THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 85:
HOW TO RUN AN EMPIRE

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 85: How to Run an Empire. In this episode, we're going to continue our look at the reign of Henry II. We'll see how he expanded the massive realm he pieced to together called the Angevin Empire. That expansion led to the first English settlements in Ireland. And it allowed Henry to position himself as overlord of the British Isles. So we'll explore those developments. And we'll also look at how terms associated with government administration entered the English language.

But before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can sign up to support the podcast at Patreon.com. Just go to historyofenglishpodcast.com and link from there.

So let's turn to this episode. And before I begin, I should mention that I won't have time to get to the next major English text called the Ormulum. I mentioned that text at the end of the last episode, and I want to spend some time on it because it reveals a lot about the development of English during this period. The exact date of the text is uncertain, but it is generally dated to the end of Henry II's reign. Since I want to dedicate some time to that text, I'll deal with it in some detail in the next episode.

But this time, I want to look at the way Henry managed his massive empire which included the majority of France and most of the British Isles. In some ways, this episode is an extension of the last episode. Last time, I looked at the development of English common law, and I looked at how French legal terms entered the English language. This time, I'm going to look at how certain government terms entered English, especially terms associated with government officials – the people who were responsible for managing Henry's empire.

As we know, Henry controlled a lot of territory, and he had a lot of titles. He was King of England. But in France, he was Duke of Normandy and Duke of Aquitaine. He was also Count of Anjou and Count of Maine. Those titles were already in place when he assumed them. That meant he was ***duke*** in some regions and ***count*** in others.

We've come across those titles before. So you may be wondering what the difference was between a duke and count. Well, not very much. A duke was a higher ranking noble than a count. Since dukes were higher nobles, they tended to hold more land. The realm of a duke was a ***duchy***, and the realm of a count was a ***county***. So generally speaking, duchies tended to be bigger than counties.

The terms ***duke*** and ***count*** were derived from Latin terms – ***dux*** and ***comitem***. The term ***dux*** meant 'leader' or 'one who leads.' It came from an Indo-European root word ****deuk*** which meant 'to lead.' That Indo-European root produced the Latin word ***ducere*** which meant the same thing. That was a very common word, and it eventually produced the word ***duke***. But it was also combined with various Latin prefixes, and produced a lot of other words, many of which also passed into English.

Pro meant 'froth' – and ***producere*** meant to 'lead forth.' And ***producere*** became the word ***produce***.

Using that same formula, to 'lead into' was to ***induce***. To 'lead away from' was ***seduce***. To 'lead between' two things – or two people – was to ***introduce***. To 'lead back' or 'lead down' was ***reduce***. The 'lead from' in the sense of drawing a conclusion from a set of facts was to ***deduce***. To 'lead out' in the sense of leading out of ignorance was ***exducere*** which eventually became the word ***educate***. The 'lead away from' was ***abducere*** which became the word ***abduct***.

So ***abduct***, ***produce***, ***induce***, ***reduce***, ***seduce***, ***seduce***, and ***educate*** all come from that Latin root meaning 'to lead,' and that root also produced the word ***duke*** meaning a leader. A female duke was a ***duchess***, and the realm of a duke was a ***duchy***. And Henry II ruled over the duchies of Normandy and Aquitaine as the ***duke*** or 'leader.'

So that's the ***duke***. But what about the ***count***? As I noted earlier, the word ***count*** comes from the Latin word ***comitem*** – rendered in its subject form as ***comes***. And ***comes*** meant a traveling companion or one who travels with the king. It combined the Latin prefix ***com*** meaning 'with' with the root word ***ire*** meaning 'to go.' So it was literally 'to go with' or 'one who goes with.' So a king's ***comes*** was his traveling companion, and more specifically, he was a member of the king's court who traveled along with the court.

In an earlier episode of the podcast, we saw a very similar construction. You might remember that the word ***companion*** was a combination of ***com*** meaning 'with' – and ***panis*** meaning 'bread.' So a ***companion*** was the person with whom you shared bread, and ***comes*** was the person with whom you traveled. ***Comes*** eventually became ***conte*** in Old French, and then ***count*** in early Middle English. The wife of a count was a ***countess***, and the territory of the count was a ***county***. Also, a count sometimes had a deputy called a ***viscount*** – literally a vice-count.

So the count was the leading official in a county. And in Anjou and Maine, Henry II held that distinction.

So Henry was "duke" in some regions and "count" in others. But he wasn't content with those regions. Throughout his reign, he looked to expand his realm. Up in Brittany, Henry and his brother were actively involved in the politics there. Henry invaded the region and forced a marriage alliance which ultimately led to his son Geoffrey becoming the Duke of Brittany. So Brittany also came within the Angevin orbit.

Henry also had an eye on the south of France – specifically the region of Toulouse east of Aquitaine. Early in his reign, Henry intervened there militarily. And later in his reign, the count of Toulouse did homage to Henry and swore an oath of fealty to him. So that brought Toulouse with the Angevin orbit as well.

