THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 179:
DEFINING MOMENTS

Presented by Kevin W. Stroud

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 179: Defining Moments. This time, as we continue the chronological story of English, we're going to look at several landmark events in the early 1600s. We'll look at the end of the Elizabethan era and the arrival of James I in England. We'll also explore the events that led to a new translation of the Bible, setting the stage for one of the most influential books in the history of English. The period also featured a plot to kill the new king and most of the members of Parliament that nearly changed the course of history. That event also had an interesting influence on the language. These were all defining moments in history, but one of the most important defining moments from this period was literally a 'defining' moment; it was the publication of the first dictionary of the English language. So we have a lot to cover in this episode.

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, as the title of this episode indicates, we're going to explore several landmark events from the early 1600s, specifically the period from 1602 to 1605. Whenever an event determines the course of events that occur afterwards, we sometimes call that a 'defining moment' or a 'defining event.' And in the early 1600s, the word ***define*** was starting to acquire its modern linguistic sense as the process of explaining what a word means.

Prior to that, the word ***define*** had a slightly different sense, which can still be found in some situations in Modern English. The 'fine' part of ***define*** is actually the same root that we find in words like ***final***, and ***finite***, and ***finish***. And that points the original meaning of ***define***. When it was borrowed from French and Latin in the 1300s, it referred to the end of something. The end of something can also be described as a boundary or border, so ***define*** could also be used to refer to the process of identifying a boundary or border. Some of that original meaning can still be found in the closely related words ***definite*** and ***indefinite***. Something that is ***definite*** has fixed limits, whereas something that is ***indefinite*** has no limits.

Well, when you identify the limits or boundary of something, you provide clarity and certainty. And the word ***define*** also acquired that meaning early on. In fact, it still has some of that sense today. If you have '***hi-definition***' TV, it means that the screen provides clarity and that the images are clearly defined. And by the late 1500s, that sense of providing clarity and identifying the limits of something was starting to be applied to words. To ***define*** a word was to explain what the word meant or to identify the scope of its meaning and use.

That sense of providing clarity and establishing a boundary also survives in that term ***defining moment***. A ***defining moment*** is an event that marks the beginning of a new period and determines the course of action that follows. And there were several defining moments in the first few years of the 1600s. Those events shaped the history of England and determined how and where the English language would be spoken in the centuries that followed.

So let's pick up where we left off last time, with the year 1602. That year began with a new work from a familiar figure. On February 2, 1602, we have the first recorded reference to a new play by William Shakespeare. This one was called Twelfth Night. This is a good place to begin because the play introduces several themes that run through this episode.

This first recorded performance of Twelfth Night was mentioned by a law student at the Middle Temple Hall in London. That was one of the Inns of Court where students learned the law. The student's name was John Manningham, and his diary mentions that he saw the performance of a play called "Twelve Night, or What You Will" on that date. That passage actually refers to the full formal title of the play – 'Twelfth Night, or What You Will' – but it is generally known today as simply 'Twelfth Night' without the subtitle.

The title 'Twelfth Night' refers to the twelfth day of the Christmas season, presumably when the play premiered. It appears that the lawyer's guild commissioned Shakespeare to compose the play for the festivities around that date, and the title of the play appears to refer to that event. The title doesn't really have anything to do with the story told in the play.

The twelfth day of the Christmas season was a time of music, rejoicing, trickery and joking. Those elements feature prominently in the play, and are also reflected in the play's famous first line – "If music be the food of love, play on." That line is uttered by a duke named Orsino, who is in love with a wealthy noblewoman named Olivia. But Olivia is not interested in the duke's advances.

We are then introduced to a young woman named Viola. She was a passenger on a ship that wrecked on the shores of the duke's realm. Her brother was lost in the wreck, and Viola isn't sure if he is alive or not. Since Viola is alone, she dresses as a man for her own protection. As we've seen before, Shakespeare loved to use cross-dressing as a comedic device, and he uses it again here.

The disguised Viola then enters the duke's service and immediately falls in love with him, but of course, she is disguised as a man. The duke then sends the disguised Viola to deliver a message to Olivia, who he is trying to court. But when the disguised Viola meets Olivia, Olivia falls for Viola thinking she is a man. So we have a classic love triangle. Olivia is in love with the disguised Viola, who loves the duke, who lives Olivia.

The play's subplot involves two other men who are also pursuing Olivia. One is Sir Andrew who is being encouraged by Olivia's uncle. But we also have Olivia's humorless and pretentious steward named Malvolio. Shakespeare presents him as a Puritan, and this is Shakespeare's opportunity to poke fun at Purtians. At the time, Puritans were critical of the theaters and wanted to shut them down. They eventually got their way and did just that in the second half of the 1600s, but at this earlier point, the Puritans were more of a nuisance for writers and performers like Shakespeare.

Well, in the play, one of Olivia's female attendants named Maria decides to play a joke on the Puritan Malvolio. She decides to write a love letter to him in Olivia's handwriting in order to make him think that Olivia is in love with him. She intends to describe the things that Olivia supposedly finds attractive so that he will do those things and make an ass out of himself. When Olivia's uncle says that Malvolio will be deceived and think the Olivia is in love with him, Maria replies, "My purpose is, indeed, a horse of that color." Now, in that reply, we find an idiom that still exists today, but in its modern version, it is almost always rendered in the negative. Today, if we are comparing two things, and one is different from the other, we might say that it is a 'horse of another color' or a 'horse of a different color.' But the original version is found here in this play, and in fact, this is the earliest known use of the phrase. But as we see here, it was originally worded in the positive to show agreement, rather than a contrast. So when Maria agrees with the uncle's statement and says it is 'indeed a horse of that color,' she is saying that he is correct.

An except of the letter written by Maria is read out loud in the play, and it also shows something interesting about the state of the language at the time. Specifically, it shows how people used the older pronoun forms – ***thee***, ***thou*** and ***thy*** – when speaking to someone in a lower class. In the first few lines of the letter purporting to be from the noblewoman Olivia, she says that Malvolio shouldn't be afraid of her higher rank, and that love is more important than any difference in social status. The letter says:

> "If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars, I am above thee, but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. Thy fates open their hands. Let thy blood and spirit embrace them."

Now, within that passage, we find a line that is still recited to this day: "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." But beyond that familiar phrase, we hear Olivia, which is really Maria pretending to be Olivia, saying that her higher status should be ignored. But she specifically addresses Malvolio, who is of a lower class, with the traditional pronoun forms used in that situation. She refers to him with the pronouns ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy***. ***Thou*** was used as the subject of a sentence, ***thee*** was used as the object, and ***thy*** was used to show possession. So it was just like we use ***he***, ***him*** and ***his*** or ***she***, ***her*** and ***hers*** today. ***Thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy*** were not only used when speaking to someone of a lower class, they were also used when expressing intimacy. So if you were speaking to a close family member, or a close friend, or a loved one, you would also use ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy***. But if you were speaking to a superior or to someone who you didn't know as well, you would have addressed them as simply ***you***. ***You*** was the more formal pronoun form.

It was similar to the way we address people by name today. If they are close to us, or they are someone perceived to be of lesser social status like a child, we would probably address them by their first name as Bill, or Mary or Tom. But if we don't have a close relationship with that person, or if the person is of a higher social status like an older adult or a teacher or a boss, we are more likely to refer to them by their last name or surname, so Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones. We have to make that judgment whenever we address someone. And in the Middle Ages and the early Modern period, people had to do the same thing with the second person pronoun forms. They had to decide if the relationship was close enough or intimate enough or equal enough to

use ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy***. If not, they had to use the formal pronoun ***you***. And if they made a mistake or a misjudgment, and they referred to someone as ***thou*** when the person expected to be addressed as ***you***, well, that was a faux pas, and it could offend the person who was being addressed. And in fact, if they specifically wanted to offend that person, they could intentionally refer to that person as ***thou*** or ***thee*** when they knew that ***you*** was more appropriate. And Shakespeare makes a specific reference to that type of intentionally offensive language a short time later in the play.

