THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 164:
SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 164: Somewhere in the Middle. In this episode, we're going to look at some important developments in the early 1580s. During this period, England made its first attempts to establish a colony in North America and to bring the English language with it. But as we'll see, those attempts were not very successful. This period was also marked by the rising tensions between England and Spain as their lingering cold war became increasingly hot. This was also a period when Modern English grammar was starting to take shape. At this point, there was no formal grammar textbook for English, so English grammar was a bit loose and flexible. So we'll look at some examples of that phenomenon as well. And along the way, we'll tie all of the developments together by avoiding the extremes and by focusing on the 'happy medium' that governed so much of life in the Elizabethan era.

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 in this episode, we're going to continue our look at the Elizabethan period of England and the various factors that were shaping the English language around the midway point in Elizabeth's reign. And speaking of midway points, that's really one of the recurring themes of this episode. As we explore this period, we're going to find many examples where key figures chose a middle path with mixed results.

In fact, the English language was rapidly expanding during this period by adding new words and new phrases to describe the pursuit of a middle path. So let's begin there with words that describe a 'middle way.' In fact, terms like ***middle way*** and it's abbreviated form ***midway*** can both be traced back to Old English. The Middle English period also added a few terms to describe the same basic idea. Geoffrey Chaucer gave us the first recorded use of words likes ***halfway*** and ***midpoint***. Those terms appeared in the late 1300s, and the word ***compromise*** appeared in the following century. A ***compromise*** is an agreement somewhere in between two or more competing positions.

Then during the early Tudor period, English added the phrase ***Golden Mean***. Again, it was another way of referring to a preferred middle ground between two extremes.

And when we get to the Elizabethan period, we find lots of new terms expressing a similar idea. The Latin words ***medium***, ***medial*** and ***equidistant*** were borrowed during that period – all originally associated with mathematics or geometry, but they soon acquired a more general sense referring to a middle quality or condition. During that period, the word ***mediocre*** was coined from the word ***mediocrity***, again referring to a middling quality. The term ***middle course*** was also adopted.

And shortly after Elizabeth died, we find the first use of other terms like ***intermediate*** and ***happy medium***.

Well, it is probably appropriate that those terms appeared during Elizabeth's reign, or shortly after her reign, because those types of terms describe her general approach to politics and to her personal affairs. Time and again, she showed a tendency to avoid the more extreme options, and she often looked for a middle path. Maybe it was a reaction of some of her father's more extreme policies, but it was a decidedly pragmatic approach. By the way, the word ***pragmatic*** is another Latin term that appeared for the first time during this same time period in the 1580s.

In matters of religion, we have seen that Elizabeth tried to avoid the extreme Protestant approach of her brother Edward and the extreme Catholic approach of her sister Mary. Her approach was more of a compromise whereby Protestant practices was adopted, but Catholic views were tolerated. In her confrontation with her ex-brother-in-law, Philip of Spain, she also preferred a middle approach. She allowed Francis Drake to attack Spanish ships and Spanish supply lines in the New World, but she didn't formally recognize him as a privateer. So he occupied a gray area between pirate and privateer just as Elizabeth preferred.

She also tended to take a middle approach in her personal relationships. She knew the importance of finding a husband to produce an heir to the throne, but she didn't want to answer to anyone but herself. So she never committed to a marriage despite repeated prodding from Parliament. In fact, her last major suitor was sent away from the royal court in the early 1580s, which effectively brought an end to any prospects for marriage.

That last suitor was Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon in France. He was the younger brother of the French king, and he was actually the heir to the French throne at the time, though he died a short time later and didn't live long enough to succeed his brother. He was the only suitor to actually come to England and live there during the courtship, but it appears that Elizabeth wasn't really interested in him. She was almost twice his age. She was 46 years old, and he was only 24. Marriage discussions officially came to an end in 1581.

As I noted, Elizabeth often vacillated and chose the middle route. But when it came to marriage, there was no middle route. She either had to marry or not. She had a tough time making a commitment, and when she ended the courtship with Francis, it marked her last effort to negotiate a marriage. At her age, it became increasingly clear that she would never produce an heir and she would die a Virgin Queen.

It was during this same period in the early 1580s when a series of portraits were produced that featured Elizabeth holding a sieve. These are sometimes called the 'sieve' paintings. At least eleven were produced between 1579 and 1583. And those paintings are notable because the sieve was a symbol of virginity. [*SOURCE: Tutors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 392*.]

Of course, a sieve is a device that strains water. So what does a sieve have to do with virginity? Well, the connection comes from an ancient Roman legend. Tuccia was a Roman Vestal Virgin whose virginity was questioned. To prove her purity, she asked the goddess Vesta to help her perform a miracle. The miracle was carried out when Tuccia scooped water from the Tiber into a sieve and carried it back to the Temple of Vesta without spilling a drop. From that point on, the

sieve became a symbol of virginity, and again, Elizabeth was regularly depicted with a sieve in her hand during this period.

Now Elizabeth fancied herself a bit of a writer and a poet. And when she ended the courtship with Francis, she composed a poem to commemorate her feelings and to express her disappointment, though scholars debate whether the sentiments were genuine. It's called 'On Monsieur's Departure.' It's pretty short, so let me read it to you, so you can get a sense of the language of the period and the way Elizabeth composed poetry. She wrote:

I grieve and dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, but inwardly do prate.
I am, and not; I freeze and yet am burned,
Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun --
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,
Stands, and lies by me, doth what I have done;
His too familiar care doth make me rue it.
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppressed.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,
For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind.
Let me or float or sink, be high or low;
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant.

Now, that poem is interesting because it shows how Elizabeth was often emotionally torn. She says, "I am, and not. I freeze and yet am burned. Since from myself another self I turned." And near the end, she seems to be saying that she wishes that she could feel one extreme or the other, rather than both at once. She says, "Let me or float or sink, be high or low, Or let me live with some more sweet content, Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant." Again, we can hear her inner struggle when she was faced with conflicting emotions and decisions, especially when there was no easy middle road to take.

The poem is also interesting because it shows how certain aspects of English grammar were loose and unsettled at the time. As I've noted before, there were no textbooks on English grammar yet, though we are on the eve of the first one, which I'm going to discuss in the next episode. So this is a good time to digress for a moment and look at the looseness of grammar and syntax at the time.

During the Elizabethan period, there were new ways of forming sentences which existed side-by-side with older traditional ways. And speakers often had a choice between the new way and the old way. Keith Johnson is a linguist at the University of Lancaster in England, and he has written about the development of English. He has described Elizabethan grammar as a 'half-way house' because speakers often had that choice between two options.