The important point here is that the portions of France under Henry's direct or indirect control continued to expand throughout his reign. Louis Henwood has prepared a map to show the full extent of Henry's realm. You can check out the map at the website – HistoryofEnglishPodcast.com. As Henry's territory expanded, it increased his access to revenues and troops and other resources. But

is also meant he had more territory to defend and more enemies on his borders. Those enemies included the king of France who was not at all happy about Henry's expansion. So expansion was always a delicate balancing act.

Later historians referred to Henry's realm as the "Angevin" Empire because Henry's father was from Anjou. But Henry never proclaimed himself to be an emperor. The various territories were never fully unified. Each province maintained its own laws, and each was administered by local men who were native to the region. The only thing that linked them all together was Henry. So Henry's "empire" was really more of a confederation of provinces, each of which had its own internal government.

That was also true in England. England was important because it gave Henry the title of ***king***. And like Henry's other provinces, it was administered by local officials. By this point, most of those officials were native to England even if they had Norman parents or grandparents. But England didn't have ***dukes*** and ***counts*** – not in the 1100s. It did later adopt the title of ***duke***, but it never adopted the title of ***count***. England did borrow the words ***county*** and ***countess***. So the English shires became ***counties***. And the wives of English earls became ***countesses***, but no ***counts***. Why not?

Well, the answer is not entirely clear. But one popular theory is that the word ***count*** was shunned in England because it closely resembled another word in Middle English that was considered vulgar. It was a word for a certain part of the female anatomy that we still have today – basically the word ***count*** without the 'o.' According to this theory, nobles preferred not to use the title of ***count*** for that reason.

This theory also may also help to explain why England retained the traditional title of ***earl***, but the earl's wife became a ***countess***. The Anglo-Saxon ***earl*** was basically the equivalent of the French ***count***. If we think back to the late Anglo-Saxon period, England was divided into several large earldoms like Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria and East Anglia. These earldoms were headed by a local earl who was very powerful. Harold Godwinsson had been the earl of Wessex before he succeeded Edward the Confessor as the King of England. So in the minds of the Anglo-Saxons, an ***earldom*** was roughly equivalent to a French ***county***, and an ***earl*** was roughly equivalent to a ***count***. In fact, when the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle referred to French ***counts***, it referred to them as "***earls***." So it didn't use the word ***count*** either, even when it was referring to an actual count.

However, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle did refer to Matilda as the ***countess*** of Anjou. So even in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the term ***countess*** was used, but not ***count*** – just ***earl***. So in England, the traditional title of ***earl*** was retained, but the earl's wife became the ***countess***.

So that explains ***earls*** and ***countesses***. But what about ***counties***? In France, a ***county*** was a large province akin to the great Anglo-Saxon earldoms. But in England, the term ***county*** was applied to the much smaller local territories called shires. So what a happened there? Well, the answer is presumably because the great Anglo-Saxon earldoms were wiped away in the wake of the Norman Conquest.

As we saw in earlier episodes, most of the great Anglo-Saxon earls were either killed at Hastings or removed in the aftermath. The large earldoms were allowed to lapse, and that entire level of government disappeared. Since the earldoms were comprised of smaller units called shires, that meant the shires then became the next level of government under the king. They became the largest subdivisions of the kingdom. So through this process, the smaller shires essentially replaced the larger earldoms. Whereas France continued to be dominated by large duchies or counties, England was now divided into these much smaller shires. The Norman kings preferred this arrangement because it ensured that a local leader couldn't become powerful enough to break away and challenge the king's authority as often happened back in France.

All of this helps to explain why the shires started to be called ***counties***. In France, a county was a primary subdivison of the kingdom. So the word ***county*** acquired that sense of a subdivision. And in England, the largest subdivision was the shire. So over time, the Normans started to refer to the shires as ***counties***. And that term stuck. Of course, many of those counties retain the word ***shire*** in their name – like Yorkshire, Hampshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, and so on.

So over the centuries, the word ***county*** acquired the sense of the largest administrative subdivision of a political entity. In the most of the later British colonies, the largest administrative units came to be known as ***counties***. And in the United States today, each state is divided into counties – or ***parishes*** in Louisiana. So ***county*** still has that sense as the primary political subdivision.

So now we know why England had counties rather than shires. And in France, the head of a county was a count, but we know that England retained the title of ***earl***. So that suggests that the leading official of the English county should have been an ***earl***, which was basically the equivalent of a count. Remember the earl's wife was a ***countess***. But as we know, the leading official of the shire or county was usually the ***sheriff*** – not the ***count***. So what happened there?

Well the answer to this question is more complicated. The head of an earldom was an ***earl***, and the traditional head of a shire was the ***shire reeve*** – or ***sheriff*** as it became known over time. When the great earldoms were broken apart after the Conquest, that left the shires and their sheriffs. So even though the shires started to be called ***counties***, the title of ***sheriff*** was retained for the local official. That may seem simple enough, but what makes it complicated is the fact that the earls didn't simply disappear.

