



# Inside Shakespeare: 400 Years of the First Folio

Carol Ann Lloyd for Smithsonian Associates, January 2023

The First Folio, printed in 1623, was the first printed collection of “all” the plays of Shakespeare. The First Folio grouped the plays as comedies, histories, and tragedies. The Catalogue of the First Folio, which includes 35 plays (*Troilus and Cressida* was added later and is not included in this list).

COMEDIES.	
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	1
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	30
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	58
<i>Much adoe about Nothing</i>	61
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	85
<i>Much adoe about Nothing</i>	101
<i>Love's Labour's lost</i>	123
<i>Midwinter Night's Dream</i>	145
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	161
<i>As you Like it</i>	185
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	208
<i>All's well that ends well</i>	210
<i>Twelfth Night, or what you will</i>	251
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	294

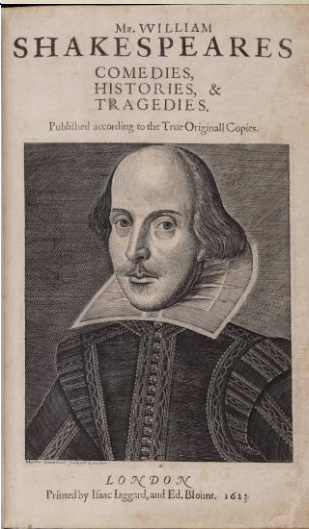
  

HISTORIES.	
<i>The Life and Death of King John</i>	Fol. 1.
<i>The Life and death of Richard the second</i>	21

TRAGEDIES.	
<i>The Tragedy of Julius Caesar</i>	Fol. 1.
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	81
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	83
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	80
<i>The Life and death of Julius Caesar</i>	109
<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet</i>	131
<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet</i>	151
<i>King Lear</i>	281
<i>Shew the Mores of Venice</i>	310
<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>	348
<i>Cymbeline King of Britain</i>	369

The Droeshout portrait is one of the few (2 or 3) portraits that is “definitely” Shakespeare and one that was commissioned and approved by people who knew him.



The Globe Theatre was built in 1599. Shakespeare became a shareholder as part of the building project, which means he began receiving a “cut” of ticket sales. The Globe was only one of the theatres where Shakespeare’s plays were performed, but it’s the one most associated with him and his plays.



English History	Year	Shakespeare and Theatre History
Elizabeth I becomes Queen	1558	
	1564	William Shakespeare born
Pope excommunicates Elizabeth	1570	Catholic plots against Elizabeth I increase
	1576	John Shakespeare's fortunes decline; Theatre built
	1577	The Curtain built in London
	1582	Shakespeare (18) marries Anne Hathaway (26)
Tydney and Walsingham form Queen Elizabeth's Men acting company	1583	Susannah Shakespeare born (6 months after wedding)
	1585	Judith and Hamnet Shakespeare born
Mary Queen of Scots executed	1587	The Rose built in London
England defeats Spanish Armada	1588	
	1590-3	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona; The Taming of the Shrew; Henry VI parts 1, 2, 3; Titus Andronicus</i>
	1592	Robert Greene's <i>Groats-Worth of Wit</i> published
Plague hits London	1592-4	Theatres closed
	1593	<i>Venus and Adonis</i> published
	1594	<i>Rape of Lucrece</i> published; Theatres reopen; <i>Richard III</i> performed (written earlier?)
	1595	The Swan built in London
	1595-6	<i>Love's Labours Lost, Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II, King John</i>
	1596-7	<i>Merchant of Venice, Henry IV part 1</i>
	1597-8	<i>Henry IV part 2, Merry Wives of Windsor (?)</i>
	1598	Lord Admiral's and Lord Chamberlain's Men licensed to play in London; <i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
Earl of Essex arrested for defying orders in Irish campaign	1599	The Globe built in London; <i>Julius Caesar, Henry V, As You Like It</i>
	1600	The Fortune built in London; <i>Hamlet</i>
Essex rebellion fails;	1601	<i>Twelfth Night</i> ; Essex supporters commission <i>Richard II</i>
	1601-2	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
Queen Elizabeth I dies; James I takes throne	1603	Lord Chamberlain's Men become King's Men and participate in coronation of James I
	1604	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
	1604-6	<i>Timon of Athens, All's Well that Ends Well</i>
Gunpowder Plot prevented	1605	
	1606	<i>King Lear, Macbeth</i>
	1606-7	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
	1608	<i>Coriolanus; Pericles</i>
	1610	<i>Cymbeline</i>
King James Bible published	1611	First performances in Blackfriars Theatre; <i>The Tempest, The Winter's Tale</i>
	1613	<i>Henry VIII</i> ; Globe burns down
	1613-4	<i>Two Noble Kinsman</i>
	1616	Shakespeare dies
	1623	"First Folio" printed

# Shakespeare Select Bibliography (a place to start)

## **Websites**

[www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)

[www.shakespearedocumented.folger.edu](http://www.shakespearedocumented.folger.edu)

[www.shakespearetheatre.org](http://www.shakespearetheatre.org)

[www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk)

[www.shakespearesglobe.com](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com)

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/shakespeare-uncovered/>

## **Books**

Ackroyd, Peter. *Shakespeare*.

Bate, Jonathan. *Mad About Shakespeare, Soul of an Age*.

Bates, Lauren, et al. *Shakespeare Saved My Life*.

Blayney, Peter. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*.

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Palfrey, Simon and Emma Smith. *Shakespeare's Dead*.

Shapiro, James. *Shakespeare in a Divided America, The Year of Lear, 1599, Contested Will*.

Smith, Emma. *Shakespeare's First Folio*.

\*\*\*Folger editions, paperback or online at [www.folgerdigitaltexts.org](http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org)

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Podcast: British History: Royals, Rebels, and Romantics  
*Tudors by the Numbers* coming summer 2023