

**THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS**

EPISODE 186: A DUTCH TREAT

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 186: A Dutch Treat. This time, as we work our way through the story of English, we’re going to focus on a couple of important developments that took place in North America in the early 1620s. First, the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth and created an English settlement there. And then, a group of settlers arrived on the island of Manhattan in what became the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. Of course, we know that settlement today as New York City. Those migrations brought English to new parts of North America, and also introduced a Dutch element which is still reflected in the English spoken in the United States, and to a certain extent, in the English spoken around the world. So as we explore those developments, we’ll see how those events and other events during this period shaped the English language.

But before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can sign up to support the podcast and get bonus episodes at Patreon.com/historyofenglish.

Also, this episode is quite long, and it’s really a story told in three parts. The first part of the episode will look at the arrival of English settlers at Plymouth in New England. I’m going to take you through their story because it is such an important part of the founding mythology of the United States. The second part of this episode will focus on developments in England during the same time period, which is basically the early 1620s. And finally, the third part of the episode will focus on the arrival of settlers in modern-day New York. That was originally a Dutch colony called New Netherland, and the settlement they built on lower Manhattan was called New Amsterdam. So in the final part of this episode, we’ll explore those events, and we’ll see how the Dutch language persists in many words and names from that region, and also persists in many common words in the English language. And since this is such a long episode, I’ve included a brief break or intermission between those three parts in case you prefer to listen to each part separately.

So let’s get started, and let’s pick up where we left off over the past few episodes. We previously looked at English spelling and pronunciation in the early 1600s, and that discussion was partially inspired by an important work on English pronunciation composed by Alexander Gil, which was published in the year 1619. So I want to pick up the story there – with events in the year 1619 around the same time that Gil’s book on pronunciation appeared. And one of the most important developments during that period was the outbreak of war in central Europe. The war is known to history as the Thirty Years War, and it eventually involved all of the major powers in central and western Europe.

The war centered around the highly fractured Holy Roman Empire, which was a collection of provinces, kingdoms and city-states that stretched across modern-day Germany, Austria, Hungary and nearby regions. Some of those territories were Protestant and some were Catholic, but the new Holy Roman Emperor who took the throne in 1619 was a staunch Catholic who sought to

crack down on those Protestant regions. And that was the ultimate cause of the conflict that initially pitted Catholics against Protestants, but soon expanded into a much broader power struggle between the European powers at the time.

The war raged across Europe for most of the next thirty years as various Protestant regions joined with France to fight against the Holy Roman Empire and its Catholic ally Spain. The war devastated much of central Europe and resulted in the death of over 17 million people. Eventually, England was forced to send troops as well.

The war had several consequences for our story, most notably in several words that can be traced back to that conflict. As I noted, the war devastated much of central Europe, including the region of modern-day Germany. And much of the destruction came from marauding bands of soldiers who plundered the countryside looking for food and other supplies. And in fact, the words *maraud* and *plunder* both came into English from this war. *Maraud* is a French word and *plunder* is a German word, and both words spread throughout the languages of the countries who were involved in the conflict during the 1600s. And by the mid-1600s, both words had also spread to English.

The word *hurrah* as an expression of support or victory was also picked up by English troops who were involved in later stages of the war. It was apparently acquired from similar shouts used in German, Danish and Swedish.

The war also gave English a very common expression – ‘to run the gauntlet.’ If you ‘run the gauntlet,’ you experience a series of difficult or frightening challenges in pursuit of some goal. The phrase can be traced back to the Thirty Years War, but the version we use today is a product of some confusion. So let me explain. Sweden eventually entered the war in support of the Protestant cause, and the phrase ‘to run the gauntlet’ can actually be traced back to Swedish. At the time, a common military punishment was to force a culprit or offending person to run between two rows of soldiers who would beat the offender with ropes or sticks as he passed through. In Swedish, that punishment was called the *gatlopp*. So to ‘run the gatlopp’ was to experience the full range of that grueling punishment and to be attacked from every side. When English troops returned from the war, they apparently brought that Swedish word and the phrase back with them. It soon appeared in English in a slightly modified version as ‘to run the gantelope.’ But how did ‘run the gantelope’ turn into ‘run the gauntlet?’

Well, the answer is linguistic confusion. English speakers back in England weren’t familiar with that Swedish word *gatlopp* or the modified version *gantelope*, so they confused it with another more common loanword – the word *gauntlet*. *Gauntlet* is a French word for a glove, specifically a hard leather or armored glove worn in combat like the kind worn by knights in the Middle Ages. The word had been around in English since the Middle English period. So the phrase ‘to run the gantelope’ soon evolved into the phrase ‘to run the gauntlet.’ But why? What did that French word for a glove have to do with that type of military punishment.

Well, it was common in the Middle Ages for a knight or soldier to throw his glove or gauntlet to the ground when he wanted to issue a challenge to another person. That led to the phrase ‘to throw down the gauntlet’ which meant ‘to issue a challenge to someone.’ So ‘throwing down the gauntlet’ had an association with combat and warfare. And that’s probably why English speakers converted ‘running the gantelope’ into ‘running the gauntlet.’ It was just a slightly more familiar loanword that already had an association with combat and warfare. At any rate, the phrase is usually traced back to English troops who encountered that specific type of military punishment – and the Swedish word for it – during the Thirty Years War.

The outbreak of war in central Europe had consequences that extended to the far corners of the continent, and that included the Netherlands in the north. As we saw in prior episodes, the Netherlands had become part of the larger Spanish Empire due to a series of marriage alliances in the prior century, but the Netherlands was a Protestant outpost in the massive Catholic empire of Spain. So the Dutch felt out of place in that massive empire, and the Spanish had little tolerance for the Protestant religion in the region. The Dutch rebelled and waged a war of independence during the late 1500s, but that conflict had been paused thanks to a temporary truce between the two countries that was set to run for twelve years.

During that period of time, the Netherlands was effectively an independent nation, and it had flourished like no other country in Europe. The creation of the Dutch East India Company had resulted in Dutch trading posts throughout Africa, India and the Far East. They also commissioned Henry Hudson to explore the region of modern-day New York in North America. The Dutch had created the first stock market to trade the stock of the East India Company. The Dutch were also the first to use checks to pay for goods. The Netherlands became the cashier of Europe, and it was the richest nation in Europe at the time. [SOURCE: *Preceding the Mayflower*, James P. Leynse, p. 146]

With such a vast and important empire that reached around the world, the Dutch kept a close eye on European and world affairs. And that information was provided by newspapers, which were being published in the Netherlands during this period. As we’ll see, newspapers hadn’t reached England yet, but they did exist across the Channel in the Netherlands.

Newspapers flourished in the Netherlands because the country allowed a general freedom of the press, and also because the country was teeming with printers. It has been estimated that Dutch printers were responsible for about half of all the books published in the 1600s. [SOURCE: *American Nations*, Colin Woodward, p. 67-8] As we saw in an earlier episode, the first English printing press had also come from the Netherlands, along with Dutch printers to help set the type.

All of that meant that there was a free flow of ideas in the Netherlands, and the country was renowned for its political and religious tolerance. And that made it a haven for refugees from other countries, even refugees from England. One particular group of English Puritans had migrated to the Netherlands about a decade earlier in 1609. As their name indicates, the Puritans wanted to ‘purify’ the Church of England because they thought the Anglican Church was essentially the same as the Catholic Church. Instead of the Pope, it was headed by the king, but otherwise, they thought it was largely Catholic in its hierarchical structure and the way it conducted its services.

Among other reforms, they wanted each local congregation to choose its own leaders. But some of the Puritans went even further. They didn't think the Anglican Church could be reformed, so they wanted to break away and do their own thing. They came to be known as 'Separatists,' and they were ones that tended to be persecuted in England. And it was a group of those Puritan Separatists that had migrated across the Channel to the Netherlands in 1609.