Earl was a very important title of nobility, and it still meant something in England. And the king had the power to grant that title, and he also had the power to create new earldoms. And this is where the Anarchy comes back in to play. During the civil war between Stephen and Matilda, they each granted the title of ***earl*** to various nobles in exchange for their support. And those earls also received new earldoms. But in most cases, these new earldoms consisted of a single shire or county. So these were mini-earldoms compared to the Anglo-Saxon period. And since these various earldoms were basically counties, the lines between the earl and the sheriff in those counties became blurred. Again, only some counties became earldoms. The others remained as traditional shires or counties with sheriffs.

So that was the situation when the Anarchy ended and Henry II came to power. Henry refused to recognize some of the earldoms created by Stephan and Matilda, and others he allowed to lapse over time. Henry also refused create any new earldoms. So the total number of earls shrank during his reign. In counties that still had an earl, the earl had a certain amount of control over the sheriff, but that power declined over time. So the title of ***earl*** became more and more ceremonial. And the real power in the countryside shifted to the sheriffs. Over time, a noble might be designated as the ***earl*** of a particular county, but he had no real power within that county. It was just a title of nobility. Now, I say that the earls lost most of their power over particular counties, but they often retained the right to what was called "third penny." It meant that the earl of a particular county was entitled to one-third of the fees and profits generated by the local county court – which could be quite significant. But other than that financial benefit, the title of ***earl*** was gradually divorced from the county that produced the title, and the title became more ceremonial over time.

I should also note that most earls were prominent barons, so the earls were powerful and influential men. But their power and influence didn't really come from their title. It came from their land holdings and other privileges. They just wanted the title to add to their prestige.

All of that meant that England now had ***counties***, but the primary local official was the ***sheriff*** – not the ***earl*** or ***count***. So let's turn our attention to the sheriff. Back in France, a count's deputy was a ***vice-comes*** in Latin – or ***viscount*** in French. But those terms never stuck. So the English title of ***sheriff*** was retained – just like with ***earl***.

As we know, the title of ***sheriff*** was derived from the old Anglo-Saxon title of ***shire reeve***. ***Reeve*** was a term for a local official in Old English. A reeve could have a variety of duties. Many towns had reeve who had certain duties in the town. After the Conquest, most manors also a reeve who made sure the peasant did their work. And the local shires had a reeve who helped with the administration of the shire. The shire reeve first appeared in the 900s, and it became the leading official of the shire.

As I noted earlier, the position of shire reeve – or sheriff – got an upgrade after the Norman Conquest. When the great earldoms were wiped out, the local administration passed to the shires. And that meant the sheriff was now the crucial link between the king and the countryside. Because they were so important, the native Anglo-Saxon sheriffs were gradually replaced with Norman sheriffs.

The sheriff was a very important figure. He had a lot of duties. He presided of the local shire court. He also collected royal taxes and the revenues from the shire. It was the sheriff who had to travel to the exchequer so royal officials could conduct an accounting of his finances. In time of war, the sheriff also assembled a militia from men of the county. So he emerged as the leading official in the countryside.

Now, in the following century, the power of the sheriffs started to decline. Some of the sheriff's functions were replaced by other officials – like escheators, coroners, commissioners of array, and justices of the peace.

In England, the sheriff's powers declined so much in later centuries that the office became largely ceremonial. The office still exists in England – known today as the ***high sheriff***. But again, it is really a ceremonial position.

Sheriffs also exist in other parts of the former British Empire, but their responsibilities vary from country to country. In the United States, the sheriff remains the leading law enforcement officer of the county.

Now I noted, that the sweeping power of the sheriff declined over the next couple of centuries as new officials emerged, and they gradually took away some of the sheriff's powers. One of those offices was the office of the escheator. This was the person in charge of escheats. Now you're probably saying, what in the world is an ***escheat***. Well, it's what happens when you die without an heir to inherit your property. If there is no heir, the property passes to the government. In that case, the property is said to escheat. That process still happens to day. In the United States, most states have an office for unclaimed funds. Those offices receive funds from people who die without an heir. And again, the legal term for that is ***escheat***. And that basic procedure goes back to Medieval land law.

If a vassal held property from a lord, and he died without an heir, the land would automatically revert to the lord, and in many cases that feudal lord was the king. So in those cases, the land would 'fall out' of the vassal's possession and 'fall into' the lap of the king. The sheriff was responsible for supervising that process – for reclaiming the king's land. But shortly after Henry's reign – in the year 1232 – that responsibility passed to a group of local officials called escheators.

I mentioned that the escheat property fell out of the vassal's hands and fell into the lap of the king. And that helps to explain the etymology of the word ***escheat***. It literally meant to fall out. It was based on an Indo-European root word – ****kad*** – which meant to fall or to die. That word ****kad*** gave us the word ***cadaver*** meaning the body of a dead or fallen person. The word ****kad*** also appears in the word ***cascade*** to describe something falling down. It also appears in the word ***cadence*** which originally meant the end of a movement in piece of music when the volume gradually fell. All of those words are from Latin.