For example, verbs in third person singular could either take the traditional [-th] ending or the newer [-s] ending which had filtered down from the north of England. So you could say, "She speaketh well" with [-th] or "She speaks well" with the [-s] ending. And you could say "He hath five cows" in the traditional way, or "He has five cows" in the newer way. Both versions often existed side-by-side, and in fact, Elizabeth did just that in the poem I read a moment ago. She initially used the [-s] verb ending when she wrote that her care "follows my flying, flies when I pursue it, Stands, and lies by me." But then she adds, "doth what I have done." And then, "His too familiar care doth make me rue it." So within the same passage, she uses both verb endings. She probably did that because the modern [-s] ending had emerged as the most common ending at the time, except in certain words like ***doth*** and ***hath***, which were more conservative. But again, there was a lot of flexibility.

Elizabeth's poem also illustrates another example of the 'half-way house' of English grammar at the time, and that's the way the word ***do*** was used to form sentences. Now I touched on this issue way back in Episode 126. That was during the period of Geoffrey Chaucer in the late 1300s. We're now approaching the Shakespearean period about two centuries later, so it's a good time to revisit the story of the word ***do*** and look at how its use had evolved over time.

First of all, it's important to keep in mind that ***do*** is a very old word from the Old English period, and it was once a simple basic verb. It meant 'to act, or perform, or carry out.' And we still use it that way today. If you 'do your homework' or 'do the laundry,' you're using the word with its original basic meaning.

But in the Middle English period, it started to be used in all kinds of new ways as a purely grammatical marker, and by the Elizabethan period, those new sentence structures using ***do*** existed side-by-side with the older version that didn't use ***do.*** Now this is a complicated topic, especially for a podcast where I can't really diagram and break down sentences for you, so I'm going to simplify this discussion as much as I can. But, basically, there are three common types of sentences – those where you make an affirmative statement, those where you make a negative statement, and those were you ask a question. So let's take a very simple example of each.

An affirmative statement is "You see." A negative statement is "You do not see." And a question in "Do you see?" Now in all three of those examples, we have the words ***you*** and ***see*** in the same order. For the negative sentence, we put ***do*** and ***not*** in between – "You do not see." And for the question, we simply put ***do*** at the front – "Do you see." So right there, you can see how the word ***do*** is used as a grammatical marker. Pair it with ***not*** and put it before the verb for negation, or put it at the front to make a question.

Well, using the word ***do*** to form those types of sentences emerged around the time of Geoffrey Chaucer in the late 1300s, and obviously they have become standard over time. But during the Elizabethan period, you could also form a negative sentence or a question without using the word ***do.*** You could use the older, more traditional approach. To make a negative sentence, you would just put the word ***not*** after the verb – "You see not." And to ask a question, you could just reverse the subject and the verb – from "You see" to "See you?" This is best illustrated by including a word like ***what*** in the sentence. You can say "What do you see?" using ***do***, or 'What see you?" in the older way without ***do***.

Well, again, the versions that used ***do*** were increasingly common in the 1500s. And during the Elizabethan period, speakers could go either way, even though the versions with ***do*** were emerging as the more accepted forms and would become the standard forms over the next century. In Elizabeth's poem, there are no questions, but she does make several negative statements, and when she does that, she prefers the older negative form without the use of ***do.***

She writes, "I . . .dare not show my discontent," rather than "I do not dare show my discontent." And she writes, "I . . . dare not say I ever meant," rather than "I do not dare say I ever meant." Again, she had a choice between the two options because English was a 'half-way house' at the time, but she chose the more traditional option without ***do***.

But here's something interesting. During the Elizabethan period, the word ***do*** was also used in plain affirmative sentences. So whereas today, we would simply say "You see" in the traditional way, people in the late 1500s would often stick a ***do*** in there. They would say "You do see." So instead of "You see the house on the hill," people would say "You do see the house on the hill." Now, sometimes we do that today when we want to emphasize the statement. Like if someone is clearly lying and they claim they can't see the house right in from of them, you might say, 'Oh come on, you DO see the house." Again, that's a slightly different use of the word ***do*** – to express emphasis. But in the 1500s, people also used the word ***do*** when they were just making a simple affirmative statement. They would say, "I do see the house" rather than "I see the house." Or "The sun doth shine" rather than the 'The sun shines." And Elizabeth did the same thing in her poem. She wrote, "I seem stark mute, but inwardly do prate." ***Prate*** meant to chatter or talk foolishly. She could have left the ***do*** out and simply said, "I seem stark mute, but inwardly prate." But she wrote "do prate" instead of "prate." And later she wrote, "His too familiar care doth make me rue it," whereas she could have simply said, "His too familiar care makes me rue it." She didn't really need the word ***doth***.

Since that word ***do*** or ***doth*** isn't really serving a grammatical function in those types of statements, it is sometimes called a 'meaningless do.' It actually has a lot of different names, but that's what I called it in that earlier episode. Nevertheless, that type of sentence structure was very common in the Elizabethan period, and in fact, it really reached its peak during that period. But for some reason, that particular use of the word ***do*** started to disappear in the 1600s.

So as we look at the way these various types of sentences were being formed in the Elizabethan period, we see how the grammar of the period was in flux. In each of the scenarios I described – affirmative statements, negative statements, and questions – people had a choice between using

do or not using ***do.*** And again, we return to our theme of having to make a choice between two options. And once again, English ultimately chose a middle path. It embraced the use of ***do*** for negative statements and questions, but it abandoned ***do*** in those regular affirmative statements. That's why today we say "You do not see" and "Do you see?" with ***do***, but we say the affirmative "You see" without ***do.*** We settled on ***do*** in certain situations, but not others.

Now around the same time that Elizabeth sent Francis away from her court, someone else showed up who captured her affections. But marriage with the newcomer was never a consideration because he was not a king or a prince. He was in fact a sailor and military leader from the West Country who spoke with a broad Devonshire accent. His name was Walter Raleigh.

Raleigh had a interesting history up to this point. About four years earlier – in 1578 – Elizabeth had authorized an expedition to North America to lay the groundwork for an English colony there. The expedition was headed by an adventurer and member of parliament named Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Gilbert had been granted a six-year licence to establish a settlement there. Well, Gilbert's half-brother was Walter Raleigh. And Raleigh had accompanied Gilbert on that expedition, but nothing came of it. The expedition was a bit of a mess, and the ships returned to England without having accomplished anything.

After that, rebellions had broken out in Ireland against the English settlements there. Those rebellions were being encouraged by the Spanish king, Philip, and the English feared that Ireland might become a base for a Spanish invasion of England. Raleigh fought in the conflict in Ireland. And he became known as an effective soldier there. Then, around 1582, he ended up at the English court. The details are a little sketchy, but he may have been brought to London to report on the state of the conflict in Ireland. At any rate, Elizabeth was enamored with Raleigh, and he became a permanent fixture at her court.

There is a well-known story about Raleigh placing his cloak over a puddle so Elizabeth could walk over it without getting her feet wet. The story didn't appear until after Raleigh died, so it isn't clear if the events really happened, but several writers reported the same story around the same time, so who knows? But the bottom line is that Raleigh formed a close bond with Elizabeth, and as we'll see, that relationship led to the first extensive effort to plant English-speaking settlements in the New World.

