

STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

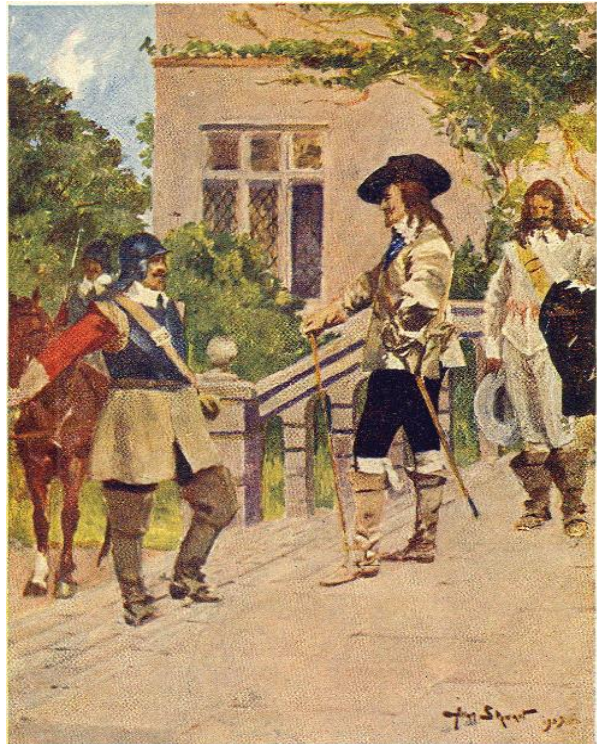
1603 TO 1688 A.D.

REIGN OF JAMES I TO GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

ERA SUMMARY – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

The reign of the Stuarts, lasting from 1603 to 1714, coincided almost exactly with the 17th century and was the most significant in English history in terms of formation of modern ideas of political and religious liberty. By the end of the Stuart reign, England was governed primarily by a democratically elected parliament and the idea of "freedom of conscience" was well established. Obviously these ideas had not yet been followed to their ultimate conclusion, since only the wealthiest class was allowed to vote and Catholics were still persecuted, but it was Englishmen living under the turbulent Stuart reign who laid the foundations for western style democracy and religious pluralism, an achievement unparalleled by any other nation, even within Christendom.

The problem of reporting on the evolution of ideas is that ideas are complicated and controversial, whereas events are relatively straight forward. The "dictates of conscience" were not a factor during the War of the Roses, for example, since loyalty by all parties was determined primarily through self-interest. The English Civil Wars, on the other hand, were the result of a convoluted mixture of strongly held religious principles, ideals of self-government, dismay at the corruption of existing institutions, loyalty to traditional institutions, and good old-fashioned self-interest. There were brave and heroic men on all sides (not both sides, for this was a many-sided conflict) as well opportunists and tyrants. Bearing in mind the complexities of the situation, the Stuart reign proceeded as follows:



KING CHARLES I AND CORNET JOYCE

James I—When Elizabeth died, the crown passed to her grand-nephew, James I, (a.k.a. James VI of Scotland). Scotland was governed independently of England at the time, but was a much poorer and more backward nation. Like England, Scotland had been greatly affected by the reformation, but instead of merely breaking with Rome and establishing a state church, the Scottish Presbyterians favored more radical *Calvinist* style reforms, which did away entirely with the priesthood, the organized church, and the liturgy. This was important because although the Catholic religion had already been proscribed in England by the beginning of the Stuarts' reign, the worst persecutions and religious wars in England's history were still to come. Rather than between Protestants and

Catholics, they were between two forms of Protestantism. These antagonists were the Anglicans, who urged preservation of much of the traditional liturgy and organization, and the Puritans, who favored the complete abolition of an established church.

Although James had grown up entirely under the sway of the Presbyterian Scots, he was by no means sympathetic to many of their ideas. He saw that rejecting the idea of traditional authority was but a step towards rejecting the idea of a king. The Scots as a whole were greatly bound by traditional loyalty to their Stuart kings, who had ruled in Scotland for hundreds of years, but there were radicals among the Presbyterians with *dangerous* ideas regarding self-government. James therefore allied himself with the interests of the Anglican Church and repressed the non-conformists in England. It was during the reign of James that the Puritans settled the New England colonies in America. Other important events of the reign of James I included a failed Catholic rebellion called the [Gunpowder Plot](#) and the publication of the King James Bible.