For ten years, they lived and worked and worshiped in the Netherlands. But at the current point in our story in 1620, many of them had decided that it was time to leave. And this takes us back to the political developments in central Europe. The Dutch had that twelve-year truce with Spain, but Spain was an ally of the Holy Roman Empire, and it had already entered the war in support of the Catholic cause. And that truce between the Netherlands and Spain was about to expire anyway. So the Dutch were preparing for renewed war with Spain. The English exiles didn't want their children fighting in the growing conflict on the continent, and if Spain emerged victorious, they didn't want to be persecuted by the Spanish authorities.

Even if the Netherlands remained independent – and remained Protestant – the English exiles didn't want their children and grandchildren to become Dutch. Their children that had been raised there already spoke Dutch alongside English. And this is where language also became a factor. The exiles realized that they were losing their English identity, and within another generation or so, their descendants would be fully Dutch citizens, speaking Dutch, and taking part in Dutch religious services. If they wanted to maintain their English identity and their English language and their English church services, they would have to go elsewhere.

Some chose to return to England, but that meant that they were once again subject to persecution for their religious beliefs. So others made the much more radical decision to leave the continent altogether, and to take their chances in North America. It would be a difficult existence there, but their isolation would give them the freedom to practice their religion as they pleased.

Such a move was going to be incredibly expensive, and they didn't have the funds to do it themselves, so they worked with an intermediary back in England who raised money from investors. The idea was that the English Separatists would establish a settlement in North America and develop the area around it, and after seven years, everything would be divided between the settlers and the investors. But as the date of the voyage drew closer, many of the exiles in the Netherlands backed out, and the investors had to find other people to take their place. Those people were men and women in England who were interested in taking part in the expedition, but not necessarily for religious reasons. Most of those substitute passengers were not Separatists or even Puritans for that matter. There were just along for the ride and seeking the chance to start a new life in North America. And there were just as many of them as there were Puritan exiles from the Netherlands. It was an odd mix from the very beginning. [SOURCE: *Preceding the Mayflower*, James P. Leynse, p. 232]

The investors soon acquired a ship used in the Mediterranean wine trade. It was called the *Mayflower*, and its hold still reeked of wine when it arrived in England to take the settlers to North America.

In July of 1620, the Puritan exiles in the Netherlands boarded a ship called the Speedwell to take them back to England, where they met up with the other settlers and prepared for their voyage. The Speedwell was to make the trip alongside the Mayflower, but when they left port in August, the Speedwell started to take on water, so they had to turn back so the ship could be repaired. After an extended delay, they headed back out to sea, but again, the Speedwell took on water and they had to turn back again.

At that point, it was agreed that the Speedwell couldn't make the voyage, so the expedition had to be scaled down to one ship – the Mayflower. That also meant leaving some of the passengers behind in England. When the Mayflower left southern England in September, the total number of passengers had been reduced to 104, plus the ship's crew. Of the 104 passengers, only 41 were Puritan exiles from the Netherlands. The vast majority were the other passengers recruited by the investors and indentured servants and other workers who were part of the expedition.

[*SOURCE: Preceding the Mayflower, James P. Leynse, p. 247, 265-70*]

Presumably, they were headed for the region around the Hudson River that Henry Hudson had explored a few years earlier. Both the English and the Dutch claimed that region, and it was far enough away from the English settlement at Jamestown that the Puritan exiles felt they could worship as they pleased there. Well, that was the plan, but the winds took them further north. And in December, they reached Cape Cod in modern-day Massachusetts. They tried to head south around the cape to their original destination, but the seas were too rough, so they decided head north around the cape and they sought refuge in Cape Cod Bay.

Again, it was December – very late in the season. The repeated delays had forced them to arrive in early winter. So it was much colder than they anticipated. And even after reaching the cape, they had to explore the region to find a good place to build a settlement. They eventually found an area on the opposite of the bay that had been cleared, presumably by some of the indigenous people of the region. Captain John Smith had named the location Plymouth when he had explored the same coast a few years earlier, so the settlers decided to build their settlement there. And that was the beginning of the Plymouth Colony.

Of course, these settlers are known to history as the Pilgrims, but that term really came along later. In the contemporary accounts maintained at the time, the Puritan Separatists were referred to as the 'Saints,' and the other settlers who accompanied them were referred to as the 'Strangers.' The two groups were at each other's throats by the time they reached Plymouth, and the non-Puritan Strangers had expressed their intention to go out on their own and build a separate settlement. But before everyone departed the Mayflower, the two groups reconciled and agreed to work together to build and maintain a settlement at Plymouth. They knew that they had to work together in order to survive the difficult months ahead. Their agreement was put in writing, and that short agreement came to be known as the Mayflower Compact.

Moving forward, I will occasionally refer to this entire group as the Pilgrims as a convenient shorthand and in keeping with the overall mythology of the Plymouth Colony. But keep in mind that those who were religiously motivated – the so-called 'Saints' or Puritan Separatists – were actually a slight minority within the overall group.

Now during those first few weeks, the settlers encountered virtually no indigenous people in the area around Plymouth. They occasionally saw some native people at a distance, but they could never make contact with them. They thought that was strange. And it was both good and bad from the settlers' perspective. It was good in that they were not subjected to attacks by people who wanted to drive them out, but it was bad in that there was no one to trade with. Having arrived in early winter, the Pilgrims didn't have time to plant crops and grow food. They had to live on their very limited supplies, and they couldn't find any indigenous people in the region who might have food and animal skins to trade.

During those first few months, the combination of limited food and supplies, the brutally cold weather, and various diseases, took a massive toll. Over the first three months, nearly half of the settlers died leaving only about fifty survivors at the settlement, and many of them were children. [SOURCES: 'Preceding the Mayflower,' James P. Leynse, p. 262, and 'Made in America,' Bill Bryson, p. 3]

That legendary colony nearly died out in the winter of 1621, but it managed to survive. And believe it or not, the English language played an important part in the colony's survival. So let me explain what I mean.

For several weeks, the settlers had not been able to communicate with any of the native people in the region. But one day in March a few months after the Pilgrims arrived, an indigenous man approached a group of settlers. At first, the settlers were suspicious of the man's intentions, but then he spoke to them, and to their surprise, he spoke to them in English. He welcomed them to the area and said that his name was Samoset.

An account of this first meeting was recorded by William Bradford, who was a Pilgrim leader and soon became the governor of the colony. In his History of Plymouth Plantation, he wrote, that Samoset saluted the settlers in English and welcomed them. He wrote that Samoset was "a man free in speech, so farre as he could expresse his minde, and of seemely carriage." So he wasn't fluent in English, but he spoke it well enough that he could communicate with the Settlers. Samoset told them that he was originally from a tribe further north and that he had learned to speak English from fishermen who had visited the region. [SOURCE: *The Story of English*, Robert McCrum, et al, p. 120] The settlers questioned him about the region, and they soon learned that Plymouth was called 'Patuxet' by the native people of the region. But the people who had lived there previously had all died from disease. Modern scholars are confident that they died from diseases acquired from the Europeans they encountered, probably smallpox. Smallpox was unknown in the region before the Europeans arrived, so the indigenous people had no immunity to it. It was one of the major causes of death among Native Americans in the colonial period. But that explained why the English settlers had encountered so few native people in the region – and why the area appeared to have been abandoned. [SOURCE: *Saints and Strangers*, George F. Willison, p. 171-2]

Samoset left, but he returned a few days later, and this time, he returned with another indigenous man. And this second man not only spoke English, he spoke it fluently. His name was Tisquantum, but the English called him Squanto. And his story is so remarkable that it really should be a Hollywood movie.