Much like Elizabeth, Raleigh also fancied himself a poet. And several pieces of his poetry survive. So he was an adventurer and a fighter, but he also knew the value of words. In fact, he might have agreed with the adage that 'the pen in mightier than the sword.' And in fact, Raleigh probably knew the man who coined that adage – or at least an early version of that adage. George Whetstone was an English writer and playwright, and he had actually been a part of that expedition to the New World in 1578. Well, after returning to England, he composed a book called 'Heptameron of Civil Discourses,' which appeared around this same point in 1582. And that book contains the line "The dashe of a Pen, is more greeuous then the counter use of a Launce." The Oxford English Dictionary cites that as the earliest known version of the modern saying 'the pen is mightier than the sword.'

Well, as I noted Whetstone had been on that expedition to North America with Walter Raleigh and Humphrey Gilbert a few years earlier. And both Raleigh and Gilbert were still interested in placing an English colony in the New World in the 1580s. And as I noted a few moments ago, Gilbert's license to establish a colony there ran for six years. And there were only a couple of years left. So when Raleigh became close with Elizabeth, it looked like they might be able to put together the funding and support they needed for another expedition.

They also found support from another source – and that source was a prominent writer who proved to be very instrumental in laying the foundations of the British Empire. He was an ordained priest named Richard Hakluyt.. He is probably best described as a propagandist. He believed that England needed to challenge Spain in North America, and his writings were an attempt to outline the reasons why England should do, and how it should go about doing it.

Hakluyt was a chaplain, and a few years earlier, he had been assigned to the English Embassy in Paris. While in France, he was subjected to the ridicule of Frenchmen who claimed that England lacked the naval abilities of other countries in Europe – and that England would never be able to compete with countries like Spain and France in the New World. During that time, he made it his mission to document England's history of naval exploration – and to argue for a more aggressive position with respect to Spain. [*SOURCE: In Search of a Kingdom, Laurence Bergreen, p. 274-5*.]

Around the same time that Walter Raleigh arrived at Elizabeth's court in 1582, Hakluyt published the first of many works called 'Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America.' In the book, he said that England had a legitimate claim to any of the territory in North America that was not then occupied by Spain. He based the claim in part of John Cabot's voyage to the region around Newfoundland in the late 1400s. I talked about that expedition back in Episode 146, and as I noted in that episode, the land that Cabot encountered became known as the 'new found land' back in England. And, of course, that produced the modern name ***Newfoundland***.

Well almost a century has passed since Cabot's expedition, but there still were no permanent European settlements in the vicinity of Newfoundland – or anywhere else in the northern part of North America. About forty years earlier, Jacques Cartier had tried to establish a colony along the St. Lawrence River for France, but the cold weather and the hostility of the indigenous tribes had forced him to abandon the settlement. But every spring and summer, fisherman and traders from various parts of Western Europe traveled to the region to fish the waters and acquire furs. Those fishermen and traders built temporary settlements while they were there, but then they would sail back home. So there was no permanent colony in the region, and no country controlled the fishery.

South of there, there were no European settlements until you reached the region known as Spanish Florida. There, the Spanish maintained two settlements – one at St. Augustine in modern-day Florida, and the other at a place called Santa Elena, which was located along the coast of modern-day South Carolina. And that settlement at Santa Elena was abandoned by the end of the decade, which left St. Augustine as the only European settlement in North America.

Obviously, there was a vast region in between – encompassing much of the east coast of the modern United States. And that was where Raleigh and Hakluyt were focusing their attention. In his book in 1582, Hakluyt argued that England's rights to that region were just as strong as those of Spain – and he argued that England should pursue those claims. Though he had no problem subjecting the indigenous people to English rule, he also wrote that the colonists should avoid the violent approach of the Spanish Conquistadors in South America. He argued that the English should try to trade with the local tribes, and work with them, and he thought that they should be converted to Christianity. He also said that the English should make an effort to learn the native languages. It wasn't exactly a modern enlightened view of the world, but it wasn't the brutal approach of the Conquistadores either. Again, it was a middle approach. But as we'll see, that middle approach was often abandoned once the boots were on the ground.

Now it's important to understand that the English interest in North America was directly tied to the rise of Spain and the threat that Spain posed. Of course, the king of Spain was Elizabeth's former brother-in-law Philip. And Philip's power had recently become even greater. The King of Portugal had died in 1580, and that allowed Philip to claim the Portuguese throne as well. So now he ruled over not only the Spanish possessions in the New World, but those of Portugal as well, including Brazil. It also gave him access to the Portuguese settlements in Africa, India and East Asia.

Philip and the Pope were also providing money and troops to support the uprisings against English rule in southern Ireland where Walter Raleigh had been fighting. And as we've seen before, Philip also ruled over the Netherlands, though the Protestant rebels there were continuing to be a thorn in his side. He was even exerting influence over the French king. And Philip increasingly had his sights set on deposing Elizabeth and replacing her with her Catholic cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. In fact, assassination plots against Elizabeth continued to be uncovered during this period.

As Philip moved his soldiers and conspirators into place – Elizabeth could sense the noose tightening around her neck. Once again, she was caught in the middle – with dangerous options all around her. But a colony in the New World could relieve some of that pressure. It would provide a base which could be used to attack and plunder Spanish ships. It could also be used as a trading base. English settlers could access the natural resources of the region, and even grow crops that didn't grow well in England. That would make England more independent and less reliant on trade with rival nations. Any excess products could even be sold to other countries in Europe. And if silver or gold was discovered within the vast inland wilderness, well all the better.

By this point, it was becoming increasingly clear to people in England that the natural resources of the New World offered a lot of potential value. In an earlier episode, I talked about John Hawkins expedition, and how an account of that journey gave us the first recorded use of the word ***potato*** in English. Well, sources from that period also attribute the word ***shark*** to the men on that expedition. It may seem odd that an island nation didn't have the word ***shark*** before that point, but apparently Hawkins' men captured a shark during that voyage and brought it back

home and showed it in London. It was reported that the sailors called it a ***shark*** – which is the first recorded use of that word. No one really knows how they came up with that word though.

Despite those limited exceptions of direct contact with the New World, most of England's knowledge about the region came from Spanish and Portuguese sources. For example, English had already pick up the word ***maize*** from Spanish sources to describe the type of corn that was common in the New World. It was a word used by the native people of the Caribbean, and it's what most of us simply know as ***corn*** today.

Also, back in Episode 154, I introduced you to William Turner who is sometimes called the 'Father of English Botany.' He composed a three-volume work called the New Herball in the 1550s and 1560s. It was attempt to identify all of the plants that were found in England. And in that work, he provided the first known use of the word ***sunflower*** in English. It was another plant that the Spanish had brought from the New World and domesticated. When the plants are young, the heads tend to turn and follow the sun in the sky over the course of a day, so Turner said that they were sometimes called ***sunflowers***.

