

STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

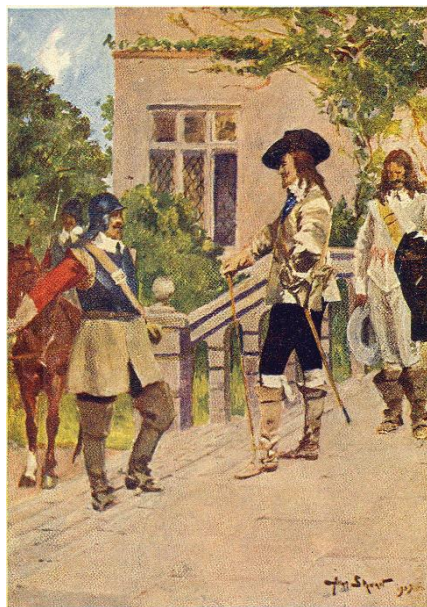
1603 TO 1714 A.D.

REIGN OF JAMES I TO DEATH OF ANNE

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 particularly important 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

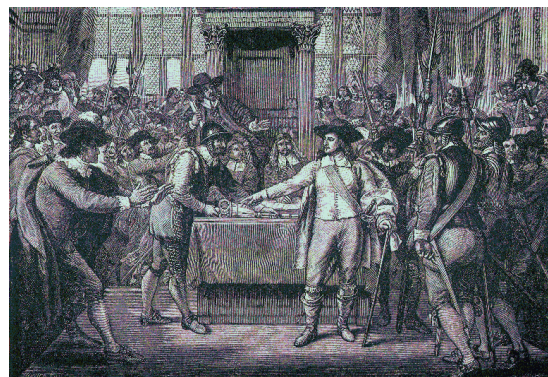
James I – When Elizabeth died, the crown passed to her grand-nephew, [James I of England](#), (a.k.a. James VI of Scotland). Scotland was governed independently of England at the time, but was a much poorer and more backward nation. Like England, Scotland had been greatly affected by the reformation, 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 ideal 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 of England](#). 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 best men of the nation. 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 not find one. 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.



CROMWELL DISSOLVING THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

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 a stringent and incorruptible government.

The Restoration and "Glorious Revolution" – When Cromwell died, therefore, one of his Puritan generals proposed to restore [Charles II of England](#) 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 of England](#), 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 of England](#) and Mary assumed the throne at the behest of Parliament, thereby permanently establishing the precedence of Parliament over royal prerogative.

After Mary's death her sister Anne assumed the throne. During the remainder of the Stuart reign the idea that one could accomplish political change through elected representatives rather than by petitioning a sovereign took hold and *party politics* became the accepted way of doing business. The Royalists became the *Tory* or conservative party, and the *Whig*, party represented the old Roundhead cause. A few other notable things occurred during Anne's reign. Her best general, the [Duke of Marlborough](#), won a great victory in France at the *battle of Blenheim*, a critical turning point in the [War of the Spanish Succession](#). This was very important in terms of curtailing the power of [Louis XIV of France](#) who was by far the most important monarch of the age. Also, the *Act of Union* in 1707 permanently united Scotland and England into the country of Great Britain by combining the two parliaments. Finally, the *Act of Settlement* established that when Anne should die, the crown would pass to the Hanovers of Germany. Thus the groundwork was laid for the rise of the British Empire.

CHARACTERS – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

STUARTS

James I	1566–1625	First Stuart king of England. Intelligent and competent, but unable to work effectively with Parliament.
Charles I	1600–1649	Second Stuart king. His quarrels with Parliament led to civil war and his execution.
William III	1650–1702	King of Netherlands, called to be king of England when James II, his father-in-law, was deposed.
Anne of England	1665–1714	Last of the Stuart queens, lived during the War of the Spanish Succession.
Arabella Stuart	1575–1615	Cousin of James Stuart. Distant heir to throne. Prevented from marrying by jealous relations.
Princess Elizabeth	1596–1662	Daughter of James I. Married Elector of Palatine, but they lost their duchy in 30 years war.