Charles I and the English Civil War—James I quarreled with his Parliament, which was becoming more sympathetic to the cause of the Puritans, but a full scale war between Parliament and the king did not break out until the reign of his son [Charles I](#). Compared to previous kings Charles I was not particularly tyrannical, but the disposition of Parliament had changed considerably since the age of the Tudors. England was becoming a wealthy and powerful trading nation; the cities were growing larger; the middle-class was rising in importance; gunpowder and long-bows had changed the nature of warfare; and the old ideas of being ruled by a landed aristocracy was resisted by many of the wealthiest men of London.

The ideas of self-government and freedom of conscience in religious matters were hopelessly intermixed, but when war finally broke out the essential division was between the traditionalists, who supported the king and the Anglican Church, and the Puritans, who supported more rights for Parliament and the disestablishment of the state church. From the very beginning, however, loyalties were mixed on both sides. For example, about a third of Parliament decided to fight for the king, and many Scots who opposed the Anglican Church were entirely loyal to their Stuart king.

Cromwell and the Commonwealth—After the first phase of the [English Civil Wars](#) (1642-1645), the king was captured. Parliament and the army sought a compromise but could there were elements on the side of Parliament that insisted on the removal of the king. The king was eventually beheaded by his enemies, but even this brought no closure to the conflict.

The civil war continued to rage, first in Ireland and then in Scotland. The man who had come to the fore during the civil war was [Oliver Cromwell](#), whose highly disciplined "Ironsides" had brought Parliament the victory. He was an extremely controversial figure, who, like Charles I, attempted to dissolve parliament when it disagreed with him. He presided over the Commonwealth of England, ruling essentially as a dictator. During this period the Anglican church was disestablished and many prominent families, including the ancestors of some of America's founding fathers, moved to Virginia, a royalist stronghold. Cromwell did much to advance the cause of religious freedom for everyone but Catholics and Anglicans, but was

extremely unpopular with the general population, who decided that the only thing worse than a lax and corrupt government was an overbearing and corrupt government.

The Restoration and "Glorious Revolution"—When Cromwell died one of his Puritan generals proposed to restore [Charles II](#) to the throne as long as he promised to respect the rights of Parliament and the religious freedom of the Puritans. Naturally this did not resolve the issue; persecutions and abuses continued. Charles II's reign was wrought with crises, including a terrible plague, the great fire of London, and an invasion by the Dutch navy. But although troubles and controversies continued between the monarchy and parliament, the inclination to turn to civil war to resolve them was abated.

A crisis within the monarchy did not arise again until the death of Charles II, at which time his brother [James II](#), a Catholic, ascended to the throne. His attempt to pass laws granting tolerance and opportunities to Catholics united the always feuding Protestants in hysterical opposition, and within a short time he was driven from the throne in favor of his daughter and son-in-law, who were loyal Protestants. The English refer to this as the "glorious revolution" because it was accomplished almost entirely without bloodshed on English soil although it did result in the [Jacobite Rebellion](#) in Ireland and Scotland. [William III](#) and Mary assumed the throne at the behest of Parliament, thereby permanently establishing the precedence of Parliament over royal prerogative.

CHARACTERS – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

<u>James I</u> 1566–1625	First Stuart king of England. Intelligent and competent, but unable to work effectively with Parliament.
<u>Charles I</u> 1600–1649	Second Stuart king. His quarrels with Parliament led to civil war and his execution.
<u>Charles II</u> 1630–1685	Restored to the throne after death of Cromwell. Presided over the great fire and plague of London.
<u>James II</u> 1633–1701	Catholic king of England, deposed by his daughter Mary and William III.
<u>William III</u> 1650–1702	King of Netherlands, called to be king of England when James II, his father-in-law, was deposed.
<u>Henrietta</u> 1609–1669	Daughter of Henry IV of France, and Queen of Charles I, and mother of Charles II and James II.