Well around the same time that William Turner wrote his multi-volume work on botany, a Spanish doctor named Nicolas Monardes published a survey of all the known plants from the New World that were thought to have medicinal properties. So the book was partly a work of botany and partly a work of medicine. Well, in the 1570s, a man named John Frampton had translated that book into English. He gave it the English title 'Joyfull Newes out of the Newe Founde Worlde.' And according to the Oxford English Dictionary, that English translation contains the first recorded reference to several plants that had been introduced from the Americas.

For example, it contains the first reference to ***tobacco*** in an English document. At the time, it was commonly thought that tobacco was good for you – that it reduced swellings and helped children with breathing problems. [*SOURCE: Hitchings, Henry. The Secret Life of Words (p. 139). Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kindle Edition.*] So you might say that he missed the mark on that one.

The translation contains an interesting remark in that regard though. It reads, ". . . the inhabitants of Florida doe nourish themselves certain times, with the smoke of this Hearbe, the whiche thei receaue at the mouth through certain coffins, suche as the Grocers do vse to put in their Spices." First of all, note the use of that 'meaningless do' that we saw earlier – 'the inhabitants do nourish themselves' rather than 'the inhabitants nourish themselves.' And 'the Grocers do use to put in their spices' rather then 'the Grocers use to put in their spices.' But also note what word is used to refer to the wrappers around the tobacco. They were called ***coffins*** because a ***coffin*** simply meant a container at the time. Of course, it came to mean a container for a corpse, but it also referred to a funnel or cone-shaped piece of paper that grocers and other sellers used for holding items. And it's interesting that this book refers to people smoking tobacco wrapped inside of coffins given the modern health concerns associated with smoking.

The book also contains some other unusual medical treatments. One passage mentions an interesting treatment for the fever caused by malaria. According to the original Spanish author, the indigenous people used certain pebbles or small stones to treat the condition. The stones were placed on the person's temples to help treat the fever. But what makes the passage so interesting is how the stones were typically obtained.

Supposedly, the warm, swampy regions of the New World were inhabited by a large lizard-like creature which ate the stones from the river banks. The native people would kill the animal and retrieve the stones from the animal's stomach – or from its ***maw*** to use the term in this English translation. The passage says of the stones that they "are founde in greate quantitie in the mawes of Caimanes, that are called Lagartos, which are a kinde of beastes very greate, and dooest inhabite in the lande, and in the sea . . ." So there we see the 'meaningless do' again – "dooest inhabite in the land" rather than simply "inhabite in the land." Anyway, in that passage, those animals are first referred to as ***Caimanes***, and then they are referred to as ***Lagartos*** using the Spanish term that was preserved in this English translation.

The word ***lagarto*** was based on the Latin word for a ***lizard***, and is in fact cognate with the word ***lizard***. But in Spanish, it was often preceded with the word ***el*** meaning 'the.' So when Spanish speakers referred to 'the lagarto,' it came out as 'el lagarto,' which the English heard and understood as ***alligator***. So this passage is one of the first references we have to an ***alligator*** in English.

But note that that term followed another word for the animal – a ***cayman***. This passage also contains the first use of that term in English as well. Again ***cayman*** was just another word for an alligator at the time, and when those reptiles were found on a small group of islands south of Cuba, those islands were called the Cayman Islands – which, of course, is still the name of those islands to this day. Technically, in modern usage, ***cayman*** and ***alligator*** refer to two very closely related but slightly different reptiles, but the terms were once interchangeable.

So where did that word ***cayman*** come from? Well, it turns out to be a west African word. Apparently, when some of the earliest slaves were brought to the Caribbean, they saw the animal, which appeared to be very similar to certain reptiles found in Africa. So they referred to the animals with that African word. And I mention that because the word ***cayman*** appears to be one of the earliest African words to pass into English via the North Atlantic slave trade. The Africans brought it to the Caribbean, where the Spanish borrowed it, and then the word passed into English via Spanish works like this medicine book that were translated into English.

Now I mentioned that West Africans had encountered a similar reptile in Africa. Well, so had the ancient Greeks. They had seen those African reptiles along the banks of the Nile in ancient Egypt. And the Greeks called the ***crocodiles***. It's a Greek word with a disputed etymology. Some scholars think it meant 'gravel worm,' but at any rate, the word had passed via Latin into English in the early 1300s. So English already had the word ***crocodile***, even though English speakers in the Middle Ages weren't entirely sure what a crocodile was. But they had read ancient Greek and Roman legends that a crocodile would moan like a human to lure its prey, and then after it had consumed its prey, it would cry out of pity for the animal it had consumed. This led to the

term ‘crocodile tears’ to refer to fake tears or a hypocritical sadness. Well, that term first appeared in English during the Elizabethan period, and Shakespeare even alluded to the same legend in a scene in Othello. In the scene, Othello is told that his wife Desdemona has cheated on him, and even though it is a lie, he strikes her in a jealous rage, and she begins to weep. He then dismisses her weeping by saying, “If that the Earth could teem with woman’s tears, Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.” So again, that’s the same idea of ‘crocodile tears’ derived from Greek legends, and it shows how common the word ***crocodile*** was at the time. But now, English also acquired the words ***alligator*** and ***cayman*** for the slightly different species that lived in the New World. Of course, there are several technical differences between alligators and crocodiles, but as we all know, the main difference is when you see them. Alligators are seen later, and crocodiles are seen after a while.

Now in addition to the terms I have already mentioned, a few other words appear for the first time in the English translation of this Spanish medical text. It contains the first English use of ***sarsaparilla*** and ***sassafras***. And it also contains the first recorded reference to an ***armadillo***. In addition to plants and animals, the book also provides the first recorded use of the word ***volcan*** in English, which soon evolved into the word ***volcano***. It’s a Romance word that comes from the name of Vulcan – the Roman god of fire.

Again, this book shows that there was a growing interest in the New World, especially in the region’s natural resources. And in 1583, Walter Raleigh and his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert thought it was good time to take another shot at establishing a colony there. Gilbert’s six-year licence was about to expire, so they had to act quickly.

Gilbert was able to gather five ships and about 250 men for the expedition. But Elizabeth would not let Raleigh go with them. He was too much of a court favorite to be allowed to participate in such a risky venture.

Gilbert and his men headed out in June of 1583. The expedition got off to a rocky start when one of the five ships had to turn back, but the other four continued on and reached Newfoundland a few weeks later. That was the region where those temporary fishing camps were common. [*SOURCE: Preceding the Mayflower, James P. Leynse, p. 26.*] One of the men on the expedition was Edward Hayes, and he kept a written account which sheds some interesting light on what happened. He noted that Gilbert chose to go to Newfoundland because the Spanish had largely abandoned any claims to that part of North America.

When they reached Newfoundland, Gilbert’s crew came across the fishing camps and about thirty-six ships from various places, including Spain, Portugal and France. Of course, they were the ships of traders and fishermen. [*SOURCE: The Pirate Queen, Susan Ronald, p. 255.*] Gilbert promptly declared the region to be a colony of England in a small, formal ceremony. The response of the local fisherman was basically – ‘Yeah, OK, whatever’ – and they just kept fishing.

