THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 158: PLANTING SEEDS

Presented by Kevin W. Stroud

EPISODE 158: PLANTING SEEDS

Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 158: Planting Seeds. In this episode, we're going continue our look at developments outside of England during the early reign of Queen Elizabeth I. This time, we'll look at several early efforts to plant English settlements in Ireland. We'll also look at some early English encounters with the New World, which set the stage for a more widespread English settlement there. So in that regard, these developments planted the seeds for a period of English colonialism that was soon to come and for the spread of the English language that went with it. This period also coincided with the first detailed writings about English spelling and the need to reform the spelling system to make it more logical and consistent. And interestingly, one of those early spelling reformers was also an advocate for English settlements in Ireland. So this time, we'll look at the odd connection between spelling reform and colonialism in Elizabethan England.

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 and get bonus episodes at Patreon.com/historyofenglish.

Now last time, we looked at events to the south and north of England in the Netherlands and Scotland. This time, we're going to turn our attention to the west to Ireland and the New World. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, England attempted to expand its influence in Ireland, and the first attempt was made to establish an English colony in North America. Of course, both of those developments had social and linguistic consequences since it paved the way for English speakers and the English language to take root in those regions. Of course, in order for something to take root, it has to be planted, and as we'll see, the English authorities were planting seeds that would eventually develop into the British Empire. In the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, England was just beginning to dip its toes in the waters of empire to the west, but as we'll see, these early developments led directly to the planting of colonies beyond those waters in the next century.

Now the time frame for the events of this episode is the first decade or so of Elizabeth's reign, so the events of this episode coincide and overlap with many of the events we covered last time. But I thought it would make sense to deal with Ireland and the New World separately from those other regions because, as we'll see, the developments in Ireland and North America were fundamentally connected, and they led to the expansion of English into both of those regions around the same time through similar processes.

So let's begin the story in Ireland. As we know, Queen Elizabeth was a Protestant, and when she assumed the throne, she re-introduced the English Bible and the English Prayer Book which her sister Mary had prohibited. About a year into Elizabeth's reign, her reforms were extended to Ireland. In places where English was spoken, the English Book of Common Prayer was to be used. In places were the native Gaelic language was spoken, which was most of the country, a

Latin translation of the book was to be used since English was largely unknown there. [*SOURCE: A History of Ireland, Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry, p. 115.*]

Now at first glance, that might seem like an important step toward the use of English in the Irish Church, but since few people in Ireland spoke English, the English Book of Common Prayer had a limited audience and a limited impact. Again, most people in Ireland spoke Gaelic, and they had very little interest in English.

Now in earlier episodes, we saw that the English arrived in Ireland around four hundred years earlier during the reign of Henry II. They initially controlled a large portion of the island, but over time, their area of influence shrank to a relatively small area in the eastern part of island around the city of Dublin. That was the fortified and protected region known as the Pale. It was the only area that was safe for English settlers. If you ventured 'beyond the Pale,' you no longer had the protection of the English authorities, so you were traveling beyond the acceptable limits, and you were taking a great risk. This is generally cited as the source of the phrase 'beyond the Pale' meaning 'beyond the acceptable limits.'

Well over time, the English influence declined within the Pale itself. More and more of the settlers abandoned English and started to speak Gaelic. They also adopted Irish dress and customs. Many even married into Irish families. By the mid-1300s, the English government was so concerned about the situation in the Pale, that a series of laws were adopted called the 'Statutes of Kilkenny.' Those laws prohibited Englishmen in Ireland from wearing Irish clothes and hair styles, and it also prohibited them from marrying Irish partners. The laws also required them to speak English and prohibited them from speaking Gaelic.

The Statutes of Kilkenny were designed to preserve the English culture in eastern Ireland, but by the current point in our story a couple of centuries later, those efforts had largely failed. Once again, the English settlers in the Pale had embraced Irish culture so much that the English language had almost disappeared in the region. We know that in part thanks to several writers in the late 1500s who commented on the situation in Ireland. They remarked that English had declined to the point where it could only be found in a few of the coastal cities. And even where English could be found, it was very different from the English spoken in England,

One of the writers from this period who wrote about the speech of Ireland was an Anglo-Irish poet and historian named Richard Stanihurst. In the 1570s, he composed a history of Ireland. He wrote that people who lived in certain parts of eastern Ireland had once spoken English very well. He then wrote, "But in our dayes they haue so aquainted themselues with the Irishe, as they haue made a mingle mangle, or gallamaulfrey of both the languages, and haue in such medley or checkerwyse so crabbedly iumbled them both togyther, as commonly the inhabitants of the meaner sort speake neyther good English nor good Irishe." He then recalled that an English official had traveled to Ireland, and when he interacted with the people there, he thought they were speaking Gaelic. He recognized an occasional word and thought he might be able to learn to speak Gaelic very easily. But then he realized that they were actually speaking their own form of English. It wasn't Gaelic at all. So even when English was spoken, it was very different from the form spoken in England.

Not only did it have a lot of Gaelic influences, it had also retained some older English words that had largely disappeared in England. For example, Stanihurst noted that the Anglo-Irish still referred to a spider as an ***attercop***, a physician was called a ***leache***, and a dunghill was called a ***mizen***. Again, those were Old English terms that were no longer common in the standard English of England, even though they did survive in some regional dialects. [*SOURCE: Introduction to Early Modern English, Manfred Gorlach, p. 382-3.*]

Now very often when I read a passage from an old document, I'll give you two versions – one in contemporary Modern English and one in the English of the period in which the passage was written based on the generally accepted sounds of the vowels and consonants at that time. Of course, when I do that, it's a rough approximation, but I want you to get a sense of how the language has changed over time.