About fifteen years earlier, he had been picked up by an English captain who was sailing through the Cape Cod region, and was taken to England. He lived there for nine years, but he wanted to return home, so he offered his services to John Smith as an interpreter. This was the same John Smith that we encountered in the Jamestown colony whose life was supposedly saved by Pocahontas. And the same John Smith that had explored the New England coast before returning to England. Well, Squanto accompanied Smith on a return voyage to the Cape Cod region in 1613. But almost as soon as he made it home, he was kidnapped by another English captain, who took him and several other indigenous people to Spain where they were sold into slavery. But Squanto managed to escape, and he made his way back to England. He remained there for several more years, and finally in 1619, he managed to join another English expedition headed back to North America. So he returned home for the second time – only a few months before the Pilgrims arrived. But when he returned home, he found that his tribe had all died from the disease that Samoset had described. But because he had spent so many years in England, he was fluent in English, and that allowed him to befriend the English settlers when they arrived at Plymouth. [SOURCES: *'Made in America,'* Bill Bryson, p. 12 and *'The Wild Shores: America's Beginnings,'* Tee Loftin Snell, p. 99]

It's remarkable that the first two indigenous people the Pilgrims encountered both spoke English, and were happy to meet the settlers, and were eager to teach them how to survive in the region. There is little doubt that their ability to communicate in the same language fostered the trust and cooperation that ensued.

Squanto lived with the Pilgrims at Plymouth, and he taught them how to live off the land, including where to hunt and where to fish and where to gather wild plants for food. It was early spring, so he taught them how to plant corn, and how to fertilize the corn fields with fish. He also taught them how to make fish traps to catch the fish. And as the settlers spread out and encountered some of the other indigenous people in the region, Squanto acted as an interpreter and an intermediary, which helped them to avoid conflicts with those tribes. In fact, he helped the Pilgrims to work out an agreement with the nearest Native American tribe which ensured that the two groups didn't attack each other. Simply stated, Squanto helped the colony to survive that first year, and one of his most important skills was his ability to speak with the settlers in the own language. His ability to speak English allowed him to become a de facto member of Plymouth colony. So it is probably fair to say that the English language played an important role in the survival of the colony. [SOURCES: *'The Wild Shores: America's Beginnings,'* Tee Loftin Snell, p. 99, and *'Saints and Strangers,'* George F. Willison, p. 176, 183-5.]

Over the course of the summer and fall, life in Plymouth improved. There was more food, less disease and death, and peace with the nearby indigenous tribes. New settlers soon arrived from England to reinforce those who had survived those first few months. When harvest time came in October, the Pilgrims invited the nearby indigenous tribe that they had befriended with Squanto's

help. The massive feast they shared was the first American Thanksgiving, and it became a regular tradition, at least in New England. It didn't become a national holiday until Abraham Lincoln declared it to be so during the American Civil War in 1863. He placed the holiday in November, rather than the October date of the original feast. [SOURCES: 'Made in America,' Bill Bryson, p. 265 and 'I Hear America Talking,' Stuart Berg Flexner, p. 504.]

This is also a good example of how the Pilgrim story spread from being the foundational story of New England to being the origin story of the entire United States, even though the colony at Jamestown was older and pre-dated Plymouth by more than a decade.

But for all of the mythology surrounding Plymouth, it was soon overtaken by a much larger settlement to the immediate north. If we look about a decade into the future, a massive wave of emigration will pour into a separate colony called the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which will be established immediately north of Plymouth. That new colony will include settlements like Salem and Boston. During the 1630s, about 20,000 settlers will arrive in that region, and that will be the first large-scale migration from England to North America. So far, the settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth only had a few hundred people, if that many. But soon, tens of thousands of people will pour into the Massachusetts Bay Colony. And a significant portion of them will come from the southeastern part of England, specifically the region known as East Anglia. And that means that a lot of linguistic features will be transferred from that region of England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Since that migration will occur in the next decade, I'm not going to address those linguistic consequences here. I'll save that discussion for an upcoming episode. So for now, we'll leave the Pilgrims and the other English settlers at Plymouth, and we'll catch up with their story when we get to that period of mass migration a couple of episodes from now.

As I noted, that new colony to the north will include a settlement called Boston, which will grow to be the largest city in the region. And a few years ago, I had the opportunity to attend a podcasting conference in Boston. And I met a lot of fellow podcasters there, and one of those podcasters was Doug Metzger, who has a podcast called Literature and History. It's a wonderful podcast that explores the great works of literature throughout history. It's presented in a very listenable and conversational style, and like this podcast, it is chronological and you even get a chance to hear Doug's original songs based on the content of the episodes. Well, Doug reached out to me recently and suggested that we should let our respective listeners know about each other's podcasts since we both cover topics related to history and literature. I thought that was a great idea, so let's take our first break here, and let's have Doug tell us a little more about the Literature and History Podcast.

[audio clip]

Welcome back to the History of English Podcast. Before the break, we looked at the first Thanksgiving feast in Plymouth in October of 1621. Well news of that feast was not known to the people back in England at that time. They didn't know much about the events in Plymouth, but they did have a new way to find out about the news in Europe. And that's because the first newspaper printed in English was being circulated around London during that autumn. Earlier in the episode, I mentioned that the Netherlands had newspapers by the early 1600s, but those types

of publications were not yet available in England, or available in English for that matter. But by September of 1621, the first newspaper had appeared in England. And we know that because a few copies of the newspaper have survived, and being a newspaper, they are dated and address current events, so it is clear when they were published.

Now prior to this point, it was common for individual news sheets to be posted or printed for public consumption. But those were individual pages addressing some bit of news that had occurred. They were not repeating publications published on a regular schedule like newspapers. At the time, those early newspapers were usually published on a weekly basis.

Now this first newspaper in England had a direct connection to those newspapers that were being published in the Netherlands. In fact, it was basically a Dutch newspaper that had been translated into English. It was translated and published in England for English audiences, but it covered breaking news from continental Europe, which was in the early stages of the Thirty Years War. So the paper didn't really have any news from England. The full title of paper was 'Corante: or, Newes from Italy, Germany, Hungarie, Spaine and France.' The fact that the title used the word *corante* (spelled 'c-o-r-a-n-t-e') reflects the Dutch origin of the paper. That was the common Dutch word for a newspaper at the time. In modern Dutch, the word has been reduced to one syllable as *krant*). The word actually has its roots within French. That original French root word gave us words in English like *courier* and *current* ('c-u-r-r-e-n-t') like a 'river current' or 'ocean current.' The Dutch used that French word to reflect the way news flows and spreads very quickly. And, again, that was the standard word for those early newspapers in the Netherlands.

By the way, that connection between water and the spread of information is reflected in the dual nature of the modern English word *current*. The word can refer to a flow of water like an 'ocean current,' and it can also be used to refer to something that is in the process of happening right now like in the term 'current events.' It's ultimately the same word that has acquired different meanings over time.

Well, when that Dutch newspaper was translated into English, the Dutch word *corante* was retained in the name. And of course, it survives in the name of some newspapers to this day, usually spelled in the older way but pronounced as 'current' like the Hartford Courant in Connecticut.

By the way, newspapers were also being published in Italy, and in fact, that's really where they originated in the 1500s. The Italian term for a newspaper was a *gazzetta*. That Italian word also popped up in English in the early 1600s as the word *gazette*. And it became another common term for a periodical news sheet in English. So by this point, English had the Dutch word *corante* and the Italian word *gazette*, but it didn't have the word *newspaper* yet. The word *newspaper* was formed as a compound word within English by combining the words *news* and *paper*, but that didn't happen until the second half of the 1600s.