And by this point in history, the game of dice was being played in western Europe. Dice were thrown down or dropped on a table. In Latin, the dice were sometimes called ***cadentia*** from this same root. ***Cadentia*** meant something that falls. As we know, the Latin 'C-A' sound – /ka/ – became a 'C-H' sound in early French. And that word ***cadentia*** evolved into a French word to describe what happens when dice fall. That word was ***chance***. And ***chance*** appeared in very early Middle English. It referred to how things might happen or fall out. In other words, how things might fall into place or fall into disarray.

The Indo-European root word ****kad*** also produced the Latin word ***cadera*** meaning to fall. Sometimes, the word ***cadera*** was given the prefix ***ad*** meaning 'to.' So ***adcadere*** meant 'to fall.' ***Adcadere*** evolved into ***accidere*** – then ***acsidera*** – and then the word ***accident*** – which originally meat 'to fall down.'

In Late Latin, if you wanted to describe something falling out – or falling away – you could combine the word ***ex*** meaning 'out' with that same Latin word ***cadera*** meaning 'to fall.' So ***excadera*** meant 'to fall out.' And in early French, that same 'C-A' sound shifted to a 'C-H' sound, and from ***excadera***, we got the French word ***escheat***. So if something fell out, it was said to escheat. And that was what happened when land fell out of a vassal's possession and fell into the hands of the king. And in the 1200s, the position of escheator was created to supervise this process.

The escheator would take possession of a vassal's property, usually when the vassal died without an heir. But in some cases, a vassal forfeited his property due to some violation, and the property was said to escheat to the king. So the property was basically confiscated. And apparently this was sometimes done in an underhanded way. And the reason we know this to be the case is because the word ***escheat*** evolved into another word to describe the process of taking something improperly – often through trickery. Of course, that's the word ***cheat***. The word ***cheat*** is actually a shortened version of the word ***escheat***. And at one time, confiscated or stolen property was called ***cheat*** – or ***cheat property***. And from its sense as stolen property, we got the word ***cheat*** to mean 'the act of deception for personal gain.' To be fair, not all escheators were cheats, but that's how we got the word ***cheat***.

The major point here is that the office of escheator encroached on the sheriff's authority. Another office that encroached on the sheriff's authority was the office of coroner. This office is first referenced in the year 1194 – five years after Henry II died. In the judicial records of that year, it is mentioned that three knights and one clerk were to be chosen as a new kind of record-keeper. In Latin, this position was described as the "custos placitorum coronae" – literally the "custodian of the pleas of the crown." But over time, that long title was shortened to the last word – ***coronae*** – or ***crown*** as it was later rendered in English. It's the same Latin word that gives us the word ***coronation***. And ***coronae*** eventually became the ***coroner***.

So the title of ***coroner*** comes from the word for ***crown*** because the coroner was originally a record keeper for the crown. Specifically, his job was to keep a record of the local court proceedings and to report those directly to the king.

The coroner was mainly concerned with felonies, including those involving murder or homicide. If a person died by accident or violence, the coroner was required to hold an inquest. He viewed the body before it was buried and took notes. But he also took note of other major crimes, so his job wasn't limited to murders. If a suspect was accused of the crime, the coroner confiscated the suspect's property and took it into custody. If the suspect was convicted – and executed – his property was forfeited to the king. So the coroner made sure that the property of executed criminals was forwarded to the royal treasury. In this respect, the role of the coroner was similar to the escheater. They both helped to increase the king's revenues by claiming property and returning it to the crown. Over time, the specific duties of the coroner became more and more restricted to the point where it was limited to crimes involving murder or suspicious deaths. And that's the sense of the word ***coroner*** today.

So the coroner came into being shortly after the reign of Henry II. And it was another check on the power of the sheriff. A good example of this is what happened when a criminal was caught red-

handed in the act of committing a serious crime. There was a specific term for this in Old English. Catching a criminal in the act was called ***aparian***. In that situation, the sheriff typically the right to kill the criminal on the spot without a trial. But after the office of coroner was introduced, the sheriff had to make sure that the coroner was present when the criminal was executed. And that was because it was the coroner's job to make sure that criminal's property was confiscated and forfeited to the crown. And that tended to prevent any abuse by the sheriff.

So, from all of this, we get a sense of the various officials that were required to carry on the routine business of the country. From sheriffs and coroners and escheators – to stewards and bailiffs and reeves – to justices and jurors – to the staff of the exchequer and the chancery – it was a massive undertaking. A relatively large bureaucracy was organized to run the country. And this allowed England to run on its own. The king didn't even need to be present. So this type of bureaucracy was essential for a king with a large empire to manage. And in fact, it was common for Norman and Plantagenet kings to spend most of their time in France or in some far-flung corner of the empire trying to conquer or subdue a border region.

I noted that Henry II spent time in Toulouse and Brittany in France trying to add those regions to his realm, but England had border regions as well. The northern border with Scotland and the western border with Wales required special attention. The Normans had an uneasy relationship with their Celtic-speaking neighbors, and that continued into the reign of Henry II.

Over the prior century, the Scots and the Welsh had been forced to make certain concessions to the Normans, but neither had been fully conquered. During the Anarchy, they both took advantage of the situation in England, and they tried to push back against the Normans. Scotland was more unified than Wales, and it had claimed the northern English counties of Northumberland and Cumberland during the Anarchy. But when Henry II became king, he forced those counties to be returned.