Well, this time, I'm going to do something a little different. Rather than focusing on the original pronunciation, I'm going to look at the original spelling because, as we'll see, many scholars were increasingly concerned about the state of English spelling at the time.

As I've noted before, spelling had been largely phonetic for many centuries, but it had gradually become more and more fixed. Scribes and printers worked with words every day, so they became accustomed to certain spelling conventions that had evolved over time, especially very common words in the core vocabulary of the language. The standard spellings adopted by the English Chancery in the 1400s had also contributed to that process. By the current point in our story in the mid-1500s, spellings resembled those that we use today, but there was still quite a bit of variation. Spellings didn't become fully standardized until English dictionaries were produced over the next couple of centuries. Only then did people have a sense that there was a 'correct' spelling that could be identified in a specific resource.

But those dictionaries didn't exist in the mid-1500s, so spellings were still a bit unsettled. In that passage about Ireland that I read a moment ago, most of the words were spelled the way we would spell them today – but there were some notable exceptions. There was still a tendency to stick an extra E on the end of word in a somewhat random manner. So the word ***speak*** was spelled 's-p-e-a-k-e,' and ***Irish*** was spelled 'I-r-i-s-h-e,' and the plural form of ***day*** was spelled 'd-a-y-e-s.' As we've seen before, those E's were holdovers from the various grammatical suffixes that were used in Old English. By the Middle English period, those various endings had been to reduced to a somewhat generic 'eh' sound at the end of many words, and that sound was represented by a letter E. By the time of Chaucer, that 'eh' sound was starting to disappear from the pronunciation of those words, but the E was often retained in the spelling. And then you might recall that printers sometimes used those final E's to justify the margins in their books. If a line was short, they could add an E to some of those words to stretch out the line. If the line was a little too long, that could remove some of those final E's. And that's why many books of this period would spell the same word with an E in one line and without an E in the next line. But again, it is generally believed that the final E in most of those words was no longer being pronounced.

We should also remember that the letters U and V were not yet distinct letters in the mid-1500s. Printers used both a 'U'-shaped symbol and a 'V'-shaped symbol, but they were just considered two different ways of writing the letter U. There was no phonetic difference between the two symbols. Those two symbols could both be used to represent the various sounds of letter U. That included the vowel sounds of the letter like 'oo' and 'uh.' And remember that the letter U was also used to represent the 'W' sound (/w/), which we still do today in words like ***queen*** and ***suite*** ('s-u-i-t-e'). So both the rounded 'U'-shaped symbol and the angular 'V'-shaped symbol could also be used to represent that sound. And those two symbols could also be used to represent the 'V' sound (/v/) because the Classical Latin 'W' sound had evolved into the 'V' sound in Late Latin. So this particular letter, which could be written two different ways, represented a variety of sounds.

Of course, over time, the curvy 'U'-shape would be assigned to the vowel sounds and the angular 'V'-shape would be assigned to consonant /v/ sound. But that hadn't happened yet. In fact, printers in the 1500s used a completely different spelling convention. They would put the angular 'V'-shaped letter at the beginning of a word when the word began with one of those sounds. So a word like ***under*** was spelled 'v-n-d-e-r,' and a word like ***us*** was spelled 'v-s,' and a word like ***very*** was spelled 'v-e-r-y.' Again, it didn't matter which of the sounds was being represented. All that mattered was that it was the first letter. Meanwhile, printers would put the curvy 'U'-shaped letter in the middle of a word. So in the passage I read a moment ago, the word ***have*** was spelled 'h-a-u-e,' and the word ***but*** was spelled 'b-u-t.' Again, it had nothing to do with the specific sounds represented by the symbol. It was strictly a matter of where the sound appeared in the word. V at the front; U in the middle. All of this looks weird to us today, but it was a standard spelling convention at the time.

I should also note that the letters I and Y were largely interchangeable at the time, so in the passage I read, the word ***neither*** was spelled 'n-e-y-t-h-e-r.' And we should keep in mind that the Great Vowel Shift was still underway, so the use of vowel letters in general was very inconsistent. In that same passage, the word ***together*** was spelled 't-o-g-y-t-h-e-r.' As we'll see a little later in the episode, there were scholars during this period who were starting to think about the state of English spelling, and they were thinking about ways to improve spelling to make it more consistent and phonetic.

Most of us refer to this process as 'spelling,' but linguists have a fancier term for it. They call ***orthography***. That word has been around in English since the 1400s, and it ultimately comes from Greek where it literally meant 'correct writing' or 'right writing.' The first part ***ortho*** meant 'correct or proper,' and we also have that root in a word like ***orthodox*** with a similar meaning. And of course the second part of ***orthography*** is 'graphy' or 'graph' meaning 'to write,' like in ***autograph*** or ***calligraphy***. So when you put those two roots together, you get a word that means 'correct writing' or 'the way to write a word correctly.'

Now let's take a closer look at the first part of that word – the root word ***ortho***. I mentioned that it meant 'correct or proper' in Greek, but it also meant 'straight or upright.' And that's because ***ortho*** was apparently derived from an even older Indo-European root word that meant 'to grow properly.' So if a plant was tended to properly, it would grow strong and tall. And that's why that

root word had a sense of both rightness and uprightness. And it ultimately gave us words like ***orthodox*** and ***orthography***, and according to some scholars, that same Indo-European root word passed through Latin where it produced the word ***arbor*** meaning 'tree' – as in Arbor Day. Again, that sense is derived from notion of a plant growing strong and tall.