POLITICAL/MILITARY

<u>Oliver Cromwell</u> 1599–1658	Military leader of Parliament who headed the Commonwealth government after death of Charles I.
<u>Robert Blake</u> 1599–1657	Military commander turned admiral who took a leading role in the Anglo-Dutch Naval Wars.
<u>Samuel Pepys</u> 1633–1703	Kept a diary during the reign of Charles II; mentions the plague, the great fire, and much else.
<u>Earl</u> of Strafford 1693–1641	Minister of Charles I, Governor of Ireland and an enemy of Parliament. He was executed by a 'Bill of Attainder' since no cause was found for treason.
<u>Guy Fawkes</u> 1570–1606	Explosives expert of the infamous "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up Parliament.

ARTS AND SCIENCES

<u>Francis Bacon</u> 1561–1626	Chancellor of England, and advocate of the scientific method of experiment and induction.
<u>John Milton</u> 1608–1674	John Milton was friend of Cromwell and a poet. His most famous work was <i>Paradise Lost</i> .
<u>Isaac Newton</u> 1642–1727	Outstanding scientist. Made important breakthroughs in physics, optics, and mathematics.

RELIGION

<u>Archbishop Laud</u> 1573–1645	Governed the Church of England during the reign of Charles I and an enemy of Parliament. Executed by Parliament even though he could not be convicted for treason.
<u>George Fox</u> 1624–1691	Founder of the 'Society of Friends,' better known as Quakers.

TIMELINE – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

- 1605 [Gunpowder Plot](#) to blow up Parliament is discovered, [Guy Fawkes](#) held responsible.
- 1607 Founding of Jamestown colony in Virginia.
- 1607 Voyages of [Henry Hudson](#) to the new world.
- 1611 [King James](#) version of the Bible first published in England.
- 1616 Death of [William Shakespeare](#).
- 1620 Voyage of the *Mayflower*; Puritans settle in New England.
- 1625 Charles I ascends to throne of England and marries a Catholic princess.
- 1629 Charles I dissolves parliament after disputes with certain members.
- 1640 Charles I recalls the 'Long Parliament' and they accuse his counsellors of treason.
- 1641 Parliament executes the king's supporter, [Earl of Strafford](#) without a trial.
- 1641-49 [English Civil Wars](#). Parliament vs. King.
 - 1642 *Battle of Edgehill*—opening battle in Civil War.
 - 1645 *Battle of Naseby*—[Charles I](#) is taken prisoner.
 - 1649 Execution of Charles I, [Oliver Cromwell](#) invades Ireland.
- 1649-58 Commonwealth, led by Cromwell.
- 1653 [First Anglo-Dutch War](#): naval war fought over commercial interests.
- 1659 Restoration of [Charles II](#).
- 1665 Great Plague of London.
- 1667 Great Fire of London.
- 1688 Glorious Revolution: [James II](#) deposed by [William III](#) and Mary.

READING – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Guerber - [The Story of the English](#) [A Scotch King](#) to [James driven out of England](#) (12)
- Marshall - [Our Island Story](#) [The Story of Guy Fawkes](#) to [How London was Burned](#) (9)
- Syngé - [The Tudors and the Stuarts](#) [The Drama of the Stuarts](#) to [Charles II](#) (10)

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Harding - [The Story of England](#) [James I, First Stuart King](#) to [The Stuart Restoration](#) (5)
- Church - [Stories From English History, 2](#) [A Little Romance](#) to [The Window in Whitehall](#) (4)
- Church - [Stories from English History, 3](#) [The Lord Protector](#) to [The Dutch in the Medway](#) (6)
- Morris - [Historical Tales: English](#) [Love's Knight-Errant](#) to [Cromwell and the Parliament](#) (4)
- Ross - [Sir Walter Raleigh](#) *entire book*
- Abbott - [Charles I](#) *entire book*
- Abbott - [Charles II](#) *entire book*
- Church - [With the King at Oxford](#) *entire book*
- Marshall - [English Literature for Boys and Girls](#) [Bacon—New Ways of Wisdom](#) to [Dryden—New Poetry](#) (9)

EASY READING SELECTIONS

- Cambridge Press - [Cambridge Historical Reader:Primary](#) [Charles I and his Children](#) to [The Great Fire of London](#) (4)
- Haaren - [Famous Men of Modern Times](#) [Oliver Cromwell](#) to [Sir Isaac Newton](#) (3)
- Baldwin - [Robinson Crusoe for Children](#) *entire book*
- Macgregor - [Pilgrims Progress Told to the Children](#) *entire book*
- Marshall - [Through Great Britain and Ireland With Cromwell](#) *entire book*