After Malvolio reads the letter, he is deceived, and he thinks Olivia is in love with him, and he starts doing the crazy things that she supposedly finds attractive like smiling constantly and wearing yellow stockings. Of course, Olivia actually finds all of those things to be annoying.

Now remember that Sir Andrew is also interested in Olivia, but when he observes Malvolio's infatuation with her, he gives up and decides to leave the court. Olivia's uncle tells him to stay and fight for Olivia by showing how courageous he is. The uncle says that Sir Andrew should show his courage by challenging the duke's young servant to a fight. Of course, that young servant is the disguised young woman Viola. The uncle says that Sir Andrew should write a letter to the young servant that will make him angry and want to fight. He says to Andrew, "If thou 'thou'-est some thrice, it shall not be amiss." In other words, if Andrew repeatedly addresses the young man with the pronoun 'thou,' it will indicate Andrew's contempt for him, and it will make the young man angry and willing to fight.

Of course, this passage points to the fact that addressing someone with the word ***thou*** could be considered an insult, even though there were other situations where ***thou*** was appropriate. And this is an important point because it may explain a notable development that was taking place in the language during this period. So let me digress for a moment to talk about what was happening with words like ***thou*** and ***thee*** and the possessive form ***thy***.

Despite the fact that Elizabethan writers continued to use those older pronoun forms in their written works, most linguists agree that those pronoun forms were in decline in regular speech in the late 1500s and early 1600s. They believe that people were increasingly using the formal pronoun ***you*** when addressing individuals, even in situations where ***thou*** or ***thee*** had been used in the past. And they think that that was partly an effort to avoid offending people by using ***thou*** and ***thee***. It was just easier to avoid all of the social complexities by using the pronoun ***you***. And any formality or stuffiness associated with the pronoun ***you*** was gradually being lost so that the word ***you*** was becoming accepted as a generic second person pronoun in any given situation.

Now you may be wondering why scholars are confident that ***thou***, and ***thee*** and ***thy*** were in decline during this period if they feature so prominently in the works of poets and playwrights and scholars. Well, it's partly because formal written documents tend to be conservative in their use of language, and it also because modern scholars have examined informal writings like surviving personal letters that families members wrote to each other. In personal letters, people tend to address each other in the way they would actually speak to that person. And when scholars look at those old letters, they notice that people tended to address each other – often close family members – with the pronoun ***you***. Traditionally, they would have used ***thou*** or ***thee***

in those situations. Of course, those older pronouns are also found in those letters, but less than would be expected under the circumstances, and they were often used interchangeably with ***you***. Based on that evidence, modern linguists think people were gradually evolving away from the use of those old pronoun forms. [*SOURCE: The Oxford History of English, Lynda Mugglestone, p. 242*.]

Of course, in places like London, society was changing. The middle class was growing, and the old social structure was changing. In that environment, it was often difficult to tell what class someone belonged to. A couple of episodes back, I noted that even commoners were wearing the fancy ruffs that had traditionally been worn by the nobility. To avoid offending people, it was easier to avoid the social complexities associated with ***thee*** and ***thou***. If you just addressed someone as ***you***, you couldn't go wrong. And gradually, it became acceptable to use that pronoun form all of the time.

Over the following century, the use of ***thou***, and ***thee*** and ***thy*** largely disappeared as reflected in the surviving documents from the early 1700s. Again, the most likely scenario is that those older pronouns disappeared in common speech first, and then gradually disappeared in the more formal written language.

We actually have commentary to support this development in the 1600s. Near the end of the century, in 1685, an early linguist named Christopher Cooper wrote a book about the English language. It was written in Latin, which was still the scholarly language of the period. The book was called 'Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae' – literally 'Grammar of the English Language.' Again, he wrote in Latin, but an English translation of one his passages reads, "In ordinary speech, we say 'you' for 'thou,' 'thee' and 'ye,' but emphatically, contemptuously or caressingly we say 'thou.' (End-quote) [*SOURCE: The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol. III, Roger Lass, Ed., p. 150*.] So that passage tends to confirm that people were generally saying ***you*** when addressing other persons in the late 1600s, but there were still situations where ***thou*** was used to express intimacy or derision in the manner we've seen.

By the mid-1700s, ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy*** were largely gone, but not completely gone. There are parts of northern and western England where those older forms have survived and can still be heard, especially in the speech of older persons. And of course, those older pronouns have lingered in certain phrases like 'fare thee well.' They have also lingered in songs like patriotic songs in the US. For example, the song 'America' from the early 1800s gives us the line "'My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing.' And the song 'America the Beautiful' from the late 1800s has the line "America! America! God shed his grace on thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea."

Of course, those old pronoun forms survive in poetic works from the early modern period, like those of Shakespeare. And they also survive in another important English work – the King James Version of the Bible. A lot of phrases from that translation preserve those older forms – and can still be found in the language today. And I'll have more to say about that translation later in this episode.

So as we've seen, ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy*** were in decline in the early 1600s, and they were gradually being replaced with the generic pronoun ***you***. But that created its own problems because remember that ***you*** was originally the plural form. In early Middle English, you would have used ***thou*** and ***thee*** when speaking to one person, and ***you*** when speaking to two or more persons. As we've seen, the word ***you*** first started to be used for individuals as a sign of respect or formality. In this regard, English was following the lead of French and other Western European languages which also used their plural second person pronoun to refer to individuals in the same way. But unlike those other languages, English speakers eventually got rid of those singular forms and adopted the plural form ***you*** in all situations. Today, all of those old distinctions have been lost. We just use ***you***. We use it when referring to one person, and we use it when referring to a group of people. We use it as the subject of a sentence, and we use it as the object of a sentence. So "You see me." And "I see you." It's always ***you***.

But of course, when plural ***you*** also became singular ***you***, that created some problems. When that happened, English speakers lost the ability to clearly indicate whether they were addressing one person or a group of people. Ultimately, people were left to their own devices to come up with a way to distinguish singular ***you*** from plural ***you***, and each dialect developed in own method. That gave us modern variations like ***y'all***, ***you-uns***, and ***yinz*** in North America, ***you lot*** and ***you together*** in parts of England, ***yez*** or ***yiz*** in Ireland, and ***youse*** in many different places around the world. Of course, those are not the only plural forms in those regions, but they are some of the ones that are still used today.

In fact, during the Elizabethan period, people already had a form of ***you*** that could be used to distinguish singular from plural. They could simply add the word ***all*** to the word ***you*** to indicate that the speaker was addressing a group of people. They could do it in two different ways. They could put the word ***all*** before the pronoun and produce '***all of you***,' or they could put it after the pronoun and produce '***you all***.' In fact, ***you all*** was more common that you might realize. A couple of episodes back when we looked at Shakespeare's play about Julius Caesar, I talked about Mark Antony's speech to the crowd gathered for Caesar's funeral. Within a few lines, Antony says, "You all did love him once, not without cause . . ." and "Who, you all know, are honorable men. . ." and "You all do know this mantle . . ." In fact, he used ***you all*** five times in that speech. So there was already a way to indicate a plural form of ***you***.