POLITICAL/MILITARY

Oliver Cromwell	1599–1658	Military leader of Parliament who headed the Commonwealth government after death of Charles I.
Robert Blake	1599–1657	Military commander turned admiral who took a leading role in the Anglo-Dutch Naval Wars.
Samuel Pepys	1633–1703	Kept a diary during the reign of Charles II; mentions the plague, the great fire, and much else.
Duke of Marlborough	1650–1722	Most renowned general of his age. Prevailed against the French at the <i>Battle of Blenheim</i> .
Lady Rachel Russell	1636–1723	Wife of Lord Russell, who was executed for opposing the restoration of Charles II.
Guy Fawkes	1570–1606	Explosives expert of the infamous "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up Parliament.

ARTS AND SCIENCES

Francis Bacon	1561–1626	Chancellor of England, and advocate of the scientific method of experiment and induction.
John Milton	1608–1674	John Milton was friend of Cromwell and a poet. His most famous work was <i>Paradise Lost</i> .
Sir Isaac Newton	1642–1727	Outstanding scientist. Made important breakthroughs in physics, optics, and mathematics.
Daniel Defoe	1661–1731	Author of <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> and <i>Moll Flanders</i> .

EXPLORATION

Henry Hudson	1575–1611	Explorer who discovered Hudson Bay and other parts of North America.
John Smith	1580–1631	Adventurer, leader and early settler at Jamestown. Befriended Pocahontas.
Samuel de Champlain	1580–1635	Founded French colonies in the St. Lawrence seaway and great lake region. Father of 'New France.'

RELIGION

Archbishop Laud	1573–1645	Governed the Church of England during the reign of Charles I. Very unpopular with parliament.
George Fox	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.
- 1641-49** [English Civil Wars](#) .
- 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.
- 1649-1658** 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.
- 1689** [Williamite War in Ireland](#)—James II exiled to France after the *Battle of Boyne*.
- 1689** Toleration Act is passed, providing freedom of worship to "non-conforming" Christians.
- 1701-1714** [War of the Spanish Succession](#) checks the growing influence of France under [Louis XIV](#).
- 1704** British victory at the *Battle of Blenheim* under [Duke of Marlborough](#).
- 1704** British gain possession of the gateway to the Mediterranean at the *Siege of Gibraltar*.
- 1707** England and Scotland join to become Great Britain.

RECOMMENDED READING – STUARTS AND CIVIL WAR

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS *

- Cambridge Press - [Cambridge Historical Reader](#) [Charles I and his Children](#) to [Bonnie Prince Charlie](#) (6)
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 the Union Jack was Made](#) (16)

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Haaren - [Famous Men of Modern Times](#) [Oliver Cromwell](#) to [William III, King of England](#) (3)
Baldwin - [Robinson Crusoe](#) *entire book*
Harding - [The Story of England](#) [James I, First Stuart King](#) to [Queen Anne, Last of the Stuarts](#) (8)
Macgregor – [Stories from Pilgrim's Progress](#) *entire book*
Marshall - [Through Britain with Cromwell](#) *entire book*
Ross - [Oliver Cromwell](#) *entire book*
Wood - [Boy's Book of Battles](#) [Edgehill](#) to [When Blake Whipped the Sea](#) (2)
Morris - [Historical Tales - English](#) [Love's Knight-Errant](#) to [The Relief of Londonderry](#) (5)
Synge - [Tudors and Stuarts](#) [The Drama of the Stuarts](#) to [Progress in Stuart Times](#) (15)

ALSO RECOMMENDED

- Church - [English History Stories - II](#) [A Little Romance](#) to [The Window in Whitehall](#) (4)
Church - [English History Stories - III](#) [The Lord Protector](#) to [Good Queen Anne and Her Son](#) (11)
Synge - [Great Englishmen](#) [John Milton](#) to [Sir Isaac Newton](#) (2)
Synge - [Great Englishwomen](#) [Princess Elizabeth](#) to [Lady Rachel Russell](#) (2)
Abbott - [Charles I](#) *entire book*
Abbott - [Charles II](#) *entire book*
Church - [With the King at Oxford](#) *entire book*
Marryat - [Children of the New Forest](#) *entire book*
Marshall - [English Literature](#) [Bacon—New Ways of Wisdom](#) to [Defoe—"Robinson Crusoe"](#) (11)

* Level I and II Study Questions are based on **Core Reading Assignments**.