The situation in Wales was more complicated. For most of the Norman period, Wales was divided between various regional leaders who often fought with each other. That division created an opportunity for the Normans who were interested in subduing the region. But the geography of Wales made it very difficult to conquer. Much of the region was mountainous, especially in the north and east, and that made it difficult for the Normans to invade. So initially, William the Conqueror chose another option. He created a series of small earldoms (Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford) along the Welsh border, and he gave those earls a great deal of autonomy and freedom. That region along the Welsh border became known as the Welsh Marches, and the barons became known as the Marcher Lords.

Now we've actually seen that word ***march*** before. Way back in Episode 25, we saw that ***marko*** or ***marka*** was the old Germanic word for a borderland. It produced the name of an old Germanic tribe called the ***Marcomanni*** – which was literally the 'border men' or 'border people.' And it's part of the name of ***Denmark***. The word passed into Old English, and it was also borrowed into Latin. So English has a lot of words from that root from both Old English and French. From Old English, we got the word ***mark*** as in 'to mark a border.' And we also got the name of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of ***Mercia***, which was originally a border region between the Anglo-Saxon settlements in the east

and the Welsh in the west. A river in the northern part of Mercia was the ***Mersey*** from that same root.

Via Latin, that root word gave us the word ***margin***, as well as the word ***march***. A ***march*** was a border region and that meant it had to be defended. So troops were routinely stationed in the march region. There was usually a lot of rough terrain that had to be trampled by the troops, and that was original sense of the word ***march*** to describe the movement of troops.

So march regions were often associated with conflict and warfare, and that was certainly the case in the Welsh Marches. And that explains why William the Conqueror gave the Marcher Lords in that region so much independence and power. He basically let them defend the border so he didn't have to do it himself. And in exchange, he let them run their counties pretty much as they pleased without his interference.

So let's look a little closer at the relationship between those Marcher Lords and the king. And in order to understand that relationship, we have to look at the concept of a ***franchise***. Now, I don't mean your local McDonald's franchise, but this is where is that term began in the English language.

The word ***franchise*** was borrowed from French in early Middle English. It is derived from the word ***frank*** which meant 'free.' We still have that word in Modern English. If we speak ***frankly***, we are speaking 'freely.'

In earlier episodes, we also saw that the word ***frank*** was used as the name of the early Germanic tribe that was granted certain freedoms within the Roman Empire. And the name of the ***Franks*** ultimately led to the name of the country – ***France***. And of course, that led to the name of the language – ***French***. So all of those words are derived from the same root.

As I noted, the word ***frank*** – or ***franc*** – meant 'free.' And when the king granted his vassals certain freedoms or privileges, that was called a ***franchise*** from the same root. So a franchise was a certain type of freedom, but it was also a privilege. When the king granted land to a vassal, the vassal's use of the land was subject to very specific conditions. But occasionally, the king would grant a franchise – or freedom – from those restrictions. So in that sense, a franchise was really an exemption and a special privilege.

The sense of the word ***franchise*** as a special privilege can still be found in Modern English when we use the word to refer to the right to vote. The right to vote was itself a special privilege at one time. So if you are ***disenfranchised***, your right to vote has been taken away.

Now if a franchise was a special privilege granted to vassal, you may be wondering what type of franchises were granted. Well, many of them were relatively minor and only covered specific situations. For example, when a lord was given the right to have his own manor court, that was a type of franchise.

I noted earlier that a sheriff of a county could execute a criminal on the spot if the criminal was caught red-handed. Well, very often, that right was also granted to the lord of a manor. If the lord

caught one of his peasants in the act of committing certain crimes – like murder of theft – he could execute the criminal on the spot, just like a sheriff could. Again, this was a common privilege or franchise. By the way, there was a specific Old English term for this particular privilege. It was called ***infangentheof***. The term literally translates as 'in-seized-thief.' ***In*** was the word 'in' – ***fangen*** meant 'seized' – and ***theof*** was the word 'thief.' That word ***fangen*** for 'seized' may seen odd, but we still have it in Modern English. We have it in the word ***fang***, which is what an animal uses to seize its prey. So again, an ***infangentheof*** – was an 'in-seized-thief' – and it meant a thief caught or seized in the act of stealing while on the lord's property. And again, the lord was usually granted the right to execute that thief on the spot. So that was a type of franchise.

Another type of franchise was the right to treasure trove, and this is the origin of the term ***treasure trove***. The right to treasure trove was the right to claim found treasure. In fact, that's what the term ***treasure trove*** means in French. We saw the word ***treasure*** a few episodes back. It was first recorded in English in the Peterborough Chronicle. And ***trove*** comes from the French word ***trouver*** meaning 'to find.' So ***treasure trove*** was literally 'treasure found' or 'found treasure.'

The root of the word ***trove*** can also be found in the word ***retrieve*** which was originally a hunting term. If an animal was shot and wounded, the hunting dogs had to go and find it first. Then they brought it back. So the etymology of the word ***retrieve*** suggests that the word originally put more of an emphasis on the dog's search for the missing prey. And of course, that's how we got the word ***retriever*** for a type of hunting dog.