Now Edward Hayes's account of this voyage contains a very interesting passage about a type of bird that they encountered in the region. And the passage sheds some light on the strange history behind a common word that we use today for a certain cold-weather bird. He wrote, "We had sight of an Iland named Penguin, of a foule there breeding in abundance, almost incredible, which cannot flie, their wings not able to carry their body, being very large (not much lesse then a goose) and exceeding fat: which the French men use to take without difficulty upon that Iland, and to barrell them up with salt."

So this particular island called Penguin was apparently named for the big birds that walked around on the island because they had big bodies and small wings and couldn't fly. Now if you know a little bit about penguins, this passage might be raising some red flags. Penguins only live in the region around Antarctica in the southern hemisphere. They don't live near the Arctic in the northern hemisphere. So how was it possible that Gilbert's men saw penguins on the islands around Newfoundland? Well, the answer is that there was once a completely different bird that lived in the north which has since become extinct. And the word ***penguin*** was originally applied to that northern bird.

Much like the bird that we call a ***penguin*** today, the northern bird was black and white, and lived in very cold climates and walked around because it couldn't fly. It sort of looked like a blend between a southern penguin and a goose. The formal name of that northern bird was actually a 'great auk.' Now despite the similarities between great auks in the north and what we know as penguins in the south, the two birds weren't really related to each other. They might have had some ancient connection in their early evolution, but for the most part, they were really two completely different birds.

Well, sailors from Wales had encountered those Canadian birds during various fishing expeditions around the North Atlantic. They would have seen them around Iceland, Greenland and other places, and they called them ***penguins***. ***Penguin*** is a Welsh word – one of the few Welsh words that has been borrowed into Modern English. In Welsh, the word ***pen*** meant 'head,' and the word ***gwyn*** meant 'white' or 'blessed.' It's the same root that we find the Welsh name ***Gwendolyn*** – which literally means 'blessed ring.' But when the word was applied to these birds as 'pen-gwyn,' it meant 'white head.' The birds may have been called ***penguins*** or 'white-heads' because they actually had a white splotch on their heads. At any rate, the name stuck, and in that passage I read to you, Hayes confirmed that they were called ***penguins*** at the time.

So what about the birds in the south around the Antarctic? How did they acquire the same name? Well, of course, the answer lies in the age of exploration. About five years earlier, Francis Drake had sailed around the world. I described that voyage a couple of episodes back. Remember that he sailed around South America by going through the Straits of Magellan near the southern tip of the continent. And remember that there is also a surviving account of that expedition. Well, the sailor who wrote that account was Francis Fletcher, and he mentioned that the crew saw black and white birds walking around as they were sailing through that region. And those birds resembled the black and white birds that lived in the North Atlantic. He wrote, "In the Ilands we found great releife & Plenty of good victualls for Infinite were the Numbers of the foule, which

the Welsh men name Pengwin . . .” And that’s the first recorded reference to the birds in the Southern hemisphere as ***penguins***.

But what happened to those Great Auks in the north which people also called ***penguins***? Well, the passage from Gilbert’s voyage that I read earlier provides the answer. He wrote that the birds were very large and fat, and that men would take them without difficulty and ‘barrell them up with salt.’ In other words, since they couldn’t fly, they were easy to capture, and over the following centuries, they were hunted out of existence. They were extinct by the mid-1800s. So that just left the penquins in the far south as the only birds that carry that name to this day.

By the way, in that same passage, the writer wrote that the northern penguins were “exceeding fat” – not ‘exceedingly fact’ like we would say today. At the time, that ‘-ly’ adverb ending was much more optional that it is today. I just wanted to mention that here because we’ll explore that issue in a bit more detail in the next episode when we look at the first written grammar of English.

So Gilbert’s expedition in 1583 had reached Newfoundland and claimed the land for England and had encountered some large birds that couldn’t fly. But his men didn’t really make any effort to build a permanent settlement there. And in fact, his men were soon ravaged by sickness and disease. Then one of the ships was lost in a skirmish. So the three remaining boats decided to head south.

They probably headed south for a simple reason. There is a strong ocean current off the coast of Newfoundland that moves in a southerly direction. It’s called the Labrador Current. And it would have been the easiest way to back home to England.

A few episodes back I talked about the Gulf Stream, which is another current in the North Atlantic. All of those currents are connected, and in fact, they’re ultimately connected to ocean currents throughout the Atlantic and Pacific. As I noted in that earlier episode, the Gulf Stream is the warm-water current that flows northward out of the Caribbean and along the eastern coast of Florida and then eventually turns eastward and flows across the North Atlantic. If carries so much warm water into the North Atlantic that it actually helps to warm the British Isles. You might not have ever realized it, but London is actually further north than Toronto and Montreal in Canada. It is located at a higher latitude. But it has a much warmer climate thanks in large part to the Gulf Stream.

Well, as the Gulf Stream reaches into the far northern parts of the Atlantic, it disperses a bit, but it feeds another current that turns back to the west near the Arctic, and then becomes a cold water current. That current loops around to the west and eventually reaches the eastern coast of Canada as the Labrador Current and then moves southward, eventually reaching the Gulf Stream. So it forms a big loop around the north Atlantic. Well, that loop meant that ships in the vicinity Newfoundland could just ride that Labrador Current southward until it approached the Gulf Stream, and then they could ride the Gulf Stream back home to Europe. But where that cold water current from the north meets that warm water current from the south, it tends to create

instability in the atmosphere – and it can produce heavy fog, bad storms and rough oceans. And during this southern trek, another one of Gilbert's ships was lost in a storm killing all on board.

We don't know the specific nature of that storm, but as European sailors explored the Atlantic and Pacific, they were becoming more and more familiar with the powerful storms that ravaged the tropics, especially in the summer and fall. By this point, English had borrowed the word ***hurricane*** from Spanish. The Spanish had taken the word from the native people of the Caribbean. And around the current point in our overall story in the 1580s, the words ***typhoon*** and ***monsoon*** also appeared in English documents for the first time. Both words entered English via Portuguese because Portuguese sailors had encountered those storms and rough weather conditions while traveling to India and China. Those two words had deeper origins in Asia, but they reflect the fact that people around the world had terms for tropical storms, and those terms were entering English in the late 1500s.

Well, whether Gilbert's fleet encountered a hurricane or a typical North Atlantic storm, it didn't really matter. Another ship was lost – leaving only two of the original five vessels.

Gilbert took command of the smaller of the two remaining vessels – a small frigate called the Squirrel. In fact, Edward Hayes who maintained the account of this expedition called it a ***frigate***, which is one of the first recorded uses of the word ***frigate*** in the English language. It was a common term used by French and Italian sailors in the Mediterranean, but now it came into English. I should note that the Dutch word ***yacht*** also entered English around this same time.

