



# Elizabethan Actors

**Prepared by**

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# From Rogues and Vagabonds to the Queen's Men

- Strolling players
- Improvised stages
- Patronage of a noble man
- The Poor Law, 1572 Vagabonds Act



- Kings and Earls kept troupe of actors among his household servants
- Earl of Worcester had company of actors from 1555.
- Earl of Warwick and Earl of Leicester in 1559.
- Queen's Men formed in 1583



# The Acting Companies

- Individual Troupes – Hard to follow
- Patron's death, defection among players, frequent plagues



# Successful companies

- Queen's Men
- Leicester's Men
- Troupe of Lord Strange (Became Earl of Derby)
- Derby's Men became Chamberlain's Men, later into King's Men



# Rivals of Queen's Men

- Earl of Worcester's Men – Actor Edward Alleyn
- Admiral's men (Marlowe wrote for them, Actor Alleyn joined later, Henslowe was its landlord and banker)



## Chamberlain's Men – King's Men

- Founded in 1594 under the patronage of Henry Carey
- Shakespeare (prominent playwright)
- Richard Burbage (Actor)
- Became King's men in 1603 after the ascension of King James I



# King Charles

- Hearty interest in Theatre
- Borrowed English players to celebrate his marriage
- He made Chamberlain's Men into King's Men
- Turned Worcester's Men into Queen Anne's
- Admiral's Men into Prince Henry's





# Acting in Shakespeare's Day

- Began as rogue and vagabond
- Ended under the patronage of Royalty
- 6 actors per group to 20 skilled players
- Dialogues were mostly improvised
- Popularity of boy-player

# Actors now Remembered

- Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, Jonson and Webster were actors.
- Heminge and Condell (Actors- edited First Folio)
- Richard Tarlton and William Kempe – Clowns, Comedians
- Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn - Great actors
- Ben Jonson on Alleyn

“Others speak, but only thou dost act”



Richard Tarlton, the The Queen's men company's principal comic actor and main star