That gives us the words ***trove*** and ***retrieve***, both from French and Latin, but their ultimate root is Indo-European. The original root word meant 'to turn' or 'to turn over.' And this explains how it came to mean 'find,' because when you turn things over, you might find something underneath. But the Greeks and the Romans also used that original root word in a special literary sense. Sometimes a poet would use words in an unusual or poetic way, where a person turned the meaning around or upside down. The words were used figuratively, rather than literally. We might say that the poet used a special 'turn of phrase.' This type of rhetoric was called a ***trope*** from the same root as ***trove***. And this literary sense of the word gave us another term we've seen before – the word ***troubadour***. A troubadour was a poet or singer who used special turns of phrase. And you might remember that troubadours in northern France were called ***trouveres*** – which is very close to the word ***trove***. So a person who turned over words to find a special poetic meaning in them was a ***troubadour*** or ***trouvere***. And a person who turned over objects in search of valuables might find a ***treasure trove***. ***Troubadour***, ***trouvere*** and ***trove*** all come from the same root meaning to find.

In 12th century England, a treasure trove belonged to the king unless the proper owner came forward and proved his ownership. So any person who found money or other valuables had a duty to report it to the king's officials. But sometimes, the king granted the right of 'treasure trove' to a local lord. This meant that the local lord had the right to the treasure if the rightful owner didn't come forward. So again, this was a special privilege or franchise.

Closely related to the right of treasure trove was the right to waif and stray. Unlike treasure trove which applied to hidden property, sometimes property was abandoned and left out in the open. This type of property was called ***waif***. And if it was an animal, it was called a ***stray***. Of course, we still

have the word ***stray*** to refer to an unclaimed animal or pet. But what about the word ***waif***? Well, we don't tend to use that word for abandoned property anymore, but we do use it to refer to an abandoned child or a homeless child. So we still have the word ***waif*** in that sense. Once again, in feudal England, abandoned property – like waif and stray – belonged to the king if it wasn't claimed. But the king might grant that right to a local lord. That meant that the local lord could keep the unclaimed property for himself. So again, this was a type of privilege or franchise.

I began this discussion about privileges and franchises in the context of the Welsh Marcher Lords. So what does all of this have to do with the Marcher Lords? Well, the privileges I just mentioned were relatively minor privileges. But sometimes, the king would grant much greater privileges. The privileges could be so broad and sweeping that the baron received his land with virtually no restrictions at all. The baron held his land with most of the rights and privileges that belonged to the king himself. The baron's freedom was so great that he could basically do as he pleased. And that was the situation in the Welsh Marches. The Marcher Lords had broad powers, and they were largely independent of the king.

This was very similar to the situation back in France where local dukes and counts were technically vassals of the king, but they pretty much did as they pleased – even going to war with the king on certain occasions. So kings were reluctant to grant these kind of sweeping powers to their vassals. They only did it in border regions where there was a constant threat of invasion. In that situation, it made sense to give the barons sweeping powers and freedom from oversight. That way, the barons could handle the border defense on a day-to-day basis without the king having to be involved. That was especially true for a king whose realm stretched across many provinces.

In this type of arrangement we can see a connection to the modern concept of business franchises. Today, many large businesses delegate their particular business model to smaller regional owners, who then turn around and operate local branches of the business. The local owners run their franchises and send a share of the profits back to the primary owner. Well, this is basically the same thing that William the Conqueror did in the Welsh Marches. He delegated his authority to a series of local Marcher Lords, and he basically let them rule as they pleased. In a sense, he franchised his kingship by creating a series of smaller petty-kings. So as we can see, franchising has been around for a long time.

I should note that these special privileges were not just granted along the Welsh border. The county of Durham in northern England also had similar privileges. And William the Conqueror granted those privileges for the same basic reasons – because he had limited control of northern England at the time. So again, it was considered a border region. In fact, Durham was not even included in the Domesday Book, and that's because it functioned as an almost independent entity at the time.

As I noted, the Marcher Lords along the Welsh border operated with very little supervision from the king. They appointed their own justices and government officials. They had their own chancery offices and kept their own official records. Unlike the other counties, they didn't have to account to the king's exchequer. They could build castles without the king's permission, so they built lots of castles in the Marches. And they could also wage war as they pleased without having to get the king's permission.

This freedom allowed the Marcher Lords to gradually expand across the border into eastern and southern Wales. By the time Henry I died, the Normans actually controlled much of southern Wales. But then England fell into civil war and anarchy, and the Welsh rose in rebellion and took back most of the lost territory.

So when the Anarchy ended, and Henry II came to power, he wanted to return the country to the state it had been in when his grandfather Henry I had ruled. That meant he wanted to get the Welsh nobles to submit to him. Henry launched two separate invasions of Wales – one in the north shortly after he became king (1157) – and another in the south a few year later (1163). These invasions were successful, and Henry got the two dominant Welsh leaders to swear homage to him. But it was an uneasy peace. A short time later, the various Welsh nobles rebelled and revived the struggle for independence. In response to the rebellion, Henry launched another major campaign in Wales (1165). But this third campaign it proved to be one of Henry's rare military mistakes. He faced bad weather, guerilla skirmishes, and a general lack of supplies. He got bogged down and eventually retreated.