Well, with Gilbert in the smaller frigate, he was struggling to keep it afloat in the rough weather. At some point, he came over to the larger of the two vessels to discuss the rough oceans they had encountered and whether they should continue the expedition or head back home. Before Gilbert returned to the smaller ship, Hayes wrote that he "did thanke God . . .with al his heart, for that he had seene, the same being enough for us all, and that we needed not to seeke any further." So they headed back home. Note in that passage that we have the 'meaningless do' again – Gilbert 'did thanke God' rather than 'Gilbert thanked God.' But then, we have a negative statement without the use of ***do.*** He wrote that 'we needed not to seeke any further' – rather than 'we did not need to seek any further.' So again, we see how the older grammatical forms without ***do*** and the newer grammatical forms with ***do*** were often mixed together during this period.

Well after that, Gilbert returned to his smaller ship, and the ocean became rough again. The writer of the surviving account, Edward Hayes, was located on the larger ship. And during the middle of the night, he noted that the light on the smaller vessel disappeared from view, and the vessel and its crew were never seen again. The one remaining ship carrying Hayes limped back to England. Gilbert's expedition to establish a colony in North America came to an end with Gilbert and most of his ships lost at sea. It was left to his half-brother Walter Raleigh to pick up the pieces of yet another failed expedition. And of course, Raleigh did just that in the months that followed.

The news of Humphrey Gilbert's failed expedition reverberated around the royal court in 1583. Elizabeth had refused to allow Walter Raleigh to participate in the voyage for fear of his safety. And with the loss of so many sailors and so many ships – and Walter Raleigh's own half-brother – it seemed like a good decision. But it wasn't all doom and gloom in that year. Elizabeth enjoyed the entertainment provided by actors at her court, and in that same year, she founded her own acting company. She served as the patron of a group of actors that became known as the Queen's Men. She secured most of the best actors from the other acting companies that were traveling the country at the time. We know that her company performed several different history plays, including plays about Henry V and King John. Of course, Shakespeare later composed his own plays about those kings. And Elizabeth's troop also performed a play about the fictional king named King Lear, which Shakespeare also tapped for source material. Shakespeare was certainly influenced by those earlier history plays, and there is even some speculation that he may have been a part of the Queen's Men for a brief period after he arrived in London a few years later, but there is no solid evidence to support that. [*SOURCE: Shakespeare & Co., Stanley Wells, p. 6*.]

The queen's love of the theater provided a much-needed distraction from what seemed to be an inevitable conflict with Spain.

In that same year (1583), another major plot to assassinate Elizabeth was uncovered. This one is known as the Throckmorton Plot, and the investigation uncovered letters that directly implicated Philip of Spain. The plan was to kill Elizabeth, and then have Spanish troops launch an attack on England. They would ensure that Mary Queen of Scots was placed on the throne and that England was returned to Catholicism.

The walls seemed to be closing in on Elizabeth. And war with Spain seemed inevitable. In fact, Philip was already mulling over various options for an invasion of England during this period. And everyone knew that Spain would be a heavy favorite once the fighting began.

Elizabeth and her advisors needed to take some kind of action to weaken Philip's position. In any conflict with Spain, the English needed to find a way to shut off the supply of gold and silver that was pouring into Spain from South America. In order to disrupt those supply lines, Elizabeth and her advisors considered sending Francis Drake back to the region to attack Spanish ships and settlements. And they also considered the establishment of a settlement along the North American coast that could be used as a base to attack Spanish ships. That idea blended perfectly with Walter Raleigh's desire to establish a colony in the same region. So in the spring of 1584, Raleigh was given a formal charter which allowed him to construct a colony there. This was really just an extension of the efforts that he and his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert had been engaged in for the past seven years. The long-term plan was to establish a thriving colony in the region, but that plan was tempered by the more immediate goal of building a base that could be used to attack Spanish ships. So where would that base be located?

Well, they couldn't go to Florida because the Spanish were already there. And Newfoundland was too far north to launch attacks on the Spanish flotilla. The cold weather also made it difficult to establish a colony there from scratch. So once again, Raleigh and Elizabeth had to find

somewhere in the middle. And they found what they thought would be the perfect spot. That spot was the thin line of barrier islands located off the coast of what is today North Carolina. Those islands are known as the Outer Banks, and they seemed like the ideal place for an English fort.

I noted earlier that Spanish ships used the Gulf Stream to take them back to Europe. Well the Gulf Stream runs northward along the Florida coast, but then it gradually veers out into the middle of the Atlantic. The last spot where ships could be spotted from land was the Outer Banks. It was also far enough north to avoid a direct confrontation with the Spanish troops in Florida, and the climate was mild enough to sustain a settlement. So again, it seemed like the perfect spot.

To that extent, they were right. It was a good spot to attack ships. In fact, the Outer Banks eventually became a haven for pirates. The famous pirate known as Blackbeard used the region as his base in the early 1700s. But beyond, piracy, it wasn't a very good location at all. The Outer Banks are little more that large shoals and sandbars. They are constantly shifting. The water is shallow around the islands, and ships of any significant size can't pass through the inlets. With each major hurricane or winter storm, new inlets are created and old ones are closed off. Geologists have determined that the islands are literally moving westward a little bit over time. In a few thousand years, they will probably merge with the mainland.

The reason why the Outer Banks are so unstable is partly because of those ocean currents I mentioned earlier. The Outer Banks are located at the point where the warm Gulf Steam moving northward and the cold Labrador Current moving southward happen to converge. Those countervailing currents helped to shape the islands, and the convergence of warm and cold water also contributes to heavy fog, storms and unsettled oceans in the region. It can be a nightmare for sailors, and since so many ships have been lost there over the centuries, the region is often referred to as the 'Graveyard of the Atlantic.'

By the late 1500s, the Spanish were familiar enough with the coastline to know how dangerous the Outer Banks were, and that's why they had never attempted to build a settlement there. But the English were newcomers, and they didn't really understand what they walking into – or 'sailing into' in this case.

Raleigh prepared two ships for the expedition. One of the ships was placed under the command of a captain named Arthur Barlowe, who later published an account of the voyage.

The two ships left England in April of 1584, and they arrived at the Outer Banks in early July. They immediately realized that the ships were too big to pass through the inlets between the barrier islands, so they anchored offshore. After a few days, several of the local indigenous people rowed out to the ships in canoes. They exchanged some items with the sailors, and communicated as best they could mainly using sign language.

At one point, the English asked them what the name of the place was. They looked at each other and replied, "Wingandacoa." And the English briefly adopted that word as the name of the region. But they later found out that ***Wingandacoa*** actually meant 'You wear fancy clothes.' The term wasn't the name of the place; it was a comment about the sailor's attire. [*SOURCE: The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island, Scott Dawson, p. 32.*]

Those Native Americans were part of a local tribe that lived on the barrier islands called the Crotoans. They spoke a dialect of the Algonquin language. Now there were many different indigenous languages spoken throughout North America, and those languages were divided into many different dialects. But in this particular region, the local people spoke Algonquin. In fact, the Algonquin dialects extended from this region northward all the way along the eastern coastline into Canada. And the language was actually widespread within modern-day Canada and pockets of the modern United States. Since that language was spoken in the coastal regions from the Outer Banks northward, and since that is where most of the early English colonies were later established, the Algonquin language had a significant impact on English. At this point, very few words were borrowed from that language – mostly local place names. But over time, Algonquin would contribute many words to English, especially American English.

