

**AMERICAN
DICTIONARIES.
A DISSERTATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649030729

American Dictionaries. A Dissertation by Stewart Archer Steger

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STEWART ARCHER STEGER

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A DISSERTATION**

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AMERICAN DICTIONARIES

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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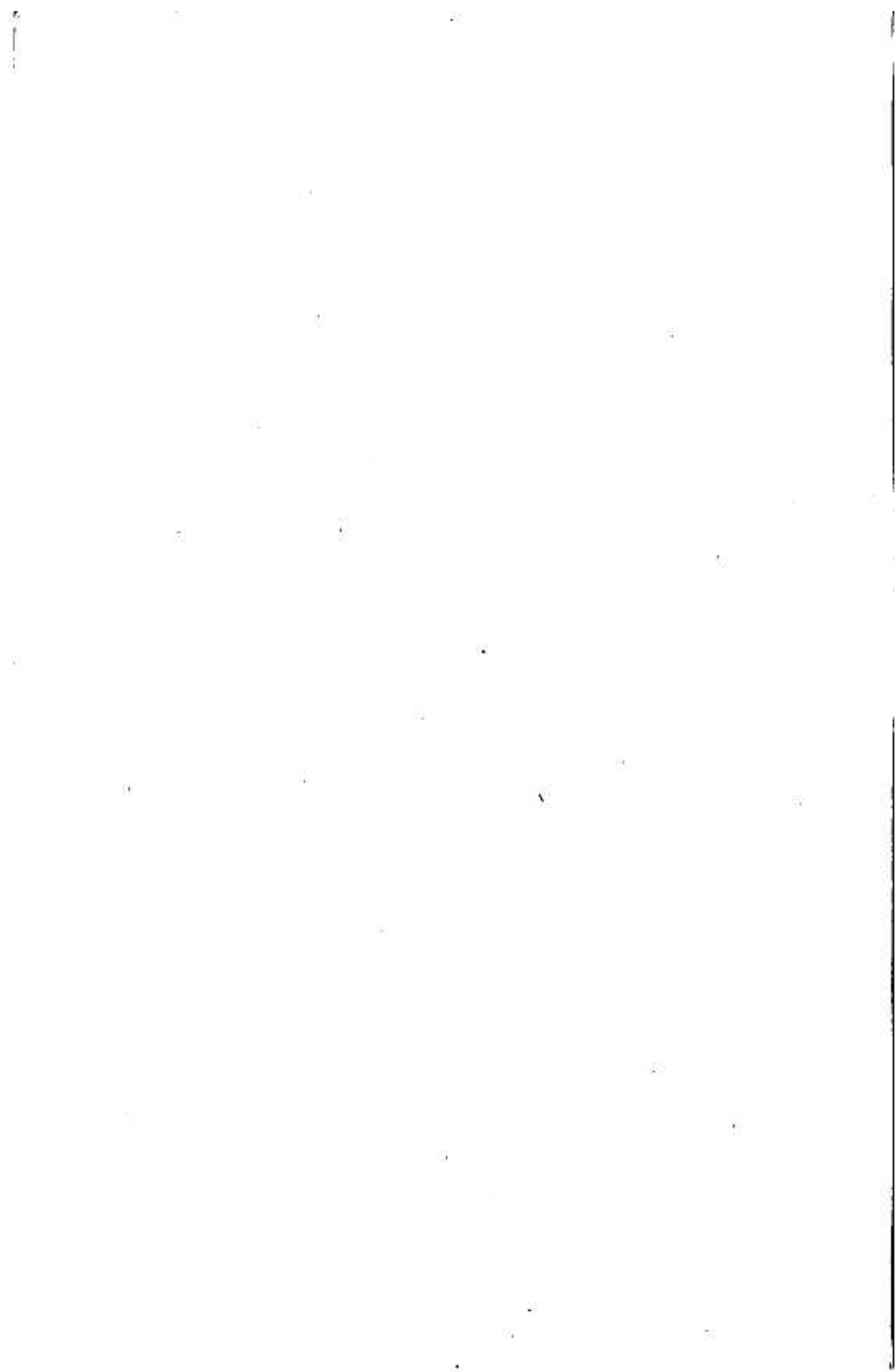
BALTIMORE

