William Shakespeare Essay, Research Paper

William Shakespeare

Born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England. His father John

Shakespeare and his mother Mary Arden. W.S. was able to attend grammer school

and learned Greek and Latin classics (this is comparable to college education

today). At age 14 his father lost the family fortune and remained poor until

his death

At 18 he married Anne Hathaway in 1582. She was 26 years old. They had three

children Suzanne(1583) and the twins Hamnet and Judith(1585).

In his mid-twenties he left Stratford(supposedly because of poaching on the

Queen’s land) for London. His first job with Richard Burbage’s men was as an

osler; next an actor.

No one knows what he was doing during 1585-1592.

By 1592 he had become known in London as an actor and playwright; his rise was

rapid.

Queen Elizabeth 1 supported the arts and the theater.

In 1592 a plague closed the theaters(Shakespeare wrote poetry during this time

to support himself). In 1593 a brief reopening of the theater happened. In 1594

theaters reopened.

The troupe became the Lord Chamberlain’s Men set up on a servant co-op structure.

Requirements for actors:

1. loud voice 2. sing and play instruments 3. good swordsman 4. good memories

During this time he wrote many comedies: Comedy of Errors first of any status.

Histories were written in support of the gov’t. This is where they were

receiving much of the financial support so they wanted to keep the gov’t (Queen)

happy. W.S. was a major stockholder in the theater.

1597-bought New Place in Stratford(2nd largest house)

1599-Lord Chamberlain’s Men bought land and built the Globe Theater in

Southwark(South Bank of the Thames River). W.S. owned 1/10th

1603-Queen Elizabeth died. King James took reign of England. He loved the

arts more than the queen. The name was changed from Lord Chamberlain’s Men to

the King’s Men.

1608-Added to the Globe Theater by buying the Black Friars Theater and giving

performances there also. W.S. owned 1/7th

1613-Fire at the Globe during a performance of Henry 8th; rebuilt within a year.

Left comedies and histories to write tragedies soon after the Globe reopened.

Sonnets-published in 1610 but circulated earlier.

First Tragedy: The Tragedy of Hamlet

Late plays: Cymbeleneand and Winter’s Tale became bitter, ironic, and sad (much

as his mood was changing toward the latter parts of his life.)

The Tempest: last play written as a posible farewell to the theater

He wrote 37 plays throughout his life.

1612-retired as a country gentlemen to New Place in Stratford

1616-wrote his will(by himself)

1616-April 23,1616 – died on the day and the month he was born

1623 – first folio was done by two of the men who admired him from his company

at the Globe.