poacher who was declared an outlaw for killing for the king's deer. Of course, he took refuge in Sherwood Forest – one of the many royal forests established during this period.

But before Sherwood Forest became famous in the tales of Robin Hood, there was another famous forest – the New Forest established by the William the Conqueror in the south of England. And that famous forest was starting to become very infamous.

One of William the Conqueror's sons had been killed in that forest a few years earlier while hunting. Early in the year 1100, while Robert was still away fighting in the First Crusade, his son named Richard went to the New Forest in England to go on a hunting trip. While in the forest, he met the same fate as his uncle. Again, the details are unclear, but the son of Robert of Normandy died while hunting in the New Forest in May of the year 1100.

No one knows if Robert received the news of his son's death while he was in Jerusalem. But by this point, the battle had been won there. The First Crusade was a victory for the European knights. And Robert was making plans for his return to Normandy.

But of course, his brother William Rufus was governing Normandy in his absence. So the big question at this point was whether William Rufus intended to give Normandy back to Robert when he returned. But we never got the answer to that question.

In August of the year 1100, about one month before Robert returned, William Rufus was back in England, and guess what he decided to do? If you guessed that he went on a hunting trip, you would be correct. In fact, he went to that favorite stomping ground – the New Forest. It was the same place that his brother had died and his nephew had died a few months earlier. And now William Rufus was about to meet the same fate.

His hunting party that day included his younger brother Henry – the one who had received ____ pounds of silver when his father died and had proceeded to count every pound. The hunting party also included one of William Rufus's companions named Walter Tyrel.

As was customary, the hunting party spread out and waited for the rangers to chase a deer across their line of fire. After a period of waiting, a deer suddenly appeared. Walter Tyrel took aim at the deer and fired his arrow – but he missed. The arrow struck William Rufus in the chest. The king reached out and broke off the arrow that was sticking out of his chest – and then fell to the ground dead.

The historical sources tell us that Tyrel immediately realized the consequences of what he had done. He headed directly to the coast and crossed over to France. Meanwhile, William Rufus's brother Henry also realized the consequences. He was standing there in the forest – over his dead brother' body. And he realized that England was now without a king. He also realized that the king had no children. So the next person in line to the throne would be one of the king's brothers. That meant either himself or his brother Robert – who was still in Jerusalem. So Henry didn't hesitate for a second. We are told that he left his dead brother lying on the ground and headed directly for Winchester. When he arrived in Winchester, he secured the royal treasury. Whoever had control of the treasury had effective control of England. The very next day, Henry was proclaimed the new King of England. He then headed to London where he was crowned at Westminster Abbey – just 3 days after his brother had been killed in the hunting accident. But was it an accident?

Many historians believe that it was not – that it was in fact an assassination. They believe that Henry and Walter Tyrel were co-conspirators. The circumstances are certainly suspicious. The shooter - Tyrel - immediately fled the country without even attempting to defend himself. And Henry left his brother lying on the ground and headed straight for the treasury to claim the throne. But neither Henry nor Tyrel were ever formally accused of any wrongdoing. And it is very likely that many in England were happy that William Rufus's reign had come to an end.

Whether it was an accident or an assassination, England now had a new king – Henry – known to history as Henry I. Henry became king in the year 1100. So we are now at the beginning of the 12th century. And this is the century when we can finally start to identify some specific changes that were taking place in the language other than the addition of new French words.

Next time, we'll look at Henry's life and death. Like his brother Robert, Henry also lost a son to an accident. So he also lacked a clear successor. And his death actually led to a period of Civil War known as the Anarchy. And that term Anarchy can also describe the linguistic situation on the ground during that same time period. So next time, we'll look at how this period of political and linguistic anarchy led to the emergence of a new type of English.

Until then, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.