

# PLAYHOUSES AND THE GLOBE THEATER

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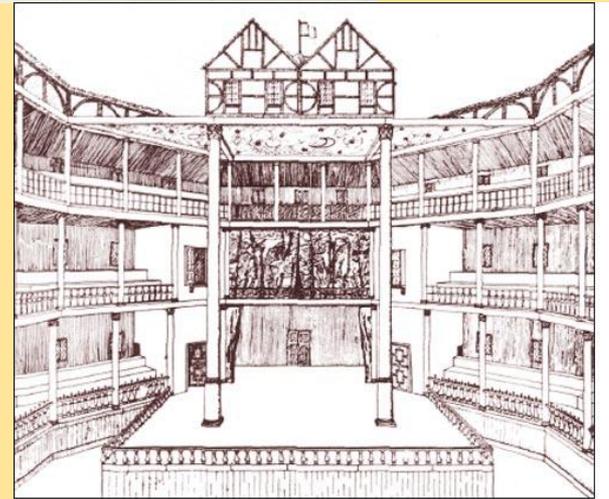
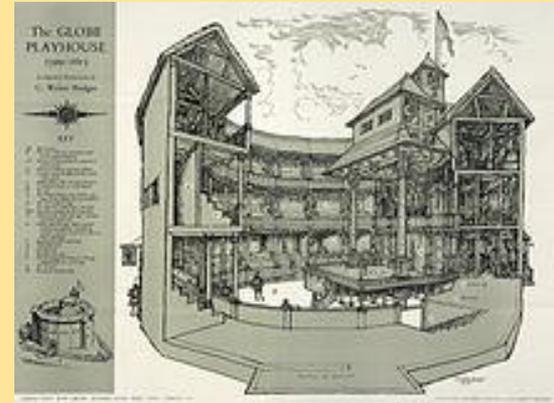
# THE GLOBE THEATRE

- The **original Globe** was an Elizabethan theatre which opened in Autumn 1599 in Southwark, on the south bank of the Thames, in an area now known as Bankside.
- It was one of several major theatres that were located in the area, the others being the Swan, the Rose and The Hope.
- The Globe was the **principal playhouse** of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Most of Shakespeare's post-1599 plays were staged at the Globe, including Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear and Hamlet.

# THE SWAN THEATRE



# THE GLOBE THEATRE



# END OF THE GLOBE ;(

On June 29, 1613, the Globe Theatre went up in **flames** during a performance of Henry the Eighth.

A theatrical cannon, set off during the performance, misfired, igniting the wooden beams and thatching. According to one of the few surviving documents of the event, no one was hurt except a man who put out his burning breeches with a bottle of ale.

# "THE THEATRE"

- The Theatre was the **first London playhouse**, built in 1576 by the English actor and entrepreneur James Burbage. It was located in a northern suburb of London on the edge of Finsbury Fields, just past Bishopsgate Street, where Shakespeare called home up to 1597.
- There are no images of the Theatre, but written accounts of the building describe a vast, three-story timber structure, open to the sun and rain. It had features similar to those of the future Globe playhouse and other playhouses of the day, such as galleries, upper rooms, a tiring house, and trap doors in the stage floor.

# WATCH TO LEARN MORE!

<https://vimeo.com/44387147>



# EARLY LIFE OF JAMES BURBAGE

- James Burbage was born in 1531 and is said to have been born at Stratford-upon-Avon. James apparently started his career as a joiner, experienced in carpentry.
- At some point in his career he changed to acting - an extremely unusual choice as in the early Elizabethan era actors were viewed as nothing better than rogues and vagabonds.
- In 1574, James Burbage became the first Englishman to obtain a theatrical license and became very serious about his role as a theatrical entrepreneur and manager.

# KEY FACTS

- James Burbage built the very **first theatre** with his brother-in-law John Brayne, appropriately named 'The Theatre'.
- It was built in 1576 on land which was leased from Giles Allen who was a staunch puritan. Giles Allen was opposed to all theatrical activities on the land but was unable to stop James Burbage from building 'The Theatre' on the site.
- James Burbage **died** in 1597 and the Theatre business was taken over by his sons Cuthbert and Richard Burbage. He was buried in the 'actors church' St Leonards in Shoreditch
- After the death of James Burbage the lease of 'The Theatre' expired and Puritan Giles Allen stubbornly refused to renew the lease.