Now in this same year that the first English newspaper was published – the year 1621, another notable text appeared. It was the story of the fictional character of Tom Thumb. It appeared in a 40-page booklet with a very long title. It was called 'The History of Tom Thumbe, the Little, for

his small stature surnamed, King Arthur's Dwarfe: whose Life and adventures containe many strange and wonderfull accidents, published for the delight of merry Time-spenders.' That's the full title. As I've noted before, books of this period tended to have very long titles, which were basically summaries of the entire text. The book tells the story of the diminutive Tom Thumb, who was no bigger than his father's thumb. It recounts his adventures, like being swallowed by a cow and becoming one of King Arthur's favorites. So why is this particular book about Tom Thumb notable? Well, it is widely considered to be the first fairy tale to be printed in English.

Now, that may come as a bit of surprise to you. Not only is it the first English fairy tale to appear in printed form, it also appears to be the first known fairy tale to appear in any type of English manuscript, even going back to the Old and Middle English periods. Yet fairy tales and folk tales were almost certainly around during those earlier periods. In fact, Tom Thumb is mentioned by name in several works in the 1500s, so he was certainly a known character long before this particular book was published.

For some reason, folk tales and fairy tales were relegated to the oral tradition, and writers saw no reason to record them for posterity. Or if they did so, none of those manuscripts survive. But now, in the early 1600s, at least some of them started to be published. There was apparently a brief interest in folklore during this period, but it soon faded, and didn't really reappear until the 1800s. That's when the Brothers Grimm started collecting folk tales in Germany. Their published collections were read and beloved around the world giving us stories like Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White. But again, that was two centuries after the current point in our story. So this English book about Tom Thumb was unique for this period.

During this same year of 1621, King James granted a charter to a Scottish courtier named William Alexander. The charter permitted Alexander to establish a Scottish settlement in the eastern part of what is Canada today. That territory was called 'New Scotland,' or 'Nova Scotia' in Latin. And that Latin term can be traced to that charter in 1621.

This is also a good time to mention that there was already a small English trading settlement in Newfoundland. It had been settled shortly after Jamestown in Virginia, and it only lasted for a few more years before it was abandoned. Of course, permanent settlements were placed there after that, but all of this is a good reminder that the English were also active during this period in what is today eastern Canada. Of course, they had to compete with the French in part of that region. [SOURCE: *Between Two Worlds*, Malcolm Gaskill, p. 92-6.]

And it wasn't just the English and the French who were interested in North America. The Dutch were as well. As we've seen, they had already commissioned Henry Hudson to explore the river that bears his name today in New York, and in this same year – 1621 – the Dutch created the Dutch West India Company as a counterpart to the existing East India Company. The West India Company was intended to focus on trade and Dutch settlements in West Africa and the Americas. As we'll see in a moment, the creation of the Dutch West India Company was soon followed with a permanent Dutch settlement on Manhattan Island along the Hudson River.

And speaking of Dutch, it was around this same time that the English language adopted a Dutch proverb. That proverb was ‘to live and let live.’ It meant ‘to get along’ or ‘live together peaceably.’ The Dutch version was ‘leven en laten leven.’ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it was first recorded in English in 1622 in a book by an English trade commissioner stationed in the Netherlands. He made specific reference to the Dutch version of the phrase in that first known English usage.

The year 1622 also gave us another first in English. It gave us the first recorded spoonerism in the English language – at least what is generally considered to be the first spoonerism. So what is a spoonerism? Well, it’s what happens when someone mixes up the sounds in two different words in the same sentence or phrase. In other words, a sound from one word in a phrase is switched with a sound in another word in the phrase. So instead of saying a ‘well-oiled bicycle,’ somebody might say a ‘well-boiled icicle.’ The [b] is moved over from *bicycle* and placed on the word *oiled*, thereby converting *oiled* into *boiled* and *bicycle* into *icycle*. Here’s another example. Instead of saying, “I was lighting a fire,” I might say “I was fighting a liar.” So the initial sounds of *lighting* and *fire* are reversed, thereby creating *fighting* and *liar*. And instead of someone saying ‘peas and carrots,’ they might say ‘keys and parrots.’ It’s usually a type of linguistic mistake, but sometimes, it is done on purpose to disguise or alter a phrase that might be offensive to some people. For example, you might hear someone say ‘bass ackward’ instead of ‘ass backward.’ But again, spoonerisms usually occur as mis-statements or word play.

Well, in 1622, we find what is generally considered to be the first recorded spoonerism in English in a text called “The Complete Gentleman” by an poet and writer named Henry Peacham. In that text, he wrote, “A melancholy gentleman, sitting one day at a table where I was, started up upon the sudden, and, meaning to say ‘I must go buy a dagger,’ by transposition of the letters, said: ‘Sir, I must go dye a beggar.’”

By the way, in case you’re wondering, the word *spoonerism* is a modern term for that type of misstatement. It comes from an Oxford professor named William Archibald Spooner. He lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and he acquired a reputation around Oxford for making those types of gaffes in his lectures. And the word *spoonerism* was apparently coined there – and became a common term for that type of linguistic mistake over time.

The year after that first spoonerism was published, we come across another first in English. In 1623, an English writer and researcher named Henry Cockeram produced a new dictionary of English words. Now that wasn’t a first. We’ve encountered a few other dictionaries since the first English dictionary was published nineteen years earlier in 1604. But what made Cockeram’s new dictionary a first is that it was the first to be called a *dictionary*. It was called simply enough ‘The English Dictionarie.’ *Dictionary* is a Latin word, and it had been around for a few centuries, but was originally applied to textbooks and wordbooks used to learn Latin. During the 1500s, it started to acquire its modern sense as a book containing an alphabetized list of words and their translations or definitions, but it wasn’t until 1623 that we actually have an English dictionary that used that term in its title.

That year was also the year that the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays was published. I talked quite a bit about that collection in the earlier episodes about Shakespeare, but it is worth noting that that collection or anthology didn't exist until this point. Half of the 36 plays in the collection had been published in some form prior to this point, but the other half appeared in print for the first time in the First Folio.

That takes us the year 1624, and it was in that year that the Dutch established the first permanent settlement on the island of Manhattan in modern-day New York. So it really from this point that we can mark the beginning of the Dutch Colony that eventually became New York. In the final part of this episode, I want to trace out those developments and examine how the Dutch language in that early settlement influenced the English that is still spoken around New York – and more broadly, how it influenced the English that is spoken in North America and around the world.

[music clip]

Now let's turn our attention to the original Dutch settlement in what is today New York and New Jersey. As I noted earlier in this episode, the Dutch formed the Dutch West India Company in 1621 around the same time that the Pilgrims were settling into Plymouth. The Company was given the exclusive right to trade in the New World, and one of the first places they focused on was the area around the Hudson River in North America. Dutch merchants had commissioned Henry Hudson to explore the region a few years earlier, and from that expedition, they realized that the fur trade in the region could be very profitable. They established small trading posts at the mouth of the Hudson River on Manhattan Island and further up the river near modern-day Albany. And now, in 1624, the Dutch West India Company decided to take the next step and actually establish a permanent settlement in the region. This would be a home to families, as well as merchants, and the expectation is that the Dutch presence in the region would grow with time, and the region would become a full-fledged colony. Since the Hudson Valley was located between Jamestown to the south and Plymouth to the north, a small trading post was vulnerable to the English in those regions. But a proper Dutch colony would provide a bulwark against those English neighbors. By the way, *bulwark* is a Germanic loanword that was probably borrowed from Dutch and reflects the long economic, political and linguistic links between England and the Netherlands.