Now you may be wondering if this Elizabethan ***you all*** is a precursor of the modern contracted form ***y'all*** associated with dialects of the American South. Well, that's a matter of some debate. Most scholars say no, for an interesting reason. The Southern ***y'all*** didn't really appear until the 1800s, and its specific origins are not entirely clear. But there is a fundamental difference between Southern ***y'all*** and Elizabethan ***you all***. Southern US ***y'all*** is a true second person plural pronoun form. It can apply to any group of two or more. But Elizabethan ***you all*** – and to a certain extent ***you all*** in modern speech – typically applies to three or more persons, not two persons. The Elizabethans – and again to a certain extent, modern speakers – would address two people as ***you two*** or the ***two of you***. Only at three persons does ***you all*** or ***all of you*** kick in. But again, Southern US ***y'all*** applies to both situations. For that reason, ***y'all*** is generally considered to be an independent development based around the same two words – ***you*** and ***all***.

But the main point here is that people were already finding ways to distinguish these different uses of the pronoun ***you*** in the Elizabethan period. And as we'll see a little later in the episode, another common way of making that distinction also has its roots in the events of the early 1600s. But more on that a little later. For now, let's return to Shakespeare's play called Twelfth Night.

I began that discussion about the decline of ***thou*** and ***thee*** by looking at a passage in Twelfth Night where one of the characters is encouraged to start a fight by intentionally using the word ***thou*** as a sign of disrespect.

Well, in the final part of the play the love triangle and gender confusion between the characters is resolved when Viola's brother shows up. Remember that Viola had been shipwrecked and she thought her brother had been lost at sea, but it turns out he survived. And when he appears at court, confusion abounds. His sister has assumed the identity of a man and has found a job working for the duke. But when she is dressed as a man, she looks just like her brother. So when her brother arrives, the two siblings are confused for each other. Olivia had been in love with the disguised Viola, but now she falls for Viola's brother, who looks the same. And when it is revealed that Viola is really a woman and is in love with the duke, the duke falls in love with her. And in the end, the love triangle is resolved and both couples presumably live happily ever after.

Again, that play is called Twelfth Night, apparently performed for the first time in February of 1602. In summarizing that play, I mentioned the part where the attendant Maria plays a joke on Malvolio by writing a fake love letter to him that purported to be from the noblewoman Olivia. The letter says that she loves it when Malvolio smiles, so he goes around smiling all the time, which Olivia actually finds annoying. In a passage where Maria makes fun of Malvolio for falling for her prank, Maria says, "He does obey every point of the letter I dropped to betray him. He does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies."

That reference to the lines on the new map of the Indies is actually a reference to the map that I mentioned in the last episode. If you listened to that episode, you might recall that an English map-maker named Edward Wright had recently prepared a map that was unique in the way it adjusted the size of the continents in the far north and south so that the lines of latitude and longitude remained straight and proportionate on the map. That made it easier for sailors to use. It was really an early version of the type of map that is common today. Wright's map was well-known for the accuracy of those lines of latitude and longitude, and that's why Maria says that Malvolio smiles with more lines on his face than can be found on that familiar map. Wright's map also contained updated information about the islands and other land masses of the Far East and the Americas. So it was much more accurate and detailed than the maps that came before it. The English were able to use the map to send trading ships to the Far East. In doing so, they joined the Dutch, who were also sending ships to the same region. Last time, I noted that the English established the East India Company to finance and carry out those expeditions, and the Dutch quickly realized that the English approach with better than their own.

The Dutch expeditions over the prior decade had been carried out by several different Dutch companies that were competing with each other. That competition reduced profits, but the English didn't have that problem since the English East India Company was a monopoly. The Dutch liked that idea, and early in 1602, they formed their own monopoly to trade in the East. That was the Dutch East India Company, and the creation of that company created a rivalry between the English and the Dutch that would extend throughout the 1600s.

The creation of the Dutch East India Company is notable for the unique way that it was financed. Unlike the English company which relied on a handful of wealthy investors, the Dutch company encouraged everyone to buy shares. Any Dutch citizen could invest in the company. So in that sense, it was the first company to 'go public.' As a result, about 1800 people invested in the initial funding of the company. [*SOURCE: Merchant Kings: When Companies Ruled the World, 1600-1900, Stephen R. Bown, p. 16.*]

At the time, most corporations required investors to hold their stock for a certain number of years before they could sell it, but the Dutch East India Company allowed investors to sell their shares at any time. So that created a open market for the shares. Just as people could buy and sell goods and services, they could also buy and sell their stock in the Dutch East India Company. That allowed people to speculate. The value of shares fluctuated with the profits – and anticipated profits – of the company. So the shares of stock were constantly changing hands. And every time someone wanted to buy or sell some of their shares, the parties had to go to the company's bookkeeper to record the transaction. With so many people buying and selling shares, that created a logistical nightmare for the bookkeeper. So the city of Amsterdam designated a separate building to be used exclusively for the trading of shares in the company. Investors could simply go there to buy some shares or sell some shares, and the transaction was recorded on the spot. And that development is notable because it was the first stock exchange. [*SOURCE: Money: The True Story of a Made-Up Thing, Jacob Goldstein, p. 47-8.*] It was a mechanism that made it easy for people to invest in the company and to speculate on the company's success. So in these first few years of the 1600s, we have the first publicly traded company and the first stock market.

We also acquired the modern sense of the word ***invest*** during this period, even though the word had been around for a while. Believe it or not, the original sense of the word ***invest*** had to do with clothing. So let's look at the history of this word for minute. The word ***invest*** is derived from the Latin word ***vestis*** meaning 'clothes' or 'clothing.' We have this root in several English words related to clothing, perhaps most obviously in the word ***vest*** for a garment worn on the upper body. It also appears in the word ***vestments*** meaning 'clothes' or 'clothing.' We also find it in a word that has become somewhat pejorative today, and that's the word ***transvestite*** which literally means 'across clothing' or 'someone who cross-dresses or wears the clothing of the opposite gender.' As we've seen, that basic idea pops up in a lot of Shakespeare plays – including Twelfth Night.

Well, it was common in the Middle Ages – and still somewhat common today – for a person to don a specific set of clothing when they acquired a specific office or position. It was typically part of a ceremony that took place when that person was installed in that position. So for example, when a priest became a bishop, he acquired the clothing or vestments of a bishop. And

the process of placing that priest in that position with that special clothing was called ***investiture***. And of course, within the word ***investiture***, we can find the roots of the word ***invest***. In fact, that was the original meaning of ***invest*** when it entered English in the late 1400s and early 1500s. It meant 'to ceremonially dress someone when they were placed into an office' or it could simply mean 'to install a person into a specific office or position.'

But in the early 1600s, the word ***invest*** started to acquire its modern sense, and it was specifically related to the activity of the English East India Company. The company had to purchase or acquire goods in England, and then exchange them for spices in the East Indies. The idea was that the amount paid for the goods in England would be significantly less than the value of the spices acquired in the Far East. Through that process, one form of capital was exchanged for another form of capital, and the new capital was presumably more valuable than the original capital. So the old capital was given a new form. The process was equated with someone who acquires an exalted position. That person is essentially transformed into a new person with new clothing to reflect his or her elevated position. And in the trading business, the original capital acquired a newer more valuable form when it was exchanged for capital that was worth more. So the capital was also 'invested' or given a new elevated form. And that appears to be how the word ***invest*** related to clothing came to refer to the process by which we convert an asset with one value into an asset of greater value.

