

The daily life in elizabethan england history essay



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“ The goal of Elizabethan fashion was to show the woman’s status in society and also make her as attractive as possible.” Elizabethan time is the time when Queen Elizabeth became Queen in 1558 at the age of twenty-five. She was the daughter of King Henry VIII. Her period as reign has such significance in history it was named after her. In that time period, the great writer named Shakespeare was born. And today we will discuss daily life in Elizabethan England.

The Elizabethan age was centered on bread and meat. The nobility and upper class men ate three fairly large main meals per day. Many of their dishes mirror those of ours in current American culture. Breakfast was the hardest meal of the day. Although some gorged on regular bread, many preferred machetes. A machete was a round loaf of darker complexion and weighed around six pounds after it was cooked. Butter was used to enhance the often flavor. Eggs were also a favorite at breakfast. They were eaten scrambled, or mixed with breadcrumbs for fried fish. A treat for Sunday mornings were pancakes, made with flour and eggs, and coated with a variety of fruit jams or dusted with powdered sugar. Besides water, and milk from goats and cows, beverages with a wine base were also very popular. An example is caudle, a hot drink thickened with eggs downed at breakfast or at bedtime. For any class of civilians, dinner was the most important meal of the day. Peculiarly, it came before lunch, from about 10: 00 am until noon. In the homes of the wealthy, fine linen was placed upon the table. Next, a trencher, napkin, and spoon were situated at every setting. A trencher is a flat, rectangular or circular piece of wood on which meat, or other food, is served or carved. An Elizabethan dinner usually consisted of several kinds of

fish, venison, seafood, various salads, vegetables, sweet meats, cheeses, and fruits. The midday meal in a well to do household consisted of coarser foods like sausage, cabbage, and porridge solely for the children. It was usually eaten around 2: 00 to 3: 00 in the afternoon and lasted for a few hours. The Elizabethans did not use many utensils. Scooping food with their hands was the norm and considered extremely efficient. Much like today, houses were status symbols. The estates of the royalty stretched for endless miles of rolling greenery. Their mansions resembled much less homes than they did museums. They had magnificent rock foundations, several floors, and too many rooms to count. In addition, these colossal lodgings contained numerous halls, chapels, great rooms, parlors, bay windows, and fortifications. The yards were alive with beautiful foliage and extraordinary stone gardens.

The upper class, usually doctors or businessmen, owned what were known as manors. These were not as lavish or mammoth as those of the nobility, but nonetheless picturesque. Beautiful countryside landscapes, gardens, and ample land accolade these elegant homes. Their interiors boasted several great rooms, parlors, and dining areas. Children of noble birth from ages 7 to 14 were generally tutored at home. Boys of middle to upper class were sent to " petty schools", also commonly referred to as " dame schools". More than often, girls were not allowed. A well-educated housewife usually ran these schools for a small fee. The curriculum included lessons on reading and writing, Christian faith, and proper behavior. Table manners were stressed, such as eating small morsels, chewing properly, using a knife and napkin. Children were trained to observe their places in society, which

included where they should sit at the table. Reading and writing skills were taught using a hornbook. A hornbook was a piece of parchment covered with transparent horn, usually pasted onto a small wooden board with a handle. Musical literacy was expected of the upper class. Customary instruments in the Elizabethan age were the lute, virginal, viola, recorder, bagpipe, and fiddle. In major towns, professional musicians known as Waits always gave free public concerts. The wealthy often hired musicians to entertain them in their homes during dinner. Most frequently, couples performed dances. It was considered one of the best occasions for interaction between married people. In that day people dance and sing.. Morris dancing was required to wear bells and it was performed as part of the summer festivals. Dancing in the Elizabethan Age was widely popular.

In the Elizabethan period, drama was at the peak of chief cultural achievement. This period witnessed the launch of the entertainment industry, especially in theater. The first public theater in London was built in 1576. Before then, performances were done in the courtyards of large size. From the Queen herself to an ordinary peasant outfitted in rags, plays united people of all economic backgrounds. A constant demand for more acts led London companies to take minor performances onto the road, like folk players, puppeteers, and acrobats. Road performances increasingly became more necessary as the spread of the plague caused theatres to close down.

Elizabethan theater was the work of proprietors, actors, playwrights and workmen. To name a few brilliant actors, there were James, Richard, and Cuthbert Burbage, Philip Henstoe, and Edward Alleyn. The virtuoso playwrights included Christopher Marlow, Ben Johnson, and William

Shakespeare. Nobles especially loved the stage. They financially supported actors and paid for processions, masques, and tournaments. While there was rarely a day when the weather was absolutely malevolent, some preferred to spend their time inside. Due to England's prime location in the north, plenty of sunlight preceded into late summer evenings. This gave people more time outdoors. Sports played a major role in leisurely activities. Some of the more prevalent ones included golf, horse racing, sliding, swimming, fishing, hunting, fencing, dueling, wrestling, and cricket. In that time, it was unacceptable for a man to be unskilled at tennis, bowling, archery and hunting. While the upper class enjoyed tennis, the rest preferred soccer. If a field could not be found, a village street was used. People enjoyed the sport of hunting. In the spring, Shrove Tuesday was celebrated with bell ringing, masking, gaming, begging, feasts, and a carnival. The Mayday celebration was held Easter time. It consisted of decorating a tall pole, the maypole, with flowers, ribbons, etc. and engaging in dance and sports around it. In the summer, bonfires and dances commemorated Midsummer's Eve on June 24. Also in June was St. John the Baptist's Festival, an important community juncture. Harvest festivals were held in the fall. On All Hallows' Eve, recognized today as Halloween, Elizabethans ducked for apples, danced and rang bells. The winter holidays began with Christmas, ran through New Year's Eve and ended with the Twelfth Night on January 5. These holidays included gifts, bonfires, wassail-a drinking toast, Yule logs, music, and of course, amassing large quantities of food.

The Elizabethan era did more than mark the end of Queen Mary's rule and the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's. It was the pinnacle of intellectual

discovery, profligacy for the rich, and most of all, the revival of life and all its joys. It has been written about the Elizabethans: " they were expressive and eloquent, ostentatious and pleasure loving, not industrious or hardworking, but bold and self-confident, markedly fearless of death, mercurial and inconsistent, loving change, above all, passionate" (Rowse 353).

Work Cited

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