The loosely-defined region claimed by the Dutch was called New Netherland. And in January of 1624, the first settlers were sent to the region. Most of them were not actually Dutch though. They were French-speaking exiles from the region of modern-day Belgium. They were called Wallons, and they made up the bulk of the original settlers in the new Dutch colony. By the way, the Captain of the ship that brought those first settlers was named Cornelius May, and Cape May at the southern tip of New Jersey is named after him. [SOURCE: *The Island at the Center of the World*, Russell Shorto, p. 40-1]

The newly arriving settlers spread throughout the region with some going down into modern-day New Jersey and some going up the Hudson towards modern-day Albany, New York. A third group remained at the mouth of the Hudson and settled at the southern tip of Manhattan island. That was the place where indigenous fur traders came from miles around to sell their furs since

the adjacent waterways led deep into the interior of the region. The Dutch called the settlement New Amsterdam.

In the spring of the following year, another group of settlers arrived in lower Manhattan from the Netherlands, and a fort and a series of houses were constructed there. [SOURCE: *Colonial America*, Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, p. 176-7.]

This was of course the beginning of what we know today as New York City and New York State for that matter. But its Dutch beginnings are often overlooked, and often relegated to little more than a line or two in most general history books. And that's a shame because, even though Dutch control of the colony only lasted for about forty years, it provided a very important foundation for the city that was to come, and its impact is reflected not only in many place names, but also in many words and phrases used throughout American English, and some of them have passed into the English spoken around the world.

One of the few events during the Dutch period that is generally known to the public is the legendary story that the Dutch purchased Manhattan from the native people of the region for 24 dollars. And it's actually true – to an extent. The story is derived from a letter written by an official of the Dutch West India Company in the Netherlands. His job was to take an accounting of Dutch ships when they returned to the Netherlands, and in one of his letters, he provided an accounting of a ship that had just returned from New Amsterdam in North America. The letter was written to his superiors, and in one section, he wrote of the colonists that “They have purchased the Island Manhattes from the Indians for the value of 60 guilders.” In the 1800s, an economic historian named Edmund O’Callaghan determined that 60 Dutch guilders was the equivalent of 20 dollars, or accounting for time and inflation, about a thousand dollars today. That still seems like a pretty good deal, but remember that is wasn’t modern Manhattan filled with skyscrapers. It was a small undeveloped island.

And as the letter notes, they didn’t pay for the land with Dutch guilders because the indigenous people had no use for European money. The letter says they paid ‘the value of 60 guilders,’ so they gave the native people items that had a value of 60 guilders to the Dutch, but were presumably worth much more to the Native American tribe that occupied the northern part of the island. Based on similar purchases from other native tribes in North America, it is presumed that they were paid with things like knives, axes, hoes, kettles, cloth, coats and perhaps even guns. [SOURCE: *The Island at the Center of the World*, Russell Shorto, p. 55-6.]

Also, the indigenous people that lived in the northern part of Manhattan and the surrounding area didn’t ‘sell’ the land in the European sense of the word *sell*. In other words, they didn’t give the Dutch exclusive possession of the whole island. It was more of an agreement to share the land. The tribe continued to use the northern part of the island after the so-called ‘purchase,’ which is reflected in later letters and accounts that mention the tribe still living there, and even mention how the members of the tribe sometimes assisted the settlers with growing crops and exploring the region. [SOURCE: *The Island at the Center of the World*, Russell Shorto, p. 58.]

The tribe had a well-worn foot path that extended the length of the long narrow island. It was how they reached the southern tip of the island. So when the Dutch built their settlement in the southern part of the island, they maintained that path. They widened it and turned it into a road. The Dutch called the road ‘De Heere Straat,’ which literally mean the ‘Gentlemen's Street.’ But since it was the widest street in the settlement, they sometimes referred to it as the ‘Breede Wegh’ [brrray-deh ve(x)] which meant ‘the broad road’ or ‘the wide road.’ When the English took over, they Anglicized the name from ‘Breede Wegh’ to **Broadway**. [SOURCE: *The Island at the Center of the World*, Russell Shorto, p. 60.]

That also explains why Broadway appears so odd when you look at a map of Manhattan. The island’s streets are famously laid out in a grid pattern with vertical avenues and horizontal streets. But in parts of the island, Broadway appears to meander in between the other streets, sometimes cutting blocks in half as it extends northward, and that’s because it was originally the Native American foot path that meandered down the island and has been largely preserved over the centuries, even when the modern grid pattern was superimposed on top of it. [SOURCE: *American Nations*, Colin Woodward, p. 59.]

Of course, Broadway is the home of the theater district in New York, and so today, we associate the word **Broadway** with plays and musical theater, far removed from its original meaning as the footpath that the Dutch widened in the mid-1600s.

By the way, I mentioned that grid pattern in Manhattan. Well, today, we refer to the areas between those streets as **blocks**. A city block is the area from one intersection to the next. Well, believe it or not, that sense of the word **block** also comes from Dutch. Later American cities like Philadelphia used the word **square** to refer to a city block because they appeared as squares on a city map. So why did the people in Manhattan call their squares **blocks**? Well, because the word **blok** was a Dutch word that referred to a group of connected houses like row houses or townhouses. As Manhattan developed, most of the houses were constructed in that style, so that Dutch word was used to describe a row of such houses from one intersection to another. And that gave us the word **block** for that region from one street to the next, usually associated with square or rectangular blocks. Today, the term is used throughout the United States, and it is really an Americanism, though it has since spread to other parts of the English-speaking world.

The Dutch settlers soon built a wall at the northern boundary of their settlement. There was also a street that ran alongside the wall, and when the English took control of the settlement in the mid-1600s, they called that street Wall Street. Of course, that name also survives to this day, and it is the location of the financial district of New York. Again, the term ‘Wall Street’ has been extended from the actual street to a general term for the financial markets in the US. We often wonder how Wall Street will react to a given political policy or financial development. By that, we mean the financial markets, or the overall economy more generally. It’s all derived from the wall that was built by the Dutch in the 1600s. [SOURCE: *American Talk: The Words and Ways of American Dialects*, Robert Hendrickson, p. 65.]

I should note that during the Dutch period, Wall Street was the location of the official slave market of New Amsterdam. And it may come as a surprise to many people today that Manhattan once had a slave market, but it was actually the primary slave market in colonial America for a time. The Dutch were actively involved in the slave trade in the early 1600s, more so than the English during that period. And in some respects, the Dutch really introduced the slave trade to the colonies. Now I noted a few episodes back that African slaves had been sold in Jamestown in 1619, but those were slaves taken from a ship that had been captured in the Atlantic and brought to Jamestown to be sold. But the Dutch were actively involved in the formal slave trade itself – buying slaves in Africa and bringing them to the Americas to be sold to white settlers.

Cities further the south like Charleston, Savannah, Mobile and New Orleans later became major slave markets, but those cities didn't exist at this early point in the 1600s. I should also note, that the overall slave trade in North America was relatively small in the 1600s compared to what it became in the 1700s, and especially in the 1800s.

All of this is a reminder that Manhattan was a rural area in the 1600s, mostly consisting of farms and few buildings. An old Dutch word for a farm was a *bouwerie*, and that word was applied to five separate small farms that were established on the southern part of the island. That Dutch word *bowery* still survives as the name of a specific street and neighborhood in lower Manhattan. [SOURCE: *Colonial America*, Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, p. 181] By the late 1800s, that neighborhood had acquired a seedy reputation for the brothels, bars and the many vagrants that were common in the area.

That name of that particular street and neighborhood refers to the bowery or farm that was owned by Peter Stuyvesant, who was one of the early leaders of New Netherland. His name survives in the name of the neighborhood of *Bedford-Stuyvesant* in Brooklyn across the East River from Manhattan. [SOURCE: *I Hear America Talking*, Stuart Berg Flexner, p. 133.] The name of the neighborhood is often shortened to simply '*Bed-Stuy*.' Again, that neighborhood is in Brooklyn, the borough located southeast of Manhattan. And the name of Brooklyn also has a name with Dutch origins. The borough of Brooklyn is named after the Dutch town of *Breukelen*. In North America, the Dutch established an early settlement in that area called Brooklyn. That settlement was called *Vlachte Bosch*, which meant 'flat bush or thicket.' Again, that Dutch name was anglicized over the centuries to *Flatbush*, which is still the name of a neighborhood in Brooklyn today.