So thanks to that little bit of etymology, we can see the historical link between planting vegetation and correct spelling. You have to tend to both of them properly in order to get the right result.

Well, during the mid-1500s, the idea of planting seeds and cultivating crops was extended to a new idea – the planting of human settlements in a foreign region. Officials in England looked at the decline of English power and influence in Ireland, and they started to think about new ways of dealing with that decline. They realized that instead of planting crops in a place like Ireland, they could plant people there instead – English people. The English government could claim pockets of Irish territory, and send settlers from England who would tend the land, and raise families, and defend the settled area from the Irish natives. In doing so, they could spread the English culture and English authority. They could also take advantage of the land and the natural resources it provided, and along the way, they could convert the Irish people to Protestantism and introduce them to English civilization.

The analogy between planting seeds to produce crops and planting people to produce a colony led to a common term for that type of settlement – a ***plantation***. And beginning in the mid-1500s, the English started to establish settlements in Ireland that became known as plantations.

The idea was really an alternative to traditional military conquest. Rather than sending in troops to subdue the native people of Ireland at great expense, the plantation approach designated specific regions to be settled by English migrants who were called ***planters***. They would hold the land, cultivate it, and defend it. In that way, the planters and their investors shouldered much of the financial burden, and the English government saved money while still reaping the benefits that flowed from the settlements.

It was during the reign of Elizabeth's sister Mary that the plantation concept started to take root. For several years, the English authorities in the Pale had been dealing with rebellions from Irish lords in a region of central Ireland west of the Pale. So during Mary's reign, that land was seized and distributed to English settlers. Those settlers or 'planters' were supposed to build houses and provide armed men to defend the settlements. But it didn't really work. The English had a hard time attracting settlers to the territory – and attacks by local Irishmen reduced the plantation to little more than an armed fort. [*SOURCE: A History of Ireland, Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry, p. 115.*] Even though this initial attempt didn't really work, it planted the seed for similar projects during Elizabeth's reign.

Around the current point in our story in the mid-1500s, a new term started to be used to refer to these types of settlements, and that's the term ***colony***. The word ***colony*** is ultimately derived from Latin, and it was originally used in reference to Roman settlements during the period of ancient Rome. It had been used in that sense in English since the late 1300s, but now, that term

started to be extended to similar settlements established by any European country. And here's an interesting note. The word ***colony*** also originally referred to the cultivation of land. The Latin word ***colore*** meant 'to cultivate or till land,' and a ***colonus*** was a tenant farmer. So again, the process of placing farmers and settlers in a particular region to claim the land for themselves produced the word ***colony***.

Over time, the word ***colony*** became the generally-accepted term for European settlements in the New World. And the word ***plantation*** acquired a different sense there. In the Americas, the word ***plantation*** acquired the sense of a large farm or estate. Typically, the crops grown on those plantations were cultivated through the use of slave labor. And that's also an important part of this story.

Though the English had not yet established colonies or plantations in the New World, the Spanish and Portuguese had. And in fact, one of the first uses of the word ***colony*** in this modern sense in English was in reference to those Spanish colonies. With the death of a large portion of the native population of the Americas through warfare, conquest and disease, those Spanish colonies desperately needed labor to work on those plantations. And that labor was being supplied by Spanish traders who brought in slaves from West Africa. After selling the slaves, they returned to Spain with gold, silver, and other products from the New World.

Up until the reign of Elizabeth, English traders had largely avoided the trade that flourished between Spain and the Americas. Remember that Elizabeth's older sister Mary had been married to Philip of Spain, so England didn't challenge the Spanish claims to those regions. But the extent of those Spanish claims was somewhat vague. Spain claimed much of South America, Central America and the southern part of North America. That included the peninsula in the southeastern corner of North America, which they called La Florida, or Florida as it is known today. But the northern extent of that territory was vague. Though Spain claimed Florida and the southern part of the modern United States, they had not had any luck with settlements in those regions. Spain had repeatedly tried to establish settlements along the Gulf coast in and around Florida, but none of them lasted beyond a few months.

Now even though the extent of the Spanish territory was vague, it was generally agreed that it didn't extend to all of North America. As we saw in an earlier episode, the French had explored the coastal regions of modern-day Canada and had laid claim to that region. But again, the French didn't have any luck settling that region either. All of the early French settlements in that region were also temporary. So up until this point, Europeans had found it much more difficult to establish a foothold in North America than they had in the south.

In 1562, the French tried to establish another settlement on the continent, but this time, they tried their luck much further south. The settlement was established along the coast of what is today South Carolina near Parris Island. But again, this settlement only a lasted a few months.

It was around this time that attitudes toward the New World started to change in England. Spain's claims to the New World had been authorized and sanctioned by the Pope, but the English authorities now let it be known that they didn't recognize that Papal authority. Going

forward, England would only recognize regions that had already been occupied by other European powers. And furthermore, England considered the seas to be open to all nations, not just the Spanish and Portuguese. [*SOURCE: The Expansion of Elizabethan England, A.L. Rowse, p. 174.*]

These changing attitudes fueled the aspirations of an English trader named John Hawkins. His father William had been one of the first Englishmen to lead trading missions to West Africa and Brazil where he traded things like ivory, brazil wood and tropical birds. [*SOURCE: The Expansion of Elizabethan England, A.L. Rowse, p. 166.*] But his son John decided to take it one step further. He decided to take part in the Spanish and Portuguese slave trade across the Atlantic. In doing so, he became England's first known slave trader.