Now, as I noted, the modern sense of the word ***invest*** came from the early years of the English East India Company. But English sailors were not just looking to the East Indies. They were also looking to the West Indies. In other words, they were once again looking westward to North America.

It had been over a decade since Sir Walter Raleigh's attempt to establish an English colony at Roanoke had failed with the mysterious disappearance of the colonists who had been left there. But in the first few years of the 1600s, there was a renewed interest in the region. In fact, in these first couple of years, Raleigh sent three expeditions back to Roanoke to look for the missing colonists. The expeditions were hampered by bad weather and rough seas, and were never able to reach the site of the original settlement. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 220*.]

Then in March of 1602, an English lawyer and sailor named Bartholomew Gosnold decided to revisit the coastline of North America. He was able to acquire the funding for a new expedition to the region, but this time Gosnold intended to head further north to the area we know today as New England, but it was called ***Norumbega*** at the time.

Norumbega was an Algonquin word that the Italian explorer Giovanni de Verrazzano had picked up when he explored the region in the early 1500s. Now Gosnold wanted to see if the region could support an English settlement. His plan was to explore the region and set up a trading post if he could find a good spot. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 220-2.*]

Among the passengers who took part in the voyage were two men who kept separate journals of their experiences. One of the men was named John Brereton and the other was named Gabriel Archer, and both of their accounts were published after they returned to England. And that's why historians know what happened on this expedition. Brereton's account was published first, and because of that, his account provides the earliest English description of New England.

Their ship reached the coastline of modern-day Maine in May of 1602. Even though they were the first Englishmen to reach the region, traders from France and Spain had been there quite a few times over the prior century. In fact, when the Englishmen went ashore and found indigenous people, some of them were wearing European clothing, including coats, pants, shoes and hose. The others were naked.

The Englishmen then traveled down the coast where they encountered a cape which Brereton described as a "mightie headland." He wrote that the area had lots of cod fish, and they caught a plentiful supply of cod while they were there. In Archer's separate account, he wrote, ". . . we tooke great store of Cod-fish." Archer wrote that they were so pleased with number of cod they caught, they decided to name the region 'Cape Cod.' So that famous cape on the eastern end of Massachusetts got its name on this expedition in 1602.

The sailors then decided to continue around the cape and explore the islands to the south. On one of them, they found an abundance of native grapes. It apparently resembled a vineyard. A note in the margin of Brereton's original account says, "The first Island called Marthaes vineyard." [*SOURCE: Early English and French Voyages, John Franklin Jameson, p. 332.*] So from this account, we know that Martha's Vineyard got its name on this expedition as well.

But who was Martha? Well, the answer depends on who you ask. It appears that Bartholomew Gosnold, who led the expedition, had a daughter named Martha who had died as an infant several years earlier. Most sources suggest that he named the island after her. But Gosnold's mother-in-law was also named Martha. So other sources suggest that she was the source of the name. Maybe he named the island after both of them. We don't really know. All we have is that note in Brereton's journal, and later explorers preserved that name. [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 224.*]

In Archer's account, he noted that another set of islands nearby were given the name the Elizabeth Islands in honor of Queen Elizabeth. There are islands in the region that bear that name to this day, though it isn't clear if they are the specific ones that Archer referred to in his account. [*SOURCE: Early English and French Voyages, John Franklin Jameson, p. 333.*]

A few days later, the English sailors encountered some more indigenous people. The sailors traded with them. They gave them knives and other trinkets in exchange for furs and animal skins. The sailors tried to communicate with them and found that they actually knew some European words, or what Brereton referred to as "Christian words." [*SOURCE: New World, Inc., John Butman and Simon Targett, p. 222.*] He also reported that were very good at repeating English words as if they were native speakers. He said that on one occasion, an indigenous man repeated an entire sentence back to him in English "so plaine and distinctly, as if he had beene a

long scholar in the language." [*SOURCE: Early English and French Voyages, John Franklin Jameson, p. 339.*]

This is an interesting account because it suggests that the language barrier between the indigenous people and the Europeans was quickly broken down as the two groups sought to communicate with each other. And that may also help to explain why so many words of the indigenous people passed into English when the English settled there.

And speaking of English settlements in North America, this expedition by Bartholomew Gosnold set the stage for the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown five years later. In fact, Gosnold was a key figure in the formation of the Virginia Company that was soon established to organize a settlement there. He was one of the company's primary promoters and recruiters, and he captained one of the three ships that took the first settlers to Jamestown. But more on that next time.

So the year 1602 saw English sailors reaching the Far East and the Americas. England was becoming more confident in its position within Europe and was now starting to actively challenge Portuguese power in the east and Spanish and French power in the west.

As we turn our attention to the following year – 1603, we begin that year by encountering another play by William Shakespeare. In February, the Stationer's Register maintained by the printers' guild included a reference to a new play called Troilus and Cressida. The play has never been one Shakespeare's more popular plays, so it hasn't much of an impact on the language. As a result, I'm not going to spend much time on it here. But let make a couple of quick notes about it before we move on.

First of all, the plot of the play was based on a popular story that had emerged in the Middle Ages. It was derived from certain elements of Homer's Iliad, and the story is set during that period of ancient Greece. If you listened to the earlier episodes about Geoffrey Chaucer, you might remember that Chaucer also composed a version of the story. And Shakespeare may have used Chaucer's poem as a source for this play. I'll refer you back to Episode 126 if you want to revisit my discussion about Chaucer's version.

Though Shakespeare's version of the story has many fans, I noted that it isn't one of his more popular plays. Many scholars think it was composed for a private performance because there is no clear evidence that it was performed at the Globe or any other theater during his lifetime. There is some legal word-play in the dialogue, so it has been suggested that it was another play composed for a private performance at the Inns of Court where students studied the law. If that's true, it might have been a follow-up to Twelfth Night which was also performed there.

As it turns out, Troilus and Cressida was the last Shakespeare play that we can definitively date to the Elizabethan period because the Elizabethan period came to an end a few weeks after the play was recorded in the Stationer's Register. About a month later, in March of 1603, Queen Elizabeth started to become ill. She was 69 years old, and her health deteriorated very quickly.

She became weak, and she stopped eating and sleeping. She eventually took to bed and lost the ability to speak.

Since she didn't have any children or siblings, and since she had never formally designated an heir, her close advisors were concerned about the issue of the succession. There had been many informal communications and assurances to the Scots king James VI, but nothing was certain. So as she was nearing the end, her councillors asked if she still wanted James as her successor. Since she couldn't speak, she supposedly gestured toward her head. The councillors interpreted the gesture as her consent. A short time later on March 24, Elizabeth passed away. At that moment, a messenger was sent on horseback to Scotland to inform King James that he was now also the King of England. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 466.*]

Elizabeth's death brought an end to the Tudor line of kings. The reason why James of Scotland was seen as an acceptable successor is because he was also a Tudor through his great-grandmother. His great-grandmother was Henry VIII's sister. And she had married the Scots king, who was part of the House of Stuart in Scotland. The Scottish line passed from them down to James, so he had Tudor blood, but he was a direct male descendant of the Scottish House of Stuart. And when he succeeded his cousin Elizabeth in England, his reign marked the beginning of Stuart monarchy in England.

James was James VI of Scotland, but since England had never had a king named James, he became James I of England. So he was both James VI and James I, depending on which monarchy you are referring to. The unification of the crowns of England and Scotland was one of those defining moments in the history of the British Isles. It eventually led to the formal political unification of two countries about a century later. And it also had linguistic consequences.