JAMES BURBAGE

CUTHBERT & RICHARD (SONS)



# JAMES BURBAGE AND THE GLOBE THEATER

- A clause was found in the lease which allowed the Burbage's to **dismantle the building** on the site and use any materials which were recovered. Richard and Cuthbert Burbage with their troupe, including William Shakespeare, and carpenters all went to The Theatre under cover of night and demolished The Theatre.
- Before he died, James created the blueprint for the Globe Theatre.
- They used the timber from The Theatre in the construction of the **Globe playhouse** on Bankside, Southwark. When Alleyn learned of the demolition, he sued the Burbages for trespass and theft of the building materials but the case was dismissed.

# AUDIENCE / ATMOSPHERE

- All outdoor playhouses had multiple levels of roofed galleried seating around the central yard and stage
- All of Shakespeare's plays brought in a wide variety of audience members
  - Higher income audience members were able to pay more to sit in special rooms such as "Gentlemen's Rooms" or "Lord's Rooms"
  - Lower income audience members such as "Groundlings" or "Apprentices" would sit in seating that was not as preferred
- One of the **great strengths** of Shakespeare's plays was the wide variety of audience members and the fact that their opinions could not be assumed
- Audiences began as interactive but over time they began to be observers behind an imaginary line

# AUDIENCE/ATMOSPHERE CONT.

- The main reason plays were so popular was the low cost
- Open-air theater cost:
  - To stand with the groundlings in the yard around the stage was 1 penny, the same cost as a loaf of bread
  - To sit in the first row of bench seats in the lower galleries it was about 2 pennies
  - For a couple more pennies you could get a seat with a cushion
  - The most expensive seat was in the lords room
- Indoor theater cost:
  - The cheapest seat in an indoor theater was about 6 pence (1 pence= \$2.40)
- The audience at Shakespeare's plays during this time were very different than audiences today
  - They would boo the villains and cheer on the heroes, leave their seats to go search for food/drinks, and they would even go visit with friends in their seats.
  - Overall, the audience was quite disrespectful back then.

# GLOBE THEATRE HISTORY

- After the Burbages lost their lease on the Theatre site, they built a new theatre.
- The Globe was built and opened in 1599.
- On June 29th of 1613, The Globe **burned** to the ground when the roof caught fire during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*.
- A second, newer Globe was quickly built on the same site, this time with a tiled roof, opening in 1614.

# GLOBE THEATER HISTORY CONT.

- In 1642, the English playhouses and theaters were closed down (and often dismantled for building materials) as the English Civil War began.
- In 1660, theater returned—as did Shakespeare's plays, now with both male and female performers.

Fun Fact: The globe was not a circular building, playhouses were polygonal buildings.

# IN THE GLOBE THEATRE

- 2 Types of theaters :
  - **Playhouses** - Were outdoor theatres – they had some covered seating, but the yard in the middle was open to the sky. (The Globe)
  - **Indoor theatres** - Were larger indoors building with a roof. They were much smaller than outdoor theatres.
- Costumes, the essential "spectacle" of the plays, were often second-hand clothes once owned and worn by real-life nobles.
- The actors for female roles typically wore gorgeous modern dresses, especially for the leading parts.
- Actors usually did not aim for historically accurate costumes

# HISTORY OF ATTENDING PLAYS

- The **first** Shakespeare play to be performed at the Globe was Julius Caesar, in 1599.
- Some of Shakespeare's other plays first performed there:
  - As You Like It, Hamlet, Measure for Measure, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, and Antony and Cleopatra.
- Other playwrights that wrote for the Globe included:
  - Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, and John Fletcher.

## Globe and Playhouses

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Built 'The Theatre' in 1576.

The very first theater in England.

Was built in 1599 using timber from an earlier theatre.

An outdoor theatre

Part of the Globe that caught fire

Caused theaters to shut down in 1642

How much was a standing seat in a playhouse

# WORD SEARCH ANSWER KEY

James Burbage / Built 'The Theatre' in 1576.

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Playhouse / An outdoor theatre

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English Civil War / Caused theaters to shut down in 1642

Penny / How much was a standing seat in a playhouse