Returning to Manhattan, there is a neighborhood just north of the Bowery called Grammercy Park. That name *Grammercy* is also derived from an earlier Dutch term, which was probably *Krom Moerasje*, which meant 'crooked swamp.'

The northern part of Manhattan island was also named after a city in the Netherlands. That city was *Haarlem*. And the river that separated Manhattan's Harlem from the land on the other side was also called the Harlem River. During the Dutch period, a settler named Jonas Bronck settled on that land on the other side of the river north of Manhattan. His farm became known as *Bronck's farm*, and over time, the 'farm' part was dropped, and the area became known as simply *The Bronx*.

The Bronx was originally part of a larger plot of land granted to a Dutch lawyer named Adriaen van der Donck. He was a prominent figure who bore the Dutch honorific title *Jonkheer*, which meant ‘young gentleman,’ so it was basically the equivalent of the English term *esquire*. Well, van der Donck was commonly known by that title *Jonkheer*, and the portion of his original land grant that didn’t become the Bronx is known today as *Yonkers* after van der Donck’s honorific title.

The Dutch also established settlements out to the east of Manhattan, in the borough known as Queens today. One of those earliest Dutch settlements in the area was called *Vlissingen*. That name has been anglicized over the centuries, and is known today as *Flushing*, Queens.

A separate island south of Manhattan was named for the Dutch Parliament – the Staten Generaal. Of course, that island became known as *Staten Island*.

So as you can see, lots of places around New York bear names today that can be traced back to the original Dutch settlers.

And speaking of names, those early Dutch settlers also brought their family names, many of which became prominent in New York and American history. I mentioned Adriaen van der Donck, who was known by his title *Jonkeer*. Well, a lot of Dutch immigrants had *van* (v-a-n) as part of their name. *Van* means ‘from’ in Dutch.

For example, an early Dutch settler named Jan Aertsen was from the town of ‘de Bilt’ in the Netherlands. So Jan Aertsen was known as Jan Aertsen van de Bilt – ‘Jan Aertsen from de Bilt.’ But over time, that topographic name was anglicized to *Vanderbilt*. Jan came to North America as an indentured servant, but despite such humble beginnings, his great-great-grandson Cornelius Vanderbilt became the richest man in America in the 1800s. And of course, the Vanderbilt name is still prominent in the United States, including the name of a university in Nashville.

The American surnames *Vandenberg* and *Vanderveer* can also be traced back to early Dutch settlers. Sometimes, the word *van* was dropped from the name as the name was anglicized. That’s what happened with the Van Roosevelts, who dropped the *van* and became simply the Roosevelts. The family produced two American presidents – Theodore or ‘Teddy’ Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And speaking of Dutch settlers whose descendants became president, the same was true for the original Van Burens, whose descendant Martin Van Buren became president in the mid-1800s. And here’s an interesting fact about Martin Van Buren. He was the only American president who didn’t speak English as his first language. Believe it or not, he spoke Dutch, because remote towns and villages in New York continued to speak Dutch well into the 1800s. And that was true for the town of Kinderhook north of New York City where Van Buren was born and raised. The name means ‘Children’s Corner’ in Dutch, and many of its residents continued to speak Dutch well into the 1800s.

The longevity of Dutch in the Hudson Valley region may come as a surprise, especially given that the English took control of the Dutch colony in the mid-1600s. But Dutch was persistent in the region and was widely spoken for more than two centuries after the colony passed to the English.

In the mid-1700s, an English visitor to the region noted that Dutch was “still so much used in some counties that the sheriffs find it difficult to obtain persons sufficiently acquainted with the English tongue to serve as jurors in the courts of law.” [SOURCE: *The American Language*, Fourth Ed., H.L. Mencken, p. 141-2.]

Around the same time, American founding father Alexander Hamilton paid a visit to Albany in upstate New York. Of the language he encountered, he wrote, “The devil a word but Dutch was bandied about . . . and in general there was such a medley of Dutch and English as would have tired a horse.” [SOURCE: *The Story of English*, Robert McCrum, et al, p. 123]

Later in the century, Noah Webster – known for his American dictionary – reported that he heard a sermon given in Dutch at a church in Albany. [SOURCES: ‘*The American Language*,’ Fourth Ed., H.L. Mencken, p. 109, and ‘*Our Own Words*,’ Mary Helen Dohan, p. 126]

Here’s another one that might surprise you. The abolitionist and women’s rights advocate Sojourner Truth was raised as a slave in the Hudson Valley of New York. She has a reputation as a great public speaker, but her first language was actually Dutch because the household in which she was raised only spoke Dutch. She didn’t learn English until she was an adult or near-adult. [SOURCE: *Made in America*, Bill Bryson, p. 138-9]

Dutch not only persisted into the 1800s, it was still being spoken in some parts of New York and New Jersey as late as the 1900s. In 1910, a Columbia professor studied about 200 people in New Jersey who still spoke a form of anglicized Dutch inherited from the original Dutch settlers. [SOURCE: *The American Language*, Fourth Ed., H.L. Mencken, p. 622] And as late as 1941 – less than a century ago – there were still Dutch speakers in the area. In that year, one of them from New Jersey was interviewed for a project conducted by the American Dialect Society. [SOURCE: *The American Language*, One-Volume Abridged Ed., H.L. Mencken, p. 90]

Now given the longevity of the Dutch influence in New York, and the overall influence of New York speech on American English, it probably isn’t surprising that some of those old Dutch words from New Netherland and New Amsterdam have passed into General American English. And given the overall influence of American English on the English spoken around the world, it probably isn’t surprising that some of those words have also passed into general English usage as well.

So I want to conclude this episode by exploring some of those words and examining their lingering influence on the language. And let’s begin with some words that have passed into general usage, and as far as I know, are common in most dialects of English today.

One of the most common words that can be traced back to the Dutch spoken in the Hudson Valley is the word **boss**, meaning ‘an employer’ or ‘the person in charge.’ It’s derived from the Dutch word **baas** meaning ‘master.’ Even though the word is Dutch in origin, it came into English via American English. The reason why this word became common in English is supposedly related to slavery in the early English-speaking colonies. Before this word came into use, the normal English word for an employer or a person in charge was **master**. But that was also the word used by slaves to refer to their owner. So white workers started to resist using the word **master** to refer to their employers. And instead, they adopted the word **boss** which meant the same thing in Dutch and was common in the Hudson Valley region. As the word **boss** started to become common in American English in the 1800s, one writer refer to it as “that Manhattanese word.” [SOURCE: *The English Language in America*, George Philip Krapp, Vol. I, p. 158]. But its Dutch origins were soon forgotten, and **boss** became common throughout American English, and from there it has spread around the world.

Another Dutch word that passed though New Amsterdam into American English, and then into general English usage, is the word **pit** in the sense of the hard seed in the center of a piece of fruit, like a cherry pit or a peach pit.

The word **spook** and its adjective form **spooky** also entered English from Dutch via New Netherland. The Dutch word **spook** [‘s-p-o-o-k’] meant ‘a ghost,’ and that form of the word appeared in American English first, though the pronunciation was altered to /spu:k/, presumably based on the spelling and its resemblance to words like **spoon** and **spool**. The adjective form **spooky** appeared in the 1800s, and has spread beyond the shores of North America.