Despite being the new English king, James was very much a Scot, and he spoke in a broad Scots dialect. But James embraced the standard English spoken in and around London, and as the two crowns – and eventually the two countries – became unified, the influence of London English began to seep into Scotland. And that was an important development because it reversed a trend that had been occurring for about six centuries in which the English-based languages of England and Scotland had diverged from each other and had become increasingly distinct.

Remember that English in England and Scots in Scotland were both derived from Old English. But English and Scots were quite different from each other in the early 1600s when James became king of England. But gradually, as James embraced the standard English spoken around London, and after the two realms were unified in the early 1700s, the standard English of the south was embraced in Scotland. Of course, most English books were printed in London in that form of London English, so readers in Scotland tended to read books printed in that form of English. [*SOURCE: Scots: The Mither Tongue, Billy Kay, p. 82.*]

And as I noted, James himself also embraced the English of the south. He had been a prolific writer to this point. After he became king, he re-issued many of his works in the English of London. Over the course of the following century, many upperclass and educated speakers in Scotland began to learn and imitate the English of the south. And when the respective

governments were unified as ‘Great Britain’ in the early 1700s, official documents throughout Britain were printed in the English of the government centered in London.

All of this led to a general erosion of Scots in favor of standard English. Today, most people in Scotland speak a form of English rooted in England rather than Scots rooted in Scotland. Of course, they speak it with a Scottish accent, but the main point here is that James’s accession to the English throne had many long-term linguistic consequences in Scotland. Had Scotland remained a completely separate and independent country, it is very likely the Scots would have continued to evolve separately from English, and that modern Scots would be far more distinct than it is today. In that regard, English in the British Isles would have probably mirrored what happened in Scandinavia when Old Norse evolved into Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic as those regions became distinct nations. But the political unification of England and Scotland that began at this point in 1603 reversed that type of process in Britain.

I mention that the printed word contributed to the expansion of London English into Scotland. That was because most English books were printed in London. But there was one book in particular that contributed to the spread of that form of English. And that book was the Bible, specifically a new translation that was adopted during James’s reign. We know that translation as the King James Version. After it was adopted, it was used throughout England and Scotland, and most people who could read and afford a book had a copy of it. As we’ll see, it played an important role in standardizing the language throughout the British Isles and beyond. [*SOURCE: Scots: The Mither Tongue, Billy Kay, p. 82.*]

And in fact, the King James Bible actually has its origins in James’s initial trip down to London to be crowned as the new King of England. And it is also connected to the Puritan movement that was growing in England.

As we saw earlier in the episode, the Puritans wanted to ‘purify’ the Church of England by removing all elements that they associated with Catholicism. Their demands had been ignored during Elizabeth’s reign, but they thought James might be willing to consider their complaints. So a Puritan delegation met James on his journey to London. They presented him with a petition summarizing their grievances and the changes that they wanted to make to the Anglican Church. James didn’t give them an answer at the time, but he did agree to meet with them to consider their demands once he was in London.

When James arrived in London, the city was once again experiencing an outbreak of plague. James’s coronation had to be held in private because public gatherings were prohibited. The outbreak was the worst in over half a century. Some estimates suggest that about twenty percent (20%) of London’s population died as a result, including two of the actors in Shakespeare’s acting company – Will Kemp and Thomas Pope. In fact, the theaters were once again closed – and remained mostly closed for the next few years until the outbreak passed. [*SOURCE: Death By Shakespeare, Kathryn Harkup, p. 36-7.*]

Despite the loss of a couple of key actors, the members of Shakespeare's acting company were somewhat fortunate in that the new king took them under his wing and made them members of the royal household. At this point, they ceased to be the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and they became the King's Men. With royal sanction, they received payments from the crown and were entitled to perform at royal functions. And that helped the company survive the outbreak. [*SOURCE: Death By Shakespeare, Kathryn Harkup, p. 36-7.*]

I should also note that some scholars date the play called 'All's Well That Ends Well' to this same time period. There isn't really any definitive way to date the play, so it isn't really known for certain when the play was composed. Again, it hasn't had much of an impact on the English language, so I'm not going to spend any time on it here. You might assume that the modern phrase 'All's Well That Ends Well' comes from the title of the play, but that phrase predates the play by at least a couple of centuries.

Part of the challenge in dating some of the plays from this period is that the theaters were mostly closed due to the plague. Those closures extended into the following year – 1604. And in fact, James's conference with the Puritans was also delayed due to the plague. But in January of 1604, he did meet with the Puritan leaders to hear their grievances. The leading bishops of the Anglican Church were also present. The meeting was held at Hampton Court – and it is generally known to history as the Hampton Court Conference.

The Puritans had a long list of demands. Those demands stemmed from Elizabeth's approach to Protestant and Catholic divide that had pulled the country in different directions. She had taken an in-between approach by establishing a Protestant church with a formal structure that resembled the Catholic Church. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 125.*] That structure included Anglican bishops who wore specific clerical robes and dress associated with the position. As we saw earlier, the word ***invest*** has its roots in this type of clothing and is related to words like ***investiture*** and ***vestment***. Well, when an English bishop underwent his investiture in the Anglican Church, he received his specific vestments which identified him as a bishop. But the Puritans associated those vestments with the Catholic Church, and they wanted to do away with them. They also opposed certain rituals in the Anglican Prayer Book like making the sign of the cross at baptisms. [*In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 133-4.*]

James heard each of the Puritan proposals. It was quite a list, and he rejected one after another. As the day wore on, James apparently felt the need to offer a concession to the Puritans – to offer them something that might placate them. And that concession came when the issue of the Bible came up. There were two primary English translations of the Bible in use at the time. The official Bible used by the Anglican Church was called the Bishop's Bible. It's language was a little stiff and formal. It was more Latinate in that it tended to use Latin and Greek words instead of common English words. But it had the sanction of the government and was found in churches across the country. The other Bible was called the Geneva Bible. It had been translated in the mid-1500s by a group of English Protestants who had fled to Geneva during the reign of Elizabeth's Catholic sister Mary known to history as 'Bloody Mary.' Well, that translation relied more on plain English and was easier for the average person to read. So it was actually the more popular version at the time. For many people, the Geneva Bible was the only book they owned.

And it was the version that the Puritans wanted to make the official Bible of England – replacing the Bishop's Bible.

But not only did the Anglican bishops oppose such a change, King James himself also opposed the suggested change. James hated the Geneva Bible, even though it had been the Bible commonly used in Scotland during his reign there. James's opposition wasn't based on the translation itself, but the extra material that was included along with the translation. The Geneva Bible included a preface to each book of the Bible, which explained what that particular book taught. The translation also included notes in the margin that explained passages that were difficult for the layperson to understand. Since the Puritans encouraged private study of the Bible, they liked the explanations provided by those notes. But the Church leaders in England didn't like that type of extracurricular material because they thought such explanations should be provided in sermons – not private study. James probably shared the Church's concern, but his objection was more specific to him. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 121.*]

There are several chapters in the Bible where a person is forced to disobey a ruler's commands in order to follow the word of God. Rulers were typically called ***tyrants*** in the Geneva Bible. The marginal notes in that version of the Bible said the persons were justified in ignoring the rulers's commands because the commands were against the word of God. That implied that a king's commands could be ignored when they were perceived as conflicting with God's will. James didn't like that implication because it could be used to justify rebellion or opposition to his reign. He believed in the divine right of kings which meant that kings were chosen and ordained by God. He believed that God worked through the king so that the king's orders had the implicit authority of God, and therefore could not be opposed on religious grounds. The notes in the Geneva Bible seemed to contradict that.