Some of you might know that the Outer Banks are where the Wright Brothers conducted the first flights with their new airplane in the early 1900s. Those flights were made on the same series of islands that the English encountered in 1584. The flights were made near a small community called Kitty Hawk. Well, Kitty Hawk is just an Anglicized version of the Algonquin name ***Chicahauk***. Here are a few other place names derived from the Algonquin language spoken in pockets throughout North America like ***Chesapeake***, ***Mississippi***, ***Manhattan***, ***Massachusetts***, ***Nantucket***, ***Connecticut***, ***Michigan***, ***Chicago***, ***Illinois***, ***Wyoming***, ***Quebec***, ***Ottowa***, ***Winnipeg***, ***Manitoba*** and ***Saskatchewan***. So as you can see, a lot of place names were taken from that language.

The Algonquin language also gave us other common words like ***raccoon***, ***moose***, ***skunk***, ***woodchuck***, ***chipmunk***, ***caribou***, ***hickory***, ***persimmon***, ***moccasin***, ***pecan***, ***squash***, ***tomahawk***, ***wigwam***, ***powwow***, and ***toboggan***. Most of those words are first recorded in the following century as English settlement became more widespread across the region.

Since communication with the local tribes was very important to the mission, the English captains befriended two of the native people; one was named Manteo and the other was named Wanchese. They actually joined the sailors on their return voyage to England, and they were even presented to Elizabeth to show her what the people of the region looked like. The idea was to teach the two men some English and to learn their native Algonquin language so that the English settlers could better communicate with the native people in the region. Even today, there are two small communities on the Outer Banks called Manteo and Wanchese to commemorate the important role of those two men.

This first expedition to the Outer Banks in 1584 only lasted for a few weeks. During that time, members of a local tribe brought the Englishmen to their home on a separate island called ***Roanoke***. [*SOURCE: The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island, Scott Dawson, p. 33.*] Roanoke

Island is located between the barrier islands and the mainland, so it wasn't visible from the ocean. And the English explorers thought it would make a perfect spot for their settlement, since it was hidden from the view of the Spanish ships that passed along the coast.

A few weeks later in September, the expedition came to an end. Having met the local tribes, and surveyed the area, and identified a place where they could build a settlement, the English sailors headed back to England to report what they had found. Again, Manteo and Wanchese went back with them. [*SOURCE: The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island, Scott Dawson, p. 33.*]

Back in England, a scholar named Thomas Hariot began to work with Manteo and Wanchese to learn their language and to teach them some English. That means that they were two of the first indigenous people of the New World to speak English – at least a few words of English. Hariot himself is a fascinating figure separate and apart from his involvement with these expeditions. He was a mathematician and an astronomer. In later years, he was one of the first people to make detailed accounts of the stars and moon with a telescope. His detailed drawings of the moon pre-date those of Galileo, and he was the first person to observe sun spots with a telescope and to make detailed drawings depicting them. But for our purposes, he is important as a linguist who tried to learn the Algonquin language of Manteo and Wanchese. [*SOURCE: A Kingdom Strange, James Horn, p. 55.*]

It was apparently through this work that he realized that the term ***Wingandacoa*** wasn't the name of a place. It was actually a comment about the sailor's clothing and fashion. So it was around this time that Raleigh decided to coin a new name for the region. I mentioned earlier that during this period, there was many portraits of Elizabeth holding a sieve which was a symbol of virginity. It was an idea that she actively promoted. Well, Raleigh tapped into that idea, and as a form of flattery, he suggested that the region be called ***Virginia***. Elizabeth liked the suggestion, and that become the official name of the territory going forward. And I should note that the scope of that term was much broader at the time. It basically referred to that entire mid-Atlantic coast between Florida and Newfoundland. So via that word ***Virginia***, Elizabeth once again became synonymous with that middle option between two extremes.

I should note that Raleigh was also knighted around that time becoming Sir Walter Raleigh. And Manteo and Wanchese were brought before Elizabeth's court to illustrate the success of the expedition. There was much excitement at the time about Raleigh's efforts.

Earlier I mentioned Richard Hakluyt's writings about English naval history and his promotion of an English colony in North America. Well, in light of this expedition, he produced the second major volume of his work called 'Discourse Concerning Western Planting.' He argued that North America had many natural resources that could replace England's reliance on imports from the Mediterranean and the Baltic region. But it would require a much larger effort with lots of people who could build a settlement and maintain it as a self-sufficient colony. [*SOURCE: A Kingdom Strange, James Horn, p. 62-3.*]

Elizabeth agreed, and the urgency of the matter was heightened due to an important development which had occurred during that summer while the expedition was in the Outer Banks. In the Netherlands, the Protestant leader of the Dutch rebels was assassinated. He was William of Orange, and he was another Protestant leader targeted by Philip of Spain. William was killed by one of Philip's followers, and his death proved that the assassination plots were real and that Elizabeth was very much at risk.

Then in January of the following year – 1585, the Pope published a bull or edict against Elizabeth declaring her to be a heretic and giving Philip nearly 2 million crowns to fund an effort to remove her as queen. That was the modern equivalent of more than a billion dollars. [*SOURCE: The Pirate Queen, Susan Ronald, p. 291.*]

Elizabeth had to make some major moves to survive, and she agreed with Hakluyt that Philip's weak spot was the New World. Hakluyt wrote of Philip, "If you touch him in the Indies, you touch the apple of his eye; for take away his treasure . . ." [*SOURCE: The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island, Scott Dawson, p. 28.*]

To that end, Elizabeth and her advisors developed a three-pronged response to Philip. England would send troops to the Netherlands to support the Protestants who were fighting against Philip's forces there. That would help to prevent Spain from securing a decisive victory in the region. Secondly, she would send Francis Drake back to the Caribbean to plunder Spanish ships and Spanish settlements. And third, a larger expedition would be sent back to Roanoke to try to lay the foundation for a permanent colony there. But at this point, there would be no women or children or families. The primary objective was to create a base which could be used to attack Spanish ships and possibly expand into a larger colony at a later date.

It was also during this period that Elizabeth open negotiations with son of Mary Queen of Scots. Of course, that was King James VI of Scotland, who had been raised as a Protestant. Elizabeth needed an ally against Spain, and her cousin James was a good option. Since Elizabeth was the Virgin Queen and not likely to produce an heir, she looked to James as the best choice to succeed her. And during this period, they began to exchange letters, which would eventually lead to James being named as her heir. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 411.*] That would not only ensure an orderly succession, but it would also ensure that England would remain a Protestant country. Through these various developments, war with Spain became inevitable.