In 1562, his ships sailed to West Africa, purchased or otherwise took humans as slaves, and then carried them across the Atlantic to sell them to the Spanish plantations in the New World. This was actually the first of three expeditions by John Hawkins, and each of them had consequences for our story. This first trade mission proved to be a financial success for Hawkins, but when the Spanish authorities got word that English traders were intruding on their territory, they sent word to the governors of the various Spanish colonies that they were not to buy any more slaves from English or other foreign traders.

The Spanish also became aware of that French settlement on the southeastern coast of North America, which they also considered to be an intrusion into Spanish territory. Then a few months later, after that French settlement failed, the French moved a little further south and established another settlement on the northern coast of Florida at the mouth of the St. John's River – near the modern city of Jacksonville. The French called the settlement Fort Caroline. Now this settlement was completely unacceptable to the Spanish. Not only did it intrude on the Spanish claims to Florida, it also threatened the Spanish shipping lanes. And let me explain what I mean.

There's a major ocean current called the Gulf Stream that runs northward out of the Carribean and along the southeastern coast of North America. During this period, Spanish ships in the Carribean would access that Gulf Stream and ride it northward along the Florida coast until they reached the latitude where they could access the westerlies, which were the winds that blew out of the west and would take them back home to Europe. So Spanish ships routinely passed along the east coast of Florida on their way back home. That made the region a perfect spot for pirates and privateers and anyone else who wanted to plunder those Spanish ships loaded with gold and silver and other products from the New World. And Spain did not want the French to have a base there which could be used to attack those ships.

Around the same time that the French established that new settlement on the northern Florida coast, John Hawkins headed back to the New World on his second slave-trading mission. This time, Elizabeth herself actually got in on the action by contributing one of her ships.

After taking slaves in Africa, Hawkins again headed to South America, but this time, the local authorities in those Spanish colonies were more reluctant to buy the slaves. They had been directed not to deal with English or other foreign traders. But as Hawkins suspected, the demand for slave labor was so great that he able to sell the slaves anyway by avoiding the authorities.

This second expedition is important to our story because an account of the journey was maintained by an English sailor who took part in the journey. His name was John Spark, and his account provides one of the earliest descriptions of the New World in English. For example, in one passage, Spark described what happened when the ships were anchored off the coast of modern-day Venezuela. They were short on supplies, so they met with some of the indigenous people in the area and traded beads, whistles and other trinkets for hens, potatoes and a type of pineapple. He wrote of the people:

"Also they brought downe to vs which we bought for beades, pewter whistles, glasses, kniues, and other trifles, Hennes, Potatoes and pines. These potatoes be the most delicate rootes that may be eaten, and doe far exceede their passeneps or carets. Their pines be of the bignes of two fistes, the outside whereof is of the making of a pineapple, but it is soft like the rinde of a coucomber, and the inside eateth like an apple, but it is more delicious than any sweete apple sugred."

Now one of the interesting things about that passage is that it contains the first recorded reference to potatoes in the English language. ***Potato*** is a native Carib word that was used in the Carribean. It was originally something like ***batata***, but the Spanish had converted it into ***patata***, and English converted it into ***potato***, and interestingly, the final vowel is rendered as 'oh' and not 'ah' even in this first recorded use of the word in English. So even though English speakers picked up the word from Spanish ***patata***, it was always rendered in English as ***potato***.

Now this oldest known use of the word ***potato*** in English provides another interesting link between North America and Ireland. Around the time that Spark composed that passage I just read to you, the potato was actually being introduced to Europe for the first time. It is first recorded in Spain, and then it spread from there. At first, European interest in the potato was relatively mild, but as I've noted several times before, the population of Europe was growing rapidly in the 1500s, and it continued into the 1600s. The same population pressures that led Europeans to look to the New World for new places to settle also forced Europeans to look for cheaper and more reliable sources of food. And the potato proved to be just such a source. It could be easily grown and it provided a lot of sustenance. And no place came to rely on potatoes as much as Ireland. But then a fungus devastated the potato crops in Ireland in the mid-1800s leading to what became known as the 'potato famine.' Out of a total Irish population of around 8 million people, about a million starved and about another million fled the country, most of them going to North America. [*SOURCE: A History of Ireland, Peter and Fione Somerset Fry, p. 233.*] So the transfer of the potato to Ireland ultimately produced a mass migration to North America. Little did anyone know of the potato's long-term impact when the word was written down for the first time in English in 1565.

Now before we move on, let me make a few comments about the spellings in that passage I read a moment age from Johan Spark's account. Again, in the printed version, many of the words are spelled the same way we spell them today. But we continue to find an extra E at the end of many words. Words like ***down***, ***do***, ***exceed***, ***rind*** and ***sweet*** are all spelled with an E at the end, which was presumably silent. Also, we continue to see the two different versions of letter U used in the way I described earlier. Remember that the 'V'-shaped version of the letter was used at the beginning of words, regardless of the specific sound it represented. And the 'U'-shaped version was used elsewhere. So in that particular passage, the 'V'-shaped version was used in the word ***us*** spelled 'v-s.' And the 'U'-shaped version was used in the word ***knives*** – spelled 'k-n-i-u-e-s.' Again, today we would reverse those because U and V are distinct letters that represent distinct sounds. But that wasn't the case when Spark's account was published. All that mattered was the position of the letter in the word.