The word **snoop** as in ‘to snoop around’ meaning ‘to pry or spy’ also came into early American English from Dutch. This is a good example of how the meaning of a word can evolve over time. The word **snoop** comes from the Dutch word **snoepe**, which means ‘candy or sweets.’ So what’s the connection between candy and snooping. Well, the Dutch word was sometimes used to refer to someone slipping candy into his or her mouth while no one was watching. So it meant ‘to eat sweets secretly.’ And from there, it came to refer to other things done in secret while no one is watching, and specifically, it came to refer to prying or spying on someone. The word became common in American English in the 1800s, and has gradually passed into use outside of North America as well.

The word **cookie** for a sweet, flat, baked good was also acquired from Dutch. The word is actually a slightly altered form of the Dutch word for cake, and its means a ‘little cake.’ The word passed into early American English, presumably via the Dutch residents of the Hudson Valley. What Americans call a **cookie** is usually called a **biscuit** in Britain and other parts of the world, though the word **cookie** has started to be used outside of North America to refer to a sweet chewy version like a chocolate chip cookie. Cookies are so popular in North America that the word has been expanded to apply to lots of other things, like a ‘smart cookie’ meaning a ‘smart person,’ or a ‘tough cookie’ meaning a ‘tough or strong person,’ or ‘to toss one’s cookies’ meaning ‘to vomit or throw up.’ And of course, when you are resigned to your fate, you might just say that ‘that’s the way the cookie crumbles.’

Before I move on, I should also note that the Dutch word *cookie* was also borrowed into Scots in Scotland around the same time that the Dutch arrived in North America, but in Scotland, the word *cookie* had a slightly different meaning. It meant a ‘plain bun.’

Now some people may feel like they are addicted to cookies, but that’s better than being addicted to dope. And *dope* is another word that passed from Dutch into early American English. Today, we use the word *dope* to refer to illegal drugs. It’s especially common in reference to marijuana, which may or may not be legal these days, depending on where you live. But the original Dutch word referred to a type of sauce, specifically a dipping sauce. That’s how the word passed into American English, but since sauces were often made up of unknown or suspicious ingredients, the word started to acquire an extended meaning with American English. Any substance that was suspicious or potentially harmful became known as *dope*. And from there, it came to refer to narcotics, especially opium in the 1800s. From that original term, we also get the adjective *dopey* meaning ‘drugged or stupid.’ In recent decades, the word has passed beyond American English and can now be found in other English dialects as well.

This may come as a bit of a surprise, but the word *bedspread* may also be an early loanword from Dutch via the Hudson Valley. The historical sources are conflicted on this one. Some say it is a compound word that was formed within English, but Dutch already had a similar word, which was *beddensprei* – literally ‘bedspread.’ Within English, *bedspread* is really an Americanism. It’s first recorded in the 1700s, and was largely restricted to American English until the past few decades. That’s why some scholars think the word came in via the Dutch spoken in and around New York. By the way, the traditional word for a bedspread was a *counterpane* – a word which is still sometimes used in Britain, though it’s probably a bit old-fashioned today. You’re probably more likely to hear someone from Britain use a word like *duvet* or *quilt* today, but the American word *bedspread* has also crossed the pond and is sometimes used as well.

Another Dutch-American word that has acquired some international currency is the word *bush* in the sense of ‘wilderness.’ Now this one is a little complicated because that broader sense of the word as ‘woods or forest’ may have also developed naturally from the traditional meaning of *bush* as ‘a shrub’ or ‘a plant smaller than a tree.’ But the Dutch version of that word – *bosch* – specifically meant ‘woods, forest or thicket,’ so it also had that broader sense found in English today. I mentioned earlier that the Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam created a settlement in modern-day Brooklyn called *Vlachte Bosch*, which became modern-day *Flatbush*. The word passed into early American English as *bush* with the same general meaning. It’s also common in modern compound terms like *bush league*, *bush ranger*, *bush fighter*, and *bushwacker*. *Bushwacker* passed from American English to New Zealand English, meaning ‘someone who clears land by cutting down trees.’ This more general sense of *bush* as ‘wilderness’ is also found in other English dialects today, most notably Australian English where it is common. But again, it’s a little unclear how much of that sense came from American English and how much developed naturally from the older, traditional sense of the word *bush*.

Another early Dutch loanword in American English is the word *caboose*. It originally referred to the cooking galley on the deck of a merchant ship, but in America, the word was applied to the final car of a train where the crew who inspected the train and the cargo were stationed. In

England, that car was more commonly called a ‘brake van’ or a ‘guard's van.’ But the word **caboose** has found some currency in other English dialects to refer to the final car of a train.

Another common word that can probably be traced back to the early Dutch settlers in New Netherland in the word **yankee**. Now the etymology of this word is disputed, but one of the most popular explanations for the origin of the word is that it is derived from the Dutch name **Jankin**. The word is first recorded in English in reference to Dutch pirates. The word may have then been derisively applied to the Dutch inhabitants of the Hudson Valley, and then from there more broadly to the inhabitants of the northern colonies, especially New England. The other suggestion is that the Dutch used the word derisively to refer to the English settlers who were encroaching on their territory to the east in modern-day Connecticut. And from there, the term was extended to all of the English inhabitants of New England, and then the northern states in general. But again, whatever the actual story is, it appears likely that **yankee** is derived from that Dutch name **Jankin**. [SOURCE: *The American Language*, Fourth Ed., H.L. Mencken, p. 110]

And here’s another one that might surprise you. Believe it or not, the very common Christmas figure of Santa Claus has his origins in the Dutch traditions of New Netherland. And to a large extent, those Dutch traditions also gave us the modern concept of gift-giving at Christmastime. In the Netherlands, people celebrated St. Nicholas’s Day on December 6. And people would give gifts in his honor on that day. So who was St. Nicholas? Well, he was the patron saint of children. He lived in the fourth century in modern-day Turkey and traveled widely giving gifts to the poor. His legend extended to northern Europe in the Middle Ages. The Dutch shortened the name **Nicholas** to **Klass**, and they started referring to him as **Sinterklass** – literally ‘Saint Nicholas.’ The figure that emerged under that identity kept an eye on the behavior of children and brought presents to the good ones. [SOURCE: *Preceding the Mayflower*, James P. Leynse, p. 170] Over time, the traditions associated with Sinterklass were transferred from St. Nicholas’s Day at the beginning of December to Christmas at the end of December. And when the Dutch brought Sinterklass to North America, his name evolved from **Sinterklass** to **Santa Claus**, and over time, his identity merged with the traditional English figure of Father Christmas, and the result was the modern Christmas figure we have today. [SOURCE: *Made in America*, Bill Bryson, p. 265]

By the way, speaking of Santa Claus, the word **sleigh** (s-l-e-i-g-h-) has its origins in those early Dutch settlers as well. **Sleigh** is still largely an Americanism.

Here are some other Dutch loanwords that are largely restricted to American English today. The word **stoop** for the raised platform where you enter a house or a small porch on the front of a house comes from the Dutch word **stoep** which meant ‘steps,’ or more specifically ‘doorsteps’ or a ‘threshold.’ It was common for Dutch houses in New Amsterdam to be built with a front porch with benches on each side, and that was the original **stoop**.

Along with the cookies mentioned earlier, Americans also love their **waffles**, and that’s another term and food item that came in with the Dutch settlers. The same is true with the **cruller** – a fried doughnut-like pastry.

The Dutch settlers were apparently the first Europeans to grow cabbage and cauliflower in North America, so perhaps it isn't surprising that the word **coleslaw** was also borrowed from Dutch. [SOURCE: *I Hear America Talking*, Stuart Berg Flexner, p. 131.]