J. H. FURST COMPANY

1913

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I.—ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	1
II.—THE BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN LEXICOGRAPHY..	18
III.—THE EARLY EDITIONS OF WEBSTER.....	30
IV.—THE LATER EDITIONS OF WEBSTER.....	58
X.—WORCESTER'S "DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE"	75
VI.—THE CENTURY DICTIONARY.....	83
VII.—A STANDARD DICTIONARY.....	97
VIII.—CONCLUSION	108



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The subject of this dissertation was first suggested by Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, of the faculty of the University of Virginia. To him the author wishes to acknowledge his chief indebtedness and to express his appreciation of the valuable and willing assistance rendered in the preparation of this study. He wishes also to acknowledge the services rendered by Dr. Charles W. Kent, of the University of Virginia; by Mr. Frank H. Vizetelly, of Funk and Wagnalls, to whose courtesy he owes much; by the Century Co.; by G. & C. Merriam Co.; by Mr. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress; by the Librarian of Yale University; by Mr. J. S. Patton, Librarian of the University of Virginia, and by Miss M. L. Dinwiddie, Assistant Librarian of the University of Virginia.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This not only helps in tracking expenses but also ensures compliance with tax regulations. The second part of the document provides a detailed breakdown of the company's revenue streams. It identifies the primary sources of income and analyzes their contribution to the overall financial performance. The third part of the document outlines the company's financial goals for the upcoming year. It includes a comprehensive budget and a clear plan for achieving these objectives. The final part of the document concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It highlights the areas where the company is performing well and identifies the challenges that need to be addressed. Overall, the document provides a clear and concise overview of the company's financial health and future prospects.

AMERICAN DICTIONARIES

I

ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A comparison of a modern dictionary with earlier and intermediate dictionaries will show that the science of lexicography has been of slow growth. One will be amazed at the complexity and the vast amount of information contained in the modern dictionary as compared with the simplicity and meagreness of early works. Not until the third decade of the eighteenth century was any attempt made to include all of the words of the English language. Bailey's dictionary, first printed in 1721, was the earliest attempt at such an inclusion. This, however, fell short of its aim; for "The alphabetical vocabulary cannot be at all depended on as complete, even as to familiar language."¹ William Curtis Stiles says that even "fifteen years ago no general dictionary existed that had more than one-third of the words desirable for use in writing and speaking the English language."² Though this insufficiency has been removed and the vocabularies of modern dictionaries are for all practical purposes complete, we may still say that Bailey is not the only lexicographer to fall short of his aim.

The functions of a modern dictionary are in the main, five: to give for each word the correct orthography, syllabification, pronunciation, derivation, and definition. Usually the definitions are clarified either by illustrative extracts from standard writers or by pictorial representation of the object defined, and

¹ *Living Age*, Dec., 1873, Vol. 119, p. 645.

² *Success Magazine*, Sept., 1903, p. 409.

sometimes by both. These, however, were by no means the functions of the early dictionaries, but are distinctly modern contributions produced by slow evolution. Even as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century there seems to have been in existence no book which had for its design the definition in English of the English words in general use.³

It is my purpose to treat historically and critically American dictionaries, endeavoring to show to what extent and with what success they have fulfilled the fundamental requirements of a good lexicon of a living language, and to point out any defects which may have occurred in such an undertaking. In order to understand just what foundation America had upon which to build, we may devote a few pages to a brief survey of what had been accomplished in lexicography in England before the appearance of the first American dictionary.

In the following brief treatment of English lexicography, no attempt is made to discuss all works. Such an exhaustive treatment is not only unnecessary but for our purpose useless. I shall, therefore, limit myself to those dictionaries which have in some way contributed to the development of lexicography, or which possess some particular interest in themselves apart from such contribution. For convenience of treatment the following divisions may be made: (1) The beginnings down to the fifteenth century; (2) The Latin-English labors to facilitate the study of Latin; (3) Works to facilitate the study of modern languages; (4) The purely English dictionary of the seventeenth century; (5) Later dictionaries aiming at completeness of vocabulary.

The origin of lexicography in England was similar to its beginnings on the continent. The first works were in substance glosses, in form manuscripts, and in language Latin. In order to assist his own memory, and to aid those who followed him, the owner of a Latin manuscript wrote the meaning of a difficult word above the original, either in a more familiar

³*Our Dictionaries.* Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1890, p. 8.