Now today, if we want to make a noun plural, we usually just add an S to the end. But Spark's account shows us that the plural suffix could be written down as either '-s' or '-es' in the mid-1500s. In fact, most of his plural nouns are spelled with '-es.' For example, the word ***beads*** is spelled 'b-e-a-d-e-s,' and ***hens*** is 'h-e-n-n-e-s.' But ***carrots*** and ***parsnips*** are made plural with a simple S. ***Carrots*** is spelled 'c-a-r-e-t-s' and ***parsnips*** is spelled 'p-a-s-s-e-n-e-p-s.' So not only are those words made plural with a simple S, but notice that ***parsnips*** doesn't have a R – suggesting a pronunciation as /pass-neps/. So we're starting to find evidence that the 'R' sound was sometimes silent after a vowel, which has become a somewhat standard pronunciation in modern British English. I don't want to dwell on that here, because I'm going to have a lot more to say about the pronunciation of letters like R in the next episode.

Now returning to that trading mission, Spark reported that the fleet soon headed northwards on its way back to England. The fleet took the same route generally used by the Spanish ships. The vessels headed north through the Carribean and then took the Gulf Stream along the eastern coast of Florida. But by that point, Hawkins's men were running short on fresh water.

Now I noted a few moments ago that the French had established that settlement called Fort Caroline along the northern coast of Florida near the modern city of Jacksonville. Well, Hawkins knew about that settlement, so he decided to stop there on his way up the Florida coast to see if they had access to fresh water. And once again, we get a detailed description of what happened thanks to John Spark's surviving account. This is in fact the first English account of the region of Florida.

Spark referred to "that part of Florida where the French men were planted." So again, we see how the language of the period associated these early settlements with the planting of people. Spark wrote that they "sayled along the shoare" looking for the French settlement. ***Sailed*** was spelled 's-a-y-l-e-d' and ***shore*** was 's-h-o-a-r-e.' They dropped anchor ('a-n-k-e-r') to ask the native people of the region if they knew the whereabouts of the French settlement. The sailors were told that it was located at the mouth of a river ('r-i-u-e-r'). Spark wrote that the English sailors were fascinated by the local people who could make fire by simply rubbing two sticks together.

Eventually, the expedition reached the French settlement, but only a small portion of the original 200 settlers were still there. The English sailors learned that the settlers ran out of supplies and couldn't support themselves. Some of the settlers attacked the neighboring indigenous people and tried to steal food from them, and several of the settlers were killed in the process. Others fled to Spanish settlements in the Carribean. Some even resorted to raiding Spanish ships as they sailed up the coast.

Despite this, Spark noted how abundant the natural resources were in the region. There were lots of fish, many wild deer, abundant grapes for making wine, plenty of maize or corn, and lots of other vegetation. So why were the French settlers starving with so many food sources around them? Well, Spark provided the answer. He said that the remaining settlers were soldiers – not farmers. They didn't know how to tend and cultivate the land to feed themselves. Once again, this points to a fundamental idea that the English and other Europeans were starting to understand. Settlement in the New World required more than just troops. It required farmers and families. It required people who would bring their own culture and society with them and transplant it in the New World – literally 'transplant' – 'to plant that society in a different place.' And of course, that process would inevitably lead to the transplanting of those European languages as well. As always, little if any thought was given to the native populations. At best, it was believed that there was plenty of room for both groups. At worst, it was thought that the indigenous people could be killed or removed if they got in the way.

Spark's description of Florida made it seem like a tropical paradise, and that description certainly influenced the perception of people in England who later read the account. Despite the failures of the Spanish and the French, English investors started to think that a settlement in the North America could not only survive, it could actually thrive.

Well, after a few days at the French settlement, the English sailors gave the French soldiers what spare supplies they had, and they headed back home to England.

By this point, King Philip of Spain was aware of that French settlement and the fact that Spanish ships had been raided in the region. So within a few weeks after the English departed, Philip sent a mission to Florida to destroy that French settlement. The Spanish wanted to repel the French, but just as importantly, they wanted to secure the shipping lanes along the coast. [*SOURCE: First Encounters: Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, Ed., p. 18-9.*]

This Spanish expedition was led by Pedro Menendez. And he arrived in Florida with 800 Spaniards and a royal charter to establish a colony there. They reached the coast in August of 1565, on the feast day of St. Augustine. After locating the French settlement, Menendez headed southward along the coast about 30 miles, and he established his own Spanish settlement there. He called it St. Augustine for the feast day when they had first spotted land. St. Augustine would prove to be the first permanent European settlement in North America, and to this day, St. Augustine, Florida proclaims itself as the oldest city in the United States.

A couple of weeks after landing at St. Augustine, Menendez and his men headed north and killed most of the remaining Frenchmen at the settlement at Fort Caroline. A few of the settlers did manage to escape and make their way back to France, but most of the settlers perished in the attack, and the settlement was effectively destroyed. [*SOURCE: First Encounters: Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, Ed., p. 23-4.*]

Meanwhile, Hawkins had made it back to England, and after accounting for the profits from his expedition, he decided to keep the money flowing. He soon made plans to return to the New World for a third time. This time, he took ten ships. Two of them belonged to Queen Elizabeth. And Hawkins was accompanied by his cousin, Francis Drake. [*SOURCE: The Expansion of Elizabethan England, A.L. Rowse, p. 175-6.*] Drake would soon become the most well-known sea captain in all of England. A few years down the road, he would also become the first Englishman to sail around the world. But for now, he captained his own ship in Hawkins's private fleet.