In the Hudson Valley, the descendants of the original Dutch settlers were often called **Knickerbockers**. The word is derived from Washington Irving's 'History of New York' composed in the early 1800s. He tells the story through the eyes of a Dutch settler named Herman Knickerbocker, who was fictitious, but the name stuck. The word was also extended to Dutch-style trousers or pants, and the clothing sense of **knickerbockers** was later shortened to simply **knickers**, which is used today to refer to loose-fitting underwear worn by women. [SOURCE: *I Hear America Talking*, Stuart Berg Flexner, p. 132.] Of course, the word **knickerbocker** still has an association with New York in the popular imagination thanks to the city's professional basketball team – the New York Knickerbockers, more commonly known as the New York Knicks.

Here's a strange, but surprising one. The word **boodle**. It's not all that common today, but it was once common in parts of the northeast. It meant 'a group of things' or 'a collection of items.' It comes from the Dutch word **boedel**, which meant 'a group of things that a person owns.' So it had more of a sense of 'household goods.' But in early American English, it acquired this broader sense of any collection of things. So all of the things you possessed or owned were your **boodle**. Now you may be wondering why I am telling you about this obscure word **boodle**. Well, it survives in colloquial phrase that you might hear in American English. If someone refers to all of something, they might refer to all the pieces as the 'whole kit and caboodle.' **Caboodle** is a just a variation of that Dutch word **boodle**.

At one time, people just referred to an entire group or collection as 'the whole boodle.' And sometimes, they would refer to 'the whole kit,' which had essentially the same meaning. And sometimes, they would combine those two phrases into one by referring to 'the whole kit and boodle.' But how did **boodle** become **caboodle** in that phrase? Well, it appears that people sometimes shortened and contracted the phrase 'kit and boodle' to **caboodle**. So instead of referring to 'the whole kit and boodle,' they would simply refer to 'the whole caboodle.' And then, as the phrase continued to evolve and the word **kit** was lost, people reinserted **kit** back into that modified phrase, and that gave us the modern version – 'the whole kit and caboodle.' It's a good example of how these phrases evolve when one of the terms is bit obscure. Speakers sometimes modify that word as they play around with the phrase, but (as far as I know) this is one of those words and phrases that never really made it beyond the American shores.

Another uniquely American term is **hunky-dory**. If someone is safe and sound and feeling well, they might say that they are **hunky-dory**. Well, this is another term that can be traced back to those original Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam. It comes from the Dutch word **honk** (/honk/), which meant home base in games played by children. Dutch children would sometimes play games that used a **honk**. Much like some versions of hide-and-seek, you were safe if you were able to reach home base – or 'to reach honk.' Well, that word passed into English as **hunk**, meaning 'a safe condition' or 'protected from harm.' And from there, the word evolved into the

adjective *hunky*, describing such a condition. And *hunky* then evolved into *hunky-dory* in the 1800s, but scholars have never been able to determine where the *dory* part came from.

Speaking of Dutch children playing games, if you visit a playground around New York today, you might hear someone refer to a children's swing as a *scup*. It's derived from a Dutch word for a swing. And you might hear someone refer to a children's slide as a 'sliding pond.' It isn't entirely clear where that term comes from. One suggestion is that it comes from the phrase 'to slide upon.' So 'slide upon' became 'sliding pond.' But the other suggestion is that it comes from an old Dutch word *baan*, which meant 'a track' and is also found in the Dutch word for a slide, which is *glijbaan*. So some scholars think that Dutch word is the origin of the local slang term 'sliding pond' for a swing. [SOURCE: *American Talk: The Words and Ways of American Dialects*, Robert Hendrickson, p. 62-3]

A few other old Dutch terms that can still be heard in and around New York and New Jersey include *clove* for a long, narrow valley in the mountains; *hook* for a bend or corner or point of land, as in Sandy Hook, New Jersey, and Kinderhook, New York; *kill* for a stream and found in place names like Catskill, Fishkill, and Peekskill; *gate* for a pass in a channel found in Hell Gate tidal strait in New York City; *dorp* for a village found in the town of New Dorp on Staten Island, and the word *vlei* for a swamp.

Now we have looked at a lot of examples of how the settlement at New Netherland influenced modern English. But it's worth noting that the Dutch settlement in the region was always limited. Life was pretty good in the Netherlands in the 1600s, so it was always difficult to find people who were willing to migrate to the rough settlement in the Hudson Valley. The Dutch West India Company often relied on other people who were willing to make the move. That included French-speaking Belgians, Poles, Fins, Swedes and others. A missionary who traveled to the colony in 1640 reported that there were about 500 people living in the settlement in lower Manhattan, and they spoke eighteen different languages. So from the very beginning, New York was made up of a diverse population. Even today, New York City is considered to be the most linguistically diverse city in the world. So the more things change, the more they stay the same. [SOURCE: 'Colonial America,' Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, p. 183 and 'American Nations,' Colin Woodward, p. 66]

The ethnic and linguistic diversity of that Dutch settlement was in direct contrast to the overwhelmingly English settlements in Virginia and New England. And over the following decades, those English settlements grew at a rapid rate as more and more people left England. But the Dutch colony remained small by comparison. Over time, the English gradually encroached on the Dutch territory from both the north and the south, and by the mid-1600s, the Dutch allowed the English to take control of the colony as part of a larger settlement between the two nations over conflicting claims to various territories. At that time, New England to the northeast had about 50,000 people and Virginia and Maryland to the south had about 50,000 people, but the entire Dutch colony of New Netherland only had about 10,000 people, and the settlement at New Amsterdam in lower Manhattan only had about 1,600 people. [SOURCE: *Colonial America*, Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, p. 182; 'American Nations,' Colin Woodward, p. 69; 'Albion's Seed,' David Hackett Fischer, p. 817.]

So with that, let me conclude with one final linguistic note. As the Netherlands and England competed for territory around the world in the 1600s, the relationship between the two nations grew increasingly tense. I'll deal with the maritime rivalry in a bit more detail in the next episode. The relationship of the two countries was also shaped by their close proximity to each other in northern Europe and also by the regular contact between the peoples of the two countries, especially sailors and traders. That allowed certain resentments and stereotypes to spread as political conflicts heightened.

During the 1600s, the word *Dutch* started to be used in a negative or pejorative way in both England and North America. And it's important to keep in mind that the word *Dutch* basically meant 'Germanic' at the time, so it could refer to someone from the Netherlands or someone from the regions of modern-day Germany. During the 1600s and 1700s, English speakers began to invent a lot of new expressions that used the word *Dutch*, and most of them had a negative connotation. '*Double Dutch*' was double talk or gibberish. A '*Dutch bargain*' was a one-sided bargain or a bargain made while the parties were drunk. '*Dutch courage*' was courage or bravery inspired by liquor or booze. '*Dutch luck*' was undeserved luck. '*Dutch praise*' was a euphemism for 'condemnation.' And '*Dutch comfort*' was comfort taken from the fact that a bad situation could be even worse.

This linguistic feature also spread to the American colonies, especially around New York and New England where the English encountered and interacted with Dutch settlers in the mid-1600s. The rivalry and negative perception of the Dutch soon seeped into early American English. Over the following couple of centuries, several such phrases began to appear in early American English. 'To run away or desert' was referred to as '*doing a Dutch*' or '*doing the Dutch act*' or '*taking the Dutch way out*.' If you were in trouble or in jail, you were said to be '*in Dutch*.' 'To do something extraordinary' was to '*beat the Dutch*.' And even today, if you go on a date where each party pays for their own food and entertainment, you '*go Dutch*.' And a meal where everyone pays for their own share is a '*Dutch treat*' – so it's not really a treat at all. That illustrates how our language still reflects this old relationship and rivalry between the English and the Dutch in North America and around the world.

I'm going to conclude on that note. Next time, we'll look at death of King James – and the succession of his son Charles. I'll warn you, England is going to have bumpy ride with Charles at the helm. And speaking of 'at the helm,' that's a good example of a sailing term that has passed into general usage in English. So next time, we're also going to look at how nautical and maritime words and phrases influenced English in the 1600s.

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