Throughout the spring of 1585, Raleigh organized a second expedition to the Outer Banks. This time, it consisted of five ships and two smaller vessels and about 600 men. Manteo and Wanchese also joined the expedition to serve as guides and interpreters. [*SOURCE: A Kingdom Strange, James Horn, p. 66.*] Thomas Hariot, who had been learning their language, also came along. And he kept a detailed account of the voyage. John White was an artist, and he was also brought along to draw detailed illustrations of the region and its people. Those illustrations were later published and contributed to the growing interest in a North American colony.

Once again, Raleigh remained in London, so Sir Richard Grenville was put in charge of the expedition. Grenville's fleet left England in April, and Francis Drake set sail for the Caribbean with his fleet a few weeks later.

In late June, Grenville's fleet reached the Outer Banks, and he very quickly learned how dangerous the region was. One of the larger ships in the fleet called the Tiger ran aground on a sandbar, and it was battered for several hours. Many of the supplies on the ship were lost. Those supplies were essential to maintaining the settlement through the winter. And the loss of those supplies proved to be a crucial development because it essentially doomed the expedition from the start.

After the ship was freed and the sailors reached Roanoke, Grenville realized that he had a problem. A few weeks later, he headed back to England with most of the sailors to get more supplies, but he left about a hundred of the men behind. And he left a man named Ralph Lane in charge. That was probably another bad decision because Lane lacked the patience and temperament that was needed. His decisions led to conflicts with the indigenous people of the region that might have been avoided if the more even-headed Grenville had remained in charge. [*SOURCE: The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island, Scott Dawson, p. 41.*]

Within a few weeks, the settlers had built a fort at Roanoke. And Manteo and Wanchese were able to act as interpreters to foster a positive relationship with the local indigenous tribes – at least for a while.

Thomas Hariot was also able to communicate with the local people because he had learned a bit of their language. And his written account of his time in the region provides the first detailed account of their language. He wrote about the plants and animals that he saw, and he often included the native word for the thing he was describing. He also had a copy of that book I mentioned earlier in the episode which described all of the medicinal plants in the New World. That book was called 'Joyfull Newes Out of the Newe Founde Worlde,' and in a passage where Hariot wrote about sassafras, he specifically referenced that other book as a source of additional information about the plant.

He described melon and gourds, grapes, strawberries, chestnuts, walnuts, and a variety of wildlife that could be consumed. It was enough to 'make a person's mouth water.' By the way, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, that phrase – 'to make a person's mouth water' – is recorded for the first time around the time of this expedition in 1586.

And speaking of the Oxford English Dictionary, some of the Algonquin words that Hariot mentioned for the first time in his written account are the oldest Algonquin words recorded in the dictionary, though none of them are common today. A ***macock*** and a ***cushaw*** were two different kinds of squash. And a ***manitou*** was a local word for a god or spirit. Again, all of those words were once common enough in English to merit an entry in the OED, but most of the Algonquin words that survive today derive from Algonquin tribes further north in places like the Chesapeake Bay area where the first permanent settlement was established a couple of decades later.

And speaking of the Chesapeake Bay area in the eastern part of the modern state of Virginia, some the English settlers actually made their way there over the winter and immediately realized that is was a much more favorable region for settlement. Ships could navigate that region much better than the Outer Banks, so it was decided that the Roanoke settlement would be moved north to the Chesapeake region as soon as Grenville's reinforcements arrived with those much needed supplies. But month after month passed, and no supply ships came. [*SOURCE: The Pirate Queen, Susan Ronald, p. 285*.]

Back in Roanoke, relations between the English settlers and the local tribes soured over time. The settlers explored the local rivers looking for natural resources and meeting the various tribes that lived throughout the region. Well, when you travel along a river or a large stream, there is the main part of the stream, and then there are the smaller tributaries that feed that stream. The primary stream is called the ***mainstream***, and many people were reluctant to venture too far from it because of the unknown risks founds in those tributaries. Of course, as we return to the theme of this episode, that's how we got the word ***mainstream*** meaning the prevailing opinion of the day. It's typically the safe choice in the middle, and in fact, the word ***mainstream*** is found for the first time in an English document around this same time in 1585.

As the English settlers encountered the local tribes, they often exchanged goods with each other. But on one occasion, a silver cup and some other items went missing. The English thought the items had been stolen, and rather than taking a measured response, they over-reacted. The village where the items went missing was burned to the ground, as were the crops in the adjoining fields. [*SOURCE: A Kingdom Strange, James Horn, p. 73-4.*] Relations between the two groups never completely recovered after that.

On top of that, every time the Englishmen visited a village, a lot of the native people died of mysterious illnesses. Of course, they had been unwittingly introduced to European diseases, and that further strained tensions.

With limited supplies, the English settlers depended on the local tribes for food, and by the spring of 1586, many of the tribes had decided to get rid of the settlers by starving them out. They refused to provide them with any food. On the verge of starvation, the English leader Ralph Lane had one of the local chiefs killed. [*SOURCES: 'The Lost Colony and Hatteras Island,' Scott Dawson, p. 44-5, and 'American Colonies,' Alan Taylor, p. 124*]

At that point, the remaining settlers were barely hanging on. If the local tribes didn't attack and kill them, they were almost certainly going to starve to death.

Finally, in July, the settlers saw an English ship on the horizon. It seemed that the relief ship had finally arrived with much-needed food and supplies. But that wasn't the case. It was actually Francis Drake. Drake had spent the past few months attacking Spanish ships and forts in the Caribbean. And his men had just plundered the Spanish fort at St. Augustine in Florida. Before heading back home, he decided to stop by and see how Raleigh's colony was faring on the Outer Banks. What he found was a small groups of settlers who were barely surviving.

Since no supply ships had arrived, the settlers at Roanoke hopped on board Drake's ships and returned to England. What they didn't know is that Grenville was finally on his way to the Outer Banks with those supply ships. Grenville arrived there a few days after Drake and the settlers had departed. He was shocked to find that all of the settlers were gone. Grenville decided to leave fifteen of his men at Roanoke, and the rest headed back home. The men left behind didn't realize that they had basically been sentenced to death. When English ships returned to the settlement the following year, they learned that all of the men left behind had been killed by the indigenous people who lived nearby.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the last attempt to establish an English settlement at Roanoke. When those ships arrived the following year, it was part of a much larger attempt to build a colony there. That next expedition included women, children and families. And it also disappeared between supply missions in what has become known to history as 'The Lost Colony.' We'll explore those developments in an upcoming episode.

Those failed attempts to establish a colony at Roanoke proved that the middle route may sometimes seem like safe route, but it can actually be fraught with danger.

When Drake returned to England in 1586, the country was on the brink of war with Spain. But something else happened in that year that was very important to our overall story. In that year, the first attempt was made to produce a formal written grammar of the English language. It was the first step in a long, gradual process to formalize and fix the rules that govern how we speak – or at least how some people thought we should speak. So next time, we'll explore those developments.

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