Once again, the fleet sailed to Africa, took West Africans as slaves, and headed across the Atlantic to the Spanish colonies in the New World. But this time, the fleet ran into problems. First, a major storm that was possibly a hurricane forced the fleet into a harbor on the eastern coast of Mexico. The Spanish authorities discovered the fleet, and several heavily armed ships were sent to destroy it. Several of Hawkins's ships were lost in the fighting, and the rest limped around the Gulf of Mexico for a couple of weeks without sufficient food or water. Rather than starve to death, many of the English sailors went ashore to surrender to the Spanish. The rest headed back home, but many of them died on the way back due to lack of provisions. Only a fraction of Hawkins's men made it home alive. Most of them came from the southwest of England, and it was said that almost every family in the region knew someone who died or was lost on that infamous trading mission. [*SOURCE: The Expansion of Elizabethan England, A.L. Rowse, p. 175-6, and Elizabethan Society: High and Low Life, Derek Wilson, p. 144-5.*]

Hawkins never attempted another voyage to the New World, and the English blamed the Spanish for the death of so many English sailors. Francis Drake, who limped home from the excursion, held a major grudge. He soon returned to the New World to attack and plunder Spanish ships becoming one of England's most famous privateers, or in the view of the Spanish, one of England's most famous pirates. Also, last time I discussed the Dutch revolt against Spanish control of the Netherlands. Well, around this same time, a Spanish ship was forced to take refuge in England after running into bad weather in the English Channel. The ship was carrying a small fortune that was intended for the payment of the Spanish troops in the Netherlands. But Elizabeth confiscated the money, worth about 85,000 pounds at the time. The Spanish was angered by that action, as well as by the English trading missions in Spanish territory. And they were soon outraged by Francis Drake's repeated attacks on Spanish ships. All of this pointed to the end of the fragile alliance between England and Spain, and it would soon lead to an explicit effort by Philip of Spain to overthrow Elizabeth and replace her with her Catholic cousin Mary Queen of Scots.

For Elizabeth, the growing Spanish threat made the situation in Ireland even more concerning. For years, English authorities had worried about a political vacuum in Ireland. Without any central control there, England's enemies could use Ireland as a base. That included both English rebels and foreign invaders. [*SOURCE: The Expansion of Elizabethan England, A.L. Rowse, p. 91*.] But a military conquest of Ireland wasn't really in the cards. It would be far too expensive and challenging and might only be a temporary solution. So from this point forward, England once again embraced the idea of planting colonies there.

As we saw earlier, England had tried this approach during Mary's reign with little success. But there was a realization that English plantations could succeed in Ireland if the settlements were more intensive. There needed to be more settlers from various classes of English society. They needed to build towns and villages, and they needed to development an economic base supported by trade. If the settled regions were a little smaller, and the settlement of people within those regions more intensive, then smaller royal garrisons could be supplemented by farmers who could also take up arms. Over time, those plantations would take root and grow, and at a certain point, they would become self-sustaining and provide the crown with revenue rather than serving as a financial drag. It would allow England to plant its people and its culture in Ireland at minimal expense, and it shifted much of the economic and military burden away from the Crown to the investors and settlers. [*SOURCE: The Plantation of Ulster, Jonathan Bardon, p. 6*.]

This idea was recommended to Elizabeth by several of her advisors – including her Lord Deputy in Ireland. They had seen how the Spanish had colonized the New World, and they thought England could apply a similar model to Ireland. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 74.*]

Another advocate of English plantations in Ireland was Elizabeth's ambassador in Paris – Sir Thomas Smith. He was also an advisor to the queen, and for several years, he had been recommending that England establish fortified towns in Ireland on the Roman model.

A few years earlier, Smith had written a letter to Elizabeth's primary advisor, William Cecil. In the letter, he stated that England could effectively conquer Ireland by establishing colonies there. He wrote that such colonies would serve to "augment our tongue, our laws, and our religion in that Isle." [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 74.*] So he saw the spread of the English language as an important part of this overall process.

Now Thomas Smith wasn't just a diplomat. He was also a renowned scholar. He had studied the Roman Empire, and he took note of how Rome had used colonies to spread its influence and power throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. In fact, as I noted earlier, the word ***colony*** was originally used in reference to Roman settlements. And just as those settlements had spread the Roman culture and language throughout those regions, Smith argued that the same process could be used to spread the English culture and language throughout Ireland.

Now the reason I'm telling you about Sir Thomas Smith is because he was not only a diplomat and a Roman scholar, he was also a self-proclaimed expert on languages. He had been instrumental in reforming the way Greek was pronounced at the time. And he also did something

else that's very important to our story. Around the current point in our story in 1568, he wrote an extensive work on English spelling. And that's why I've been commenting on the state of English spelling throughout this episode.

Smith was an early spelling reformer – one of several prominent scholars to recommend a more stable and logical spelling system for English. But being a bit of a pompous scholar, he composed his work on English spelling in Latin. Smith's long Latin title translates into English as "A Dialogue on Correct and Improved English Writing." To a certain extent, Smith's work on English spelling can be seen as an extension of his word on Greek. He had noticed that the Greek pronunciations used by scholars at the time didn't always match the traditional Greek spellings. So his arguments in favor of Greek reform were based on the idea of bringing those pronunciations more in line with the spellings. So he applied that same idea to English. He noted that English pronunciations also didn't match the spellings. Since it wasn't really possible to change the pronunciation of English, he argued that the spellings should be revised to bring them more in line with the pronunciations. So he was an advocate of a phonetic spelling system for English. [*SOURCE: A History of English, D.G. Scragg, p. 93.*]

For example, he recognized that a lot of English letters were being required to represent multiple sounds. For example, we've seen how the letter U – sometimes written with a curvy 'U'-shape and sometimes written with an angular 'V'-shape – could represent several different sounds. It could represent the various vowel sounds of U like /oo/ and /uh/, as well as the consonant 'V' sound (/v/), and sometimes the 'W' sound (/w/). So Smith recommended that the letter be restricted to a vowel letter. For the 'W' sound (/w/), he said that the letter W should always be used. And for the 'V' sound (/v/), he invented an altogether new letter. Of course, Smith's letter was never adopted. [*SOURCE: The History of English Spelling, Christopher Upward and George Davidson, p. 294.*]

I said that Smith recommended the use of letter U for the various long and short sounds of the vowel letter like in the words ***putt***, and ***put***, and ***prune***, but Smith recommend the use of various marks above or below the vowel letters to distinguish those long and short sounds.