So when the Puritan leaders suggested that the Geneva Bible be made the official translation used by the Anglican Church, James firmly rejected it. But then one of the leaders suggested that perhaps an alternate translation could be prepared that might satisfy some of their recommendations and might be an improvement on the Bishop's Bible that was then being used by the Church. At that suggestion, James saw his opportunity to offer a concession to the Puritans. He agreed to allow a new translation to be commissioned. He also knew that it would take a while for the translation to be prepared, so the delay would get the Puritans off of his back for a while. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 161-2.*]

The leading religious scholars of Oxford and Cambridge were directed to work on the new translation, but James imposed several conditions on them. The new translation was to be a revision of the Bishop's Bible, not the Geneva Bible which he opposed. Marginal notes were also prohibited in the new translation, except as needed to explain Hebrew and Greek words that English readers might not understand. [*SOURCE: Bible: The Story of the King James Version, Gordon Campbell, p. 35-37.*] Of course, that newly authorized translation is known today as either the 'Authorized Verison' or the 'King James Version.' And it is also worth noting that the translation generally avoided the use of the term ***tyrant*** in the places where it was used in the Geneva Bible. That wasn't a direct order from James, but the translators were probably sensitive to the king's concern about the use of that term.

This new translation took seven years to complete, so we'll look at it in a little more detail in a future episode when it appeared for the first time. But it became the most popular book in the English language. If a household had any books at all, it probably had that translation of the Bible. It was composed in the standard dialect used around London and the East Midlands, and the King James Bible helped to secure the status of that dialect as the standard written dialect of English.

That Bible also did something else of note. It extended the life of the second person pronouns ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy*** which we looked at earlier, and which were in decline in common speech. As I noted earlier, formal written English was more conservative in that regard. And just as Shakespeare preserved those pronoun forms in his plays and poetry, so did the scholars who worked on the King James translation. And that helped some of those old pronoun forms to endure in the language a bit longer than they probably would have otherwise.

Since the translation was authorized at this point in the early 1600s while those pronoun forms were still being used, the translation preserved them. If a new authorized translation had not been approved at this time, but instead had been approved at the end of the 1600s, it is very likely that it would not have contained pronouns like ***thee***, and ***thou*** and ***thy***. It would probably have used the simple ***you*** that we use today.

Now the commission of the King James Bible was an important development in the history of English, and it was accompanied by another defining moment in the evolution of the language. And this was literally a 'defining moment.' In the same year that King James Bible was commissioned, a schoolmaster named Robert Cawdry published a book that is considered to be the first dictionary of the English language.

Now when I say this was the first English dictionary, I mean that it was the first book to define English words in English. In other words, it was specifically intended for English-speakers to help them define and understand English words. Prior to this point, there had been lots of translation dictionaries. So for example, there was a long history of books used to translate Latin words into English, or vice versa. And of course, French-English translation guides had been around since the Middle Ages. A few episodes back, I talked about John Florio's book that translated Italian words into English. These types of translation guides or dictionaries were common at the time. But Cawdry's book was unique in that it was the first monolingual – or English to English – dictionary.

It wasn't a completely new idea though. Back in Episode 163, we looked at Richard Mulcaster's book about English called 'The Elementarie.' You might recall that Mulcaster had recommended the preparation of a monolingual dictionary. And for many centuries, English writers had included glossaries at the end of their works to define and explain difficult words used in the text, usually words from Latin or Greek.

Robert Cawdry took these ideas and expanded them into a proper resource that could be used to define English words, and more specifically, to define hard words that many English speakers didn't understand. Much like those earlier glossaries, this first dictionary focused on difficult

words, many of which had roots in Latin and Greek. So this first dictionary was born out of the fact that English had borrowed so many words from those languages over the prior century or so, and many common people still didn't fully understand those terms, so they needed some help. And Cawdrey's book was intended as such a resource. In fact, he made his intention clear in the title of the book. As I have noted before, many books during this period have very long titles, and Cawdrey's book is no exception.

Here's the full title of the book: "A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c. With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons. Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elswhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues."

Now there is a lot to unpack in that long title. First of all, the dictionary is commonly known today by the first few words in that passage – 'A Table Alphabeticall.' And the title makes it clear that the work was designed to help readers understand hard words found in many books at the time, and was also intended for "Ladies, Gentlewomen, and any other vnskilfull persons." Now we might cringe at that wording today because it seems sexist, but it was sexist for a reason. The book was intended for women because most female readers didn't have any formal education in Latin or Greek, and would have struggled with English loanwords derived from those languages. At the time, formal education in the grammar schools and universities was still largely restricted to males. Females would have had access to an informal education with private tutors or 'petty schools' taught by local people who could read and write. But those informal types of education would have focused almost exclusively on English. So when Cawdrey said that his dictionary was intended for "Ladies, Gentlewomen, and any other vnskilfull persons," he meant people who didn't have any formal education in Latin or Greek and therefore needed help with recent loanwords derived from those roots. In that regard, it's interesting to see a book being specifically marketed to a female audience. And it shows that such an audience was quite substantial in the early 1600s.

The title that I read also mentioned that the dictionary was designed to help people read the Scriptures, as well as sermons. So this confirms that many people were reading and studying the Bible on their own. As I noted earlier, the Geneva Bible was the most popular Bible at the time because it was designed in part for private study. Of course, it would have used loanwords from Latin and Greek, so Cawdrey's dictionary was designed to sit alongside that Bible in households around the country. This wasn't a book for scholars. It was a book for the common people. [*SOURCE: The Adventure of English, Melvyn Bragg, p. 122.*]

Since the dictionary was intended to define so-called 'hard words' borrowed from other languages, it isn't the type of extensive dictionary that we find today with every common word in the language. It only contained about 2500 words, and again, they were included because they were hard or challenging for English readers at the time. [*SOURCE: A History of English Words, Geoffrey Hughes, p. 251.*]

It is therefore interesting to observe words that were included in Cawdrey's dictionary that seem very common to us today. That suggests that those words were somewhat obscure at the time, but have become more common in the language over the past four centuries. For example, on the first few pages of the dictionary under the letter A we find words like ***abolish***, ***absolute***, ***accent***, ***accident***, ***action***, ***admire*** and ***agent***. Today, most English speakers would not need a dictionary to define those words – but apparently their use was more limited in the early 1600s and some readers would have needed to look them up in Cawdrey's dictionary.

Just as some of the words have become more common with time, others have declined or disappeared altogether. The dictionary includes words like ***warish*** meaning 'to ease or deliver,' ***welde*** meaning 'to move,' ***capuchon*** meaning 'a hood,' ***crassitude*** meaning 'thickness,' ***obtrectation*** meaning 'slander,' and ***malepert*** meaning 'proud.'

Very often, a word was included that is familiar to us today, but the definition suggests that the word had a different meaning at the time. In those cases, the definition usually reflects a literal meaning based on the original meaning of the word in Latin or Greek or whichever language the word came from. Over the centuries, the meaning of these words has evolved in such a way that we don't really recognize the original meaning today. For example, the word ***translation*** appears in the text. It seems appropriate under the circumstances, but it is defined as 'altering or changing,' so it didn't really have the more specific sense of 'changing from one language to another' that is has today. The word ***inspire*** is defined as 'breath or blow into.' ***Instant*** is defined as 'earnest.' ***Tablet*** is defined as a 'little table.' And the word ***undermine*** has the original literal definition of 'grave or dig.' As I noted in an earlier episode, during siege warfare, a fighter would dig under the walls of a castle and place explosives there. He would literally mine under the walls, thus the word ***undermine***. When the explosives were detonated, the wall would weaken or collapse, and that gave us the more modern sense of ***undermine*** as 'to weaken or injure or destroy.' That extended sense hadn't yet emerged in the early 1600s, so Cawdrey's dictionary only includes the original literal meaning of the word.