This defeat is actually important to our story. It meant that Wales retained its independence. And the Welsh border continued to mark the western limit of the English language in Britain. But ironically, Henry's defeat in Wales actually set the stage for the first expansion of the English language to Ireland.

And once again, the key players in this part of the story were those Marcher Lords. The Marcher Lords enjoyed a great deal of power and freedom, and many of them looked to expand into Wales. But now, that was no longer a good option. They were blocked from seeking new lands in Wales. So they started to look elsewhere.

And this is where events in Ireland suddenly became very important. Much like Wales, Ireland was very fractured with several different regional rulers who often fought with each other. One of the kingdoms was Leinster in the southeast of Ireland – so it was located directly across the Irish Sea from Wales. It was the region located immediately south of the city of Dublin on the eastern coast of Ireland. Its king was Dermot MacMurrough. (That's an Anglicized version of his actual Irish name, but that's what I'll use here).

Dermot found himself at war with several of his enemies. And in the year 1167, he was overthrown and forced into exile. But Dermot wasn't willing to give up. After his defeat, he traveled to meet with King Henry who happened to be in France at the time. Dermot asked Henry for permission to raise an army with men from Henry's realm. Henry agreed, so Dermot set about looking for someone who was willing to help him raise an army to take back his kingdom in Ireland.

Now this was just two years after Henry's defeat in Wales. And as I noted, the Marcher Lords along the Welsh border were frustrated and looking for other opportunities. And now, here came a deposed Irish king looking for help. Dermot quickly found allies among the southern Marcher Lords. The most prominent was named Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, the Earl of Pembroke. But he is mostly known to history by his nickname – Strongbow. As that names suggests, he was a powerful Marcher Lord who loved a good fight. And he quickly accepted Dermot's offer to invade Leinster in Ireland.

In the year 1170, Strongbow landed in Ireland with 200 knights and about 1000 armed troops. The native Irishmen weren't accustomed to the advanced military technology of the Normans. Strongbow's forces had armor and helmets, and they fought on horseback. The Irish did not have those advantages, so Strongbow's forces quickly overran Leinster and captured Dublin.

Now Strongbow wasn't just looking for a quick military victory, he was looking for something more permanent. So he then arranged a marriage between himself and Dermot's daughter. And that made him the heir to the kingdom of Leinster. A few months later, Dermot died, and Strongbow – the Marcher Lord – now became the King of Leinster in Ireland.

All of this might sound very familiar to you. It was very reminiscent of William of Normandy. He had once been a vassal of the French king, and then he went off and conquered England and became a king in his own right. And the French king's position had suffered ever since. And now, it looked like Strongbow was doing the same thing. He was one of Henry's vassals, but now he had gone off and made himself a king in Ireland. And given Strongbow's military advantages, it was possible that he might end up conquering all of the other rival kingdoms – thereby becoming King of All of Ireland. All of this sent off alarm bells in Henry's court. There was no way Henry was going to allow history to repeat itself. So Henry realized that he needed to deal with Strongbow before things got out of hand

Henry immediately planned his own invasion of Ireland – to make sure than Strongbow understood that Henry was still his overlord. But in order to invade Ireland, Henry needed a secure route through Wales. So he actually made peace with Rhys, the ruler of southern Wales. Henry recognized Rhys's rights to the lands he occupied there. And in return, Rhys swore an oath of fealty to Henry. Within a couple of years, Henry had reached a similar agreement with the northern Welsh leader as well – named Dafydd (David). These agreements brought peace with Wales for the rest of Henry's reign. And most importantly, that initial agreement gave with Rhys gave Henry the secure route to Ireland that he needed.

Henry assembled his forces which consisted of five hundred knights and about three or four thousand archers. When he landed in Ireland, he had a decisive military advantage. Strongbow had little choice but to recognize Henry's authority, so he agreed to hold his Irish lands as Henry's vassal. This is exactly what Henry wanted. And it meant that eastern Ireland was now added to Henry's realm. Several other Irish rulers also came forward and recognized Henry as their overlord. But the Irish leaders in the northwest held out.

These early expeditions are very important to our story because they resulted in the first permanent English settlements in Ireland. Norman castles started to be constructed there. And an English colony was set up in Dublin where traders were invited. In fact, Dublin really became the gateway for English settlement going forward.

The settlement zone expanded over the following decades. Other nobles traveled to Ireland with their knights and supporters to claim lands and carve out their own regions. By the early 1200s, the Anglo-Norman nobles actually governed about two-thirds of Ireland. And a system of counties, with sheriffs and coroners, was gradually established. Other institutions were also created on the English

model – including a chancery, an exchequer and central courts. Feudal manors also started to be established.

So an English conquest was underway. Of course, from the Irish perspective, this was the beginning of a long, bloody struggle for independence – a struggle that would last for centuries.