Smith also opposed the use of letter combinations to represent specific sounds like the use of TH to represent the /th/ sound, and the use of SH to represent the /sh/ sound and the use of CH to represent the /ch/ sound. He recommended one letter for each sound. I've noted before that there are actually two slightly different TH sounds in English – one is voiced and one is voiceless. It's the difference between the sound in ***thank*** and ***them***. It may not seem like those sounds are different until you reverse them, in which case you get /thank/ and /them/. Anyway, Smith proposed bringing back the Old English letters that had been used for those sounds – thorn and eth. Alternately, he suggested that English could adopt the Greek letter theta (θ) for one of those sounds. [*SOURCE: The History of English Spelling, Christopher Upward and George Davidson, p. 294.*]

For the SH sound (/sh/), he proposed another new letter. And for the CH sound (/ch/), he recommended that writers simply use the letter C. Now the use of letter C for that sound made sense for a couple of reasons. If you listened to the earlier episodes on Old English, you might

remember that that is how Old English used the letter C. It was generally used to represent that same /ch/ sound. Also, that is the letter that was used for that same sound in Italian like in the word ***ciao*** for 'goodbye.' And remember that Smith was also a Roman scholar, and he had actually studied law in Italy, so he was familiar with how Italian used the letter C. So he recommended that English writers and printers do the same. [*SOURCE: The History of English Spelling, Christopher Upward and George Davidson, p. 294.*]

Of course, since Smith's proposal required one letter for each sound, and since the letter C was to be used for the /ch/ sound, that meant the letter couldn't be used for any other sounds. But of course, that was OK because we don't really need the letter C otherwise. In Modern English, it can be used to represent a 'K' sound like in the word ***cat***, but a K works just as well. And we also use the letter C for the 'S' sound like in the word ***civil***, but again, a letter S does the same thing. So in Smith's purely phonetic writing system, you didn't need the letter C for those sounds. And that was another reason why it could be used for the /ch/ sound – because it wasn't really needed for anything else.

Smith also made an interesting observation about the letter S. He noted that it usually represented the /s/ sound like in ***sit*** and ***some*** and at the end of words like ***kiss*** and ***jumps***. But very often, the letter S also represents a 'Z' or 'zed' sound, especially at the end of words. And I'm just going to refer to that as the 'Z' sound going forward. So in a word like ***lies*** (spelled 'l-i-e-s'), we actually pronounce that final sound as /z/. Of course, we do the same thing with the word ***buses*** where the first S is pronounced as an 'S' and the second S is pronounced as a 'Z.' So Smith said that those two pronunciations should always be clearly distinguished in spelling. You should use the S for the /s/ sound, and the Z of the /z/ sound. So a word like ***lies*** would be spelled 'l-i-e-z' and a word like ***buses*** would be spelled 'b-u-s-e-z.' [*SOURCE: The History of English Spelling, Christopher Upward and George Davidson, p. 294.*]

Now as you can tell by now, Smith's proposals didn't gain much traction. First of all, his text was written in Latin, so that limited the audience who read it at the time. And more importantly, his proposals simply went too far. No one was going to undertake such a radical change in the way words were spelled. For example, the word ***though*** ('t-h-o-u-g-h') would have been spelled with two letters under Smith's system – the old letter eth which looked like a D with a line through it, and the letter O. So the modern six letters of ***though*** would have been reduced to just two letters. It was logical, but it was too radical.

Interestingly, around the same time that Smith produced his work on English spelling in Latin, another scholar named John Hart produced a massive text on the same subject in English. Now I actually mentioned Hart back in Episode 153 called 'Zombie Letters.' That was the episode about all of those silent letters that were beginning to be added to English words to reflect their Latin and Greek roots like the letter B in ***doubt*** and ***debt***. I mentioned Hart in that episode because he was another advocate of phonetic spelling, and he strongly opposed those silent letters.

Hart's original work on the topic was published in 1551, which is why I mentioned him back then, but I also noted in that earlier episode that that particular work on English spelling was really just a first draft. Hart went back and revised and expanded it later years – with a much more definitive version appearing about 18 years later. Well that revised work appeared at this point in 1569 – one year after Smith's Latin text. This new version of Hart's work was called 'An Orthographie.' Earlier in the episode, I noted that the word ***orthography*** was increasingly used during this period to refer to the study of spelling, and that's the word that Hart used for his title.

Now Hart shared Smith's view that English words should be spelled phonetically. He also recommended the assignment of specific letters to specific sounds, and the consistent use of those letters for those sounds. And he also recommend the use of accent marks to distinguish long and short vowel sounds. But some of his ideas conflicted with those of Thomas Smith.

Since Hart's manuscript was composed in English, and since Hart explained how the various letters were pronounced at the time, his work is a goldmine for linguists. And there is so much to say about the manuscript that I'm not going to go through it here. Instead, I'm going to dedicate the next episode to the letters and sounds as he described them in the late 1500s. That episode will be our first detailed look at the alphabet and the sounds of the alphabet in the Modern English period. But for this episode, I think the important thing to take from this discussion is that scholars in England were starting to demand a more logical and consistent way of spelling words. Needless to say, both Smith and Hart would have been disappointed to see where we ended up.