Let me also make a quick note about the spellings contained in Cawdrey's dictionary. Generally speaking, he used spellings that were the same or similar to the ones used today, but there was some variation. For example, many words contained a final [-e] that appeared to be optional. In that opening title I read earlier, he used the word ***words*** three times. One time it was spelled like today – [w-o-r-d-s], but the other two times, it had that extra [e] and was spelled [w-o-r-d-e-s]. The word ***door*** is also spelled with an extra [-e] as [d-o-o-r-e].

Words like ***magic*** and ***traffic*** end in [-ic] today, but Cawdrey spelled them with a final [-icke]. So ***magic*** was spelled [m-a-g-i-c-k-e]. Many words that end in a single [-l] today had double [-l]'s in his dictionary. So words like ***alphabetical***, ***fearful***, ***burial*** and ***final*** all had double [-l]'s at the end. Words like ***agony*** and ***dignity*** were spelled with [-ie] at the end instead of their modern [-y].

Those variations from modern spelling would be gradually resolved over the course of the 1600s, thanks in part to other dictionaries that followed this one. And speaking of those later dictionaries, I should note that each one that came after Cawdrey's dictionary tended to be larger

than the one that came before it. Cawdrey's dictionary had around 2500 words. About twelve years later, John Bullokar produced a new dictionary called 'An English Expositor.' It had nearly 4,000 words. In the mid-1600s, Thomas Blount published a dictionary called 'Glossographia.' It was nearly three times as big with about 11,000 entries. In the early 1700s, a dictionary called 'Dictionarium Britannicum' was four times larger with 48,000 entries. [*SOURCE: A Biography of the English Language, C.M. Millward, p. 240.*]

Now, as I noted, Cawdrey's dictionary appeared in the year 1604, and at the end of that year, we have evidence of two more plays by William Shakespeare. Apparently, the plays Measure for Measure and Othello were performed at the royal court at the end of that year. Remember that the theaters were still closed for much of that period due to plague, so it appears that Shakespeare's acting company – now known as 'The King's Men' – were giving private performances at James's court. The evidence comes from an account maintained by the Master of Revels named Edmund Tilney. The Master of Revels was in charge of entertainment at the royal court. ***Revels*** is just a variation of the word ***revelry***. And this particular account from the Master of Revels indicates that expenses were paid for a performance of a play called 'The Moor of Venice' on November 1. 'The Moor of Venice' is the subtitle of Othello. The account also lists expenses for a performance of Measure for Measure on December 26. So we can definitively date those two plays to this period, though we don't know exactly when they were composed. [*SOURCE: Shakespeare: The Evidence, Ian Wilson, p. 305.*]

Measure for Measure is another Shakespeare play that has it fans, but it isn't one of his more popular plays. It hasn't really had much of an impact on the English language, so in the interest of time, I'm not going to spend any time on it here.

But the other play mentioned in those records – Othello – is one of Shakespeare's more well-known plays. It has been popular with audiences over the centuries, and it still regularly performed to this day. The full title is 'The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice.' The story comes from an Italian writer named Giovanni Battista Giraldi, who wrote under the name Cinthio. A hundred of his stories were published in Italian in the mid-1500s, and Shakespeare's play sticks pretty close to the original source material. By the way, that same book also provides the plot of that other Shakespeare play which appeared around this same time called Measure for Measure. So apparently, Shakespeare loved this particular book of Italian stories.

As I noted, the story of Othello describes him as 'the Moor of Venice.' The word ***Moor*** had been around since the Old English period, and it originally referred to an inhabitant of northwest Africa in the region of modern-day Morocco and Algeria. The Moors were later conquered by Muslim invaders and converted to Islam. And when Muslim armies invaded southern Spain in the early Middle Ages, most of the invaders came from that same part of north Africa. After that point, the word ***Moor*** acquired a more general sense as a Muslim or a person of African descent. In Othello, Shakespeare uses the word ***Moor*** in that sense as a black person because there are several references in the play to Othello's physical appearance.

In the play, Othello is a general in the Venetian army, and he has become engaged to Desdemona – the daughter of one of Venice's most powerful senators. So this play centers around an interracial relationship, and the racial undertones of this relationship run through the play.

The play's leading antagonist or villain is Iago – a prominent soldier serving under Othello. The play begins with Iago expressing his frustration and disappointment that Othello has overlooked him for the position of lieutenant under Othello's command. Instead, Iago has been relegated to a lesser position. While expressing his frustration to his friend Roderigo, he says that he will pretend to be content with his position, adding that if he were to make his true feelings known, then ". . . I will wear my heart upon my sleeve For daws to peck at." In other words, if he is transparent and wears his heart on his sleeve, the birds will peck at it. So he will hide his true feelings. I mention that passage because it is apparently the source of the phrase 'to wear your heart on you sleeve' meaning 'so speak you mind' or 'let your true feeling be known.'

This Shakespearean phrase is actually adapted from another phrase that was common at the time. If something was open and obvious and apparent to everyone, then it was common to say that that thing was 'pinned on the person's sleeve.' So it was in plain sight for everyone to see. Here, Shakespeare took that phrase and had Iago say that if he wore his heart on his sleeve, then everyone would know his true feelings. And, of course, 'wearing your heart on your sleeve' survives to this day.

Iago's hatred of Othello is partly due to being overlooked for the position he wanted in Othello's army, but also because he is racist. He makes explicit comments about Othello's race and physical appearance. He then decides to plot against Othello

Through subtle suggestion, Iago leads Othello to believe that Desdemona is cheating on him with another man. He wants to make Othello jealous, but he does so by ironically suggesting that Othello should try not to be jealous of Desdemona's relationship with the other man. He says "O, beware, my lord, of jealously! It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock The meat it feeds on." So he describes jealously as a 'green-eyed monster,' and that description has survived in the language. Today, jealously is still sometimes described with that euphemism.

Othello becomes obsessed with the notion that his wife may be cheating on him, and he blames Iago for planting the idea in his head. He confronts Iago and demands that Iago provide proof of the allegation. In the speech, Othello gives us the first recorded use of the phrase 'pomp and circumstance.' He says that before he became obsessed with his wife's fidelity, he was happy being a general and thinking only about the "pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

Iago is forced to provide proof of the alleged affair, so he makes up a lie on the spot. He says that he shared sleeping quarters with the other man, and the man revealed the affair while talking in his sleep. Othello believes the lie. When Iago says that he can't say for certain that there was an affair since the man was speaking in his sleep, Othello responds, "But this denoted a foregone conclusion: 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream." And that passage gives us the first recorded use of the phrase 'foregone conclusion.' It appears to be a phrase that Shakespeare

coined. So if you refer to something today as a ‘foregone conclusion,’ you can thank Shakespeare and this line from Othello.

Ultimately, Othello is driven mad with jealously. He eventually murders Desdemona in a rage of passion. When he later finds out that he has been deceived by Iago, and that Desdemona had in fact been faithful to him all along, he regrets his actions so much that he kills himself. So the main characters experience a tragic fate in keeping with the general structure of tragedies of this period.

As I noted, the earliest evidence we have for Othello and Measure and Measure is their performance as part of the royal entertainment in November and December of 1604. As it turns out, there was another activity underway at that same time which would have both political and linguistic consequences.