For purposes of our story, these developments are important because they gave the English language a foothold in Ireland. Up until this point, the only place outside of England where English was being spoken as a native language was the southern corner of Scotland. As we saw in an earlier episode, an early form of Scots was being spoken there.

But now, English speakers were starting to settle in Ireland – especially in and around Dublin. Now to be fair, most of the early nobles were Normans, and we can assume that most of them still spoke French. But there were also knights, and soldiers and traders. And we can assume some of them spoke English.

Over the next few decades, many of those Norman and English settlers married local people. So they started to mix in with the native population, and many of them adopted the language and customs of Ireland. However, some of them did retain their English language and culture.

It's not clear how many English speakers there were in Ireland at the time. Documents from southern and eastern Ireland dating from the year 1300s show a significant number of people with English names. Most were probably descended from the settlers who had arrived over the prior century or so. Documents from Kilkenney in the early 1300s include English names like Langley and Westmedes. Again, this suggests a fair number of English speakers. But beyond that limited evidence, it is impossible to put any real numbers on any of this.

I noted that English settlements in Ireland expanded in the decades after Henry's expedition. But there was a major reversal of this trend in the mid and late 1300s. One of the major causes of this reversal was the plague known as the Black Death. As you probably know, that plague killed a large percentage of the European population. In Ireland, there weren't enough surviving peasants to keep many of the manors going. And a lot of those English settlements and manors were abandoned. However, an English settlement remained in place around Dublin on the east coast.

Later English rulers wanted to maintain that English presence around Dublin. And they were concerned that the English who remained there were gradually becoming assimilated by the Irish. So in the year 1366, a series of laws were passed called the Statutes of Kilkenny. The laws prohibited Englishmen born in Ireland from wearing Irish clothes and hair styles. And more importantly for our purposes, the laws prohibited the Englishmen from speaking the native Gaelic language. It also prevented them from marrying Irish partners. So this shows how desperate the English were to preserve their culture in Ireland.

Despite these laws, English settlements continued to shrink. By the 1400s, the only part of Ireland controlled by the English was Dublin City and an area around it called the ***Pale***. The Pale was so-named because it marked the border between the English settlement and the rest of Ireland. It came

from the Latin word ***palus*** meaning a 'stake or post' – the material used in the construction of fences to mark borders. That word gave us the word ***impale*** to mean 'pierced and fastened to a stake.' In its sense as a group of stakes forming a fence, it also gave us the word ***palisade***. The word ***palus*** had also been borrowed by the early Germanic tribes from the Romans. That Germanic borrowing passed into Old English and gave us the word ***pole***. And again, in eastern Ireland, the sense of the word as a fence produced the name of the English settlement known as the ***Pale*** – the region inside the designated border.

Now one very popular theory, found in many etymology books, is that this is the origin of the phrase ***beyond the pale***. If you were an English man or woman in Ireland, and you lived inside the pale, you were likely to be safe and secure. But if you ventured 'beyond the pale,' you did so at your own risk. You were beyond the control of English authorities. So if you went 'beyond the pale,' you went beyond the acceptable limits.

There is no doubt that the phrase 'beyond the pale' originally referred to this type of situation where someone left a safe zone and ventured into a foreign region. But the problem is that the term ***Pale*** was fairly common. Lots of safe zones were called ***pales***, not just this part of Ireland – even though this was one of the most famous pales.

Even the Oxford English Dictionary says there is no specific connection between the phrase and any particular location. So did the phrase 'beyond the pale' originate with the Pale in Ireland? Maybe or maybe not. But either way, now you know what the phrase originally meant.

As far as the English settlement in Ireland is concerned, I'm going to leave the story there for now. We'll pick up the story again when we get to the 1500s because that's when the Tutors made a concerted effort to conquer all of Ireland. And that's when the English language spread throughout the island and started to replace the native Gaelic language in many regions. But if we want to trace the ultimate origins of the English language in Ireland, it really begins here with Henry II's expedition in the year 1171.

Henry's stay in Ireland only lasted about six months – through the winter of 1171 into 1172. But then Henry got word of trouble brewing on the horizon. By this point, Henry's wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, had returned to Aquitaine. Presumably, she had enough of Henry's mistresses. And Henry's eldest son was causing problems by demanding part of his eventual inheritance – right then while Henry was still alive. When that request was denied, the son headed to the King of France to talk about forming an alliance. He was soon joined by two of Henry's other sons. And then his wife Eleanor joined in. And then most of Henry's other enemies on his borders joined in. It was the biggest challenge Henry faced in his entire life.

Next time, we'll see how Henry dealt with this rebellion. Henry managed his neighbors very well, but he struggled with his own family. He built a massive empire, but he couldn't manage to leave it to his children without causing jealousy and infighting. Henry spent most of his final years dealing with his rebellious children.

Next time, we'll look at the end of Henry's reign. And we'll finally get to the next major work in the English language – a biblical interpretation called the Ormulum. It was composed around the time of Henry's death, and its author was one of the first known spelling reformers in the English language. So next time, we'll look at that text, and we'll also look at English spelling was starting to change under French influence.

So until next time, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.