Now as I noted, Sir Thomas Smith is a central figure in our story because, not only was he an early spelling reformer, he was also an early advocate of English plantations in Ireland. And with the encouragement of people like him, Elizabeth agreed to give an English adventurer and explorer named Humphrey Gilbert permission to establish a plantation in the northern part of Ireland in the region known as Ulster. Gilbert was another plantation proponent. He thought that England had fallen behind Spain and France by not pursuing such settlements.

He managed to bring together a group of investors, and in the late 1560s, they tried to establish a plantation in Ulster. But once again, the effort failed largely because Elizabeth didn't provide them with enough military support to deal with the opposition from the native Irish who were being displaced.

With the settlement in the north of Ireland falling apart, Gilbert turned his attention to the south of the country and tried to establish a settlement there. But once again, local opposition made it difficult to secure the plantation. Gilbert soon returned to England.

It was around that time in 1570 that the Pope finally decided to excommunicate Elizabeth for her support of Protestant reforms. That was a major development because it meant that Elizabeth was now officially a heretic in the eyes of the Catholic Church. If effectively authorized any attempt to remove her from power, even through assassination. And with Philip in Spain emerging as her bitter enemy, and with Mary Queen of Scots in position to claim the throne as a Catholic queen,

it seemed that Elizabeth's reign might be in jeopardy. Increasingly, Catholic Ireland was seen as a problem because it could be used as base to overthrow Elizabeth.

Within a few months of Elizabeth's excommunication, Sir Thomas Smith – the spelling reformer – came forward and asked Elizabeth for permission to establish is own plantation in Northern Ireland. In November of 1571, Elizabeth gave him permission to settle 360,000 acres in Ulster. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 79.*] Most of the effort was carried out by Smith's son. By the spring of the following year, they had gathered 800 settlers to take part in the establishment of the plantation. But repeated delays caused a lot of those settlers to abandon the project before it ever left England. By the time they headed to Ireland, they were down to around 100 settlers. They met fierce opposition when they arrived in Ireland, and after struggling to survive for about a year, Smith's son was attacked and killed. The settlement was soon abandoned, and Smith himself died of poor health a short time later. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 80-1*.]

These early efforts show that the process of colonization was going to be much more difficult than the advocates in England had realized. But these initial efforts were only the beginning. Almost immediately, other Englishmen took up the mantle and tried to establish their own plantations in Ireland with Elizabeth's permission. Over the course of Elizabeth's reign, some of those settlers – or 'planters' as they were known – finally started to secure a foothold in various parts of the country, especially in the north.

The English settlers faced fierce opposition from the native population of Ireland. Much like in Scotland, the Gaelic culture was centered around large loose-knit family or tribal units known as ***clans***. Over time, as some of these groups were defeated, their lands were confiscated and turned over to English planters. And it was only at that point that opposition to the settlements was reduced to the point that English plantations could finally take root.

Today, the word ***clan*** is most closely associated with Scotland, but the word itself can be traced back to the Gaelic language of Ireland. It's one of the few Irish Gaelic words that has made its way into Modern English. But here's something that may surprise you. The Gaelic speakers in Ireland actually borrowed the word ***clan*** from Latin. And believe it or not, that original Latin word was ***planta*** – the same word which gave English the word ***plant***. Within those early Irish dialects, there was no 'P' sound. So very often, a different sound was substituted for that 'P' sound, and in many cases, it was a 'K' or 'C' sound. And that's how Latin ***planta*** became Gaelic ***clan***. From the Latin sense of the word as something with deep and far-reaching roots, the Irish applied the term to family or tribal units in which most everyone was an offshoot or descendant of a common ancestor. In the same way that a single plant could be cultivated into an entire garden, a single ancestor could produce a large tribal unit with a common culture and common language.

That was the same idea employed by these early colonizers, and in fact, as we've seen, words like ***clan*** and ***plantation*** and ***colony*** all have their origins in words for plants and are rooted in the idea that a culture expands best when it does so internally though the growth of its own members

who are raised from birth within that culture. Given enough time, and enough stability, that growth can overtake and replace the culture around it.

And what is so interesting is that many of the same Englishmen who applied that concept in Ireland also applied the same concept in North America.

In fact, I noted a few moments ago that the spelling-reformer – Sir Thomas Smith – was preceded in Ireland by an adventurer named Humphrey Gilbert. Well after his failed attempts at colonization in Ireland, he received permission from Elizabeth to establish a colony on the same basic model in North America. Gilbert traveled to North America, but he died when his boat sank on its return voyage home. Gilbert's death inspired his younger half-brother to carry on the family legacy – to continue those efforts to plant an English colony in the New World. Gilbert's half-brother was Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh had also been active in trying to establish an English foothold in Ireland, but he is important to our story because he financed and organized the first English settlement in North America. That's ultimate a story for a future episode, but I wanted to you to see how these colonial ideas took root in Ireland and soon spread to North America.

Ultimately, those developments led to the expansion of the English language into both of those regions. Of course, that expansion came at the expense of the native peoples and their cultures – and their languages. But it is ultimately the process by which English became a truly global language.

Again, we'll explore those developments in more detail as we move forward. But next time, I want to focus on John Hart's comments about English spelling and pronunciation. As I noted earlier, he gave us the first detailed account of English phonetics, and his work is really the starting point for any attempt to understand how the pronunciation of English evolved in the modern era. So we'll look at what he had to say about the English letters and the sounds they represented. Until then, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.