In this episode, we’ve seen that the Puritans were fervent Protestants who were opposed to many aspects of the Church of England, and were frustrated with the government’s unwillingness to make the changes they wanted. But at the same time that King James faced complaints from the Puritans, he also faced fierce opposition from many Catholics who wanted a return to the traditional Catholic religion of England. In earlier episodes, we saw that Elizabeth faced several assassination attempts. And in December of 1604, James was about to experience his own assassination attempt from a group of radical Catholic conspirators. But this attempt not only targeted the king; it also targeted Parliament. The assumption was that Parliament would simply replace James with another Protestant monarch if James were killed. So the entire governing structure of the country had to be removed.

Earlier in the year, a staunch Catholic named Robert Catesby began devising a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament during the opening of the next session of Parliament when the king would be present. The attack was intended to kill everyone in the building at the time. The plan was to rent a house next door to Parliament, and then dig a tunnel that would extend from under the house to the Parliament building where explosives would be planted and detonated at the appropriate time. The main problem with the plot – beyond the outrageous nature of it – was that it required someone with an expertise in explosives, and specifically someone with an expertise in undermining a structure with explosives. As we saw earlier in the episode, the word ***undermine*** still had that more literal sense in the early 1600s.

And Catesby not only needed an expert in undermining and explosives, he also needed someone willing to take part in such a crazy plot. And he soon found the man he was looking for in an English Catholic named Guy Fawkes. Fawkes had been involved in the war in the Netherlands as the Dutch tried to secure their independence from Spain. He had actually been fighting on the side of the Spanish, and he had been involved in blowing up Dutch fortifications with explosives. So in the spring of 1604, Fawkes joined several other members of the conspiracy to kill the king and to blow up the Parliament building in England. [*SOURCE: The Life of Guy, Allan Metcalf, p. 45.*]

The conspirators secured a lease on the house near Parliament, and they started digging the tunnel in December around the same time that Othello and Measure for Measure were being performed for the royal court. Parliament was supposed to open a couple of months later in February of 1605, but the outbreak of plague forced the opening to be pushed back to November later in the year. This bought the conspirators some more time, but progress on the tunnel remained very slow.

Then, a few months later in March of 1605, they learned that a coal merchant was renting a vault that actually extended under the Parliament building. The merchant was using the vault to store coal, but he was in the process of removing the coal and ending his lease. So the conspirators altered their initial plan and acquired the vault after the merchant was done. They now had access to a chamber under the Houses of Parliament. They were then able to connect that vault to the basement of the building they were already renting, and voila, they had a direct path from the rented house to Parliament, and they soon placed 36 barrels of gunpowder under the building where most of the national government of England would soon be gathered. [*SOURCES: The Life of Guy, Allan Metcalf, p. 47-8.] [Rebellion, Peter Ackroyd, p. 14*.]

But the plot fell apart when one of the conspirators involved in the plot tried to warn his brother-in-law, who was a member of Parliament. The man who gave away the plot was Francis Tresham. His brother-in-law was a staunch Catholic and a member of Parliament. Tresham didn't want his brother-in-law to perish in the attack, so he sent him an anonymous letter and warned him to stay away from Parliament on the opening day when the attack was planned. The brother-in-law then alerted the authorities. The authorities suspected an attack on the building based on the wording of the letter, and they conducted a search which led to the underground vault. On Monday, November 4 – the day before the planned attack – the authorities found Guy Fawkes in the cellar underneath the Houses of Parliament. They also found the 36 barrels of gunpowder. [*SOURCE: Rebellion, Peter Ackroyd, p. 15-6*]

Fawkes was arrested and tortured, and he eventually confessed to the plot, which is known to history as The Gunpowder Plot. He also revealed the identity of the other conspirators. They were soon located. Several were killed, and the rest were arrested. All were tried, found guilty, and executed a couple of months later.

The timing of these events is remarkable because the plot was uncovered and stopped with literally a few hours to spare. It was that close to succeeding. And when the details emerged, the people of England treated the last minute reprieve as a case of divine intervention. Bonfires and celebrations filled the streets of London. And a few weeks later, Parliament adopted a law requiring an annual observance on November 5 to commemorate the events and to celebrate the country's fortune in having spoiled the plot. The annual celebration was marked with bonfires and effigies that were burned. Over time, this commemoration became known as Guy Fawkes Day. [*SOURCE: The Life of Guy, Allan Metcalf, p. 68-9.*]

Now this notorious event in English history had both political and linguistic consequences. The political consequences are obvious because, if the plot has been successful, it is difficult to imagine all the ways it could have changed the trajectory of history, especially considering that

these events took place on the eve of the British Empire being established. A successful attack would have probably changed the history of world. It was another defining moment in history.

But these events also had linguistic consequences. Those consequences might not be obvious at first, but it specifically affected how some people dealt with the general decline of those old second person pronouns ***thou***, ***thee*** and ***thy***. So let me explain.

Each year on November 5 when the events of the Gunpowder Plot were commemorated, people lit bonfires and burned effigies. It became common for people to refer to the effigy as 'Guy' or 'the Guy' after Guy Fawkes, the man who most people associated with the conspiracy. That association led people to use the word ***guy*** as a generic noun for a dummy or effigy. [*SOURCE: The Life of Guy, Allan Metcalf, p. 78.*]

As we'll see in the next episode, the English colony at Jamestown in Virginia was established just two years after the Gunpowder Plot. So initially, Guy Fawkes Day was also celebrated in colonial America. But over time, as the colonies grew more independent, they stopped commemorating the holiday. And after the Revolutionary War and the founding of the United States, the holiday was largely forgotten in the new country. But the use of the word ***guy*** for a dummy lingered on in American English.

By the mid-1800s, Americans were using the word ***guy*** as a slang term for a man, often used in a pejorative way at first. So a ***guy*** was a man with a bad reputation. That negative connotation was eventually lost. By the early 1900s, the meaning of ***guy*** has evolved such that American English was regularly using the word as a generic term for a man without any negative association, and the plural form ***guys*** could refer to a group of men. And by the mid-1900s, the plural form ***guys*** was extended even further to apply to a group of both people regardless of gender. When the gender aspect was lost, it gave American English a new way of referring to a group of people. They now just became ***guys***, or if you were addressing them directly, ***you guys***.

And with the advent of ***you guys***, American English now had an effective way of distinguishing singular ***you*** from plural ***you***. If I'm speaking to an individual, I can address him or her as simply ***you***. But if I'm speaking to a group of people, I can refer to them as ***you guys***. This approach proved to be very popular in the northern parts of the US, as distinct from the ***y'all*** approach that was more common in the South. And due to the global impact of American English, the term ***you guys*** as a second person plural pronoun form has even spread to other parts of the English-speaking world. And believe it or not, every time you refer to someone as a ***guy***, or a group of people as ***guys*** or ***you guys***, you are ultimately using the name of Guy Fawkes – the man whose plot could have changed the course of history forever.

By the way, some of you may recall that I spoke with Professor Allan Metcalf a few years back about his book on this subject called "The Life of Guy." Unfortunately, Professor Metcalf passed away a short time after I did that interview. But I would refer you back to that Bonus Episode and his book for a deeper dive on the Gunpowder Plot and the linguistic consequences that flowed from it.

With that, I'm going to wrap up this episode about several defining moments in the history of England and the English language. Next time, we'll look at the establishment of the first permanent English Colony at Jamestown, and that will allow us to begin our look at the history of English in America. Of course, Shakespeare was still around, and he still had a few well-known plays left in him – plays like Macbeth and King Lear, among others. So we'll continue to keep an eye on what he was up to. And of course, as always, we'll keep track of other linguistic and literary developments along the way.

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