

## Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> Century: 1660-1785

**James Stuart 1603-1625** James VI of Scotland, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, succeeded Elizabeth, who died without an heir. At the time, he was thirty-seven years old and had served as King of Scotland most of his life. He had several heirs with his wife, Anne of Denmark, although he was known to be a homosexual. He was described by a contemporary as having an overly large tongue, being prone to drooling, never washing his hands, and constantly “fiddling about his codpiece..” He was an autocrat whereas Elizabeth had shared power with House of Commons and House of Lords. He had hoped to unify the domains of Scotland and England as a single nation, but the legal and ecclesiastical systems of the two were not compatible. In all, he had a wasteful, disorderly court and had financial problems. Whereas Elizabeth had compromised in ways that were acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants, neither group was particularly happy with James. The unrest was most obvious with The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in which a small group of Catholic dissidents tried to blow up Parliament. This heightened anti-Catholic sentiment. He did, however, commission the King James Bible.

**Charles I 1625-1649** Henry, the favored heir, died of typhoid fever after swimming in the Thames, thrusting his younger brother Charles onto the throne. Charles was even more of an autocrat than his father had been. His marriage to Henrietta Maria, the Catholic daughter of King Louis XIII of France, led to increasing unpopularity, especially as she appeared to exert her influence in political matters. Charles appointment of William Laud as archbishop of Canterbury was very controversial as Laud’s doctrine and ceremonies aligned the Church of England with Catholicism and enraged Puritans. Also, Charles had little acquaintance with Scotland, so his father’s homeland resented him. He attempted to rule without summoning Parliament between 1629 and 1638. This led to Civil War between the king’s forces and armies loyal to the House of Common and ultimately resulted in beheading of Charles in 1649. His wife had refused to be crowned in a Protestant ceremony, and so, upon the death of Charles, Cromwell refused to give her an allowance. *This political chaos is one reason people longed for logic and clarity, in government and in language.*

**Commonwealth Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell 1653-1658** A former general of parliament who was also an autocrat, Cromwell was never king of England. He did, however, rule and enjoyed many of privileges of kingship. A Puritan who detested licentiousness, Cromwell nonetheless liked music, and his secretary, John Milton, used to play the organ for him.

**Richard Cromwell 1658-1659** Cromwell’s heir, Richard, was simply not up to the task of leading the country. He abdicated the throne in 1658, making way for the return of the Stuarts in the person of Charles II, son of Charles.

**Charles II 1660-1685:** Charles II was restored to the throne after the abdication of Richard Cromwell. In an early attempt to regain the throne, Charles, in battle against Cromwell, was reportedly forced to hide in an oak tree. Upon being crowned, *Charles reopened theaters, approved of the Royal Society*, and made every attempt to bring Puritanism to an end. In 1673, the Test Act required everyone to take the sacrament according to the Anglican church; Protestant dissenters and Catholics were excluded. In 1678, the so-called Popish Plot, largely a rumor that Catholics were trying to rise, led to the attempt of Protestants to make Charles II exclude his Catholic brother James II. This act led to the formation of Whigs (king’s opponents) and Tories (king’s supporters), which later developed into the political parties in Britain today. Richard Walpole, architect of Whig policy, became the first “prime” minister. Although Charles had sixteen bastards (he was a notorious womanizer whose most famous affair was with the actress Nell Gwynn), he did not produce a legitimate heir. Thus, his younger brother succeeded him.

**James II 1685-1688:** James was fifty-one when he was crowned. He was not personable or popular like his brother. In fact, it turns out that neither the Whigs nor the Tories were happy with James, who made little attempt to conceal his Catholic sympathies. Charles had two Protestant heirs (Anne and Mary) by his first wife. His second wife, Mary of Modena, was a Catholic. News of Mary giving birth to a son led to the “Glorious” or “Bloodless” Revolution of 1688. Secret negotiations by Charles’ Protestant enemies led to his daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, taking the throne. James fled, but his son and grandson, dubbed the “old” and “new” pretenders, occasionally gained support. He is the only king to die as an exile.

**William III and Mary II 1689-1702:** William and Mary were cousins who were married to one another for political purposes when Mary was only fifteen. Reportedly, she wept at the wedding, unhappy at the prospect of marrying her older, dull, and hunchbacked cousin. Although they ruled England jointly, Mary’s role was eclipsed by the stronger-willed William, whom she apparently grew to love. Mary died of small-pox when she was thirty-two, leaving William to rule alone. William was not particularly well-liked. He was killed after being thrown from his horse, which apparently tripped over a mole’s hill. Thereafter, some Englishmen began to drink toasts to moles!

**Anne: 1702-1714:** Anne came to throne next (the last Stuart monarch). Anne’s reign was in many ways glorious, especially considering the many brilliant writers who flourished at the time (Swift, Dryden, Pope, and others). Anne herself, however, was reportedly very dull. She apparently liked to drink brandy and entertained herself with a close lady friend, Sarah Churchill (this friendship was so close that rumors. *Her reign rang in the Augustan Age, a period that emphasized the Golden Age of Rome and rebelled against Renaissance tendencies to write in a flourishing, elaborate style. The emphasis was upon reason and logic, with Latin used as a model for English. Many of our current rules came about during this time.*

of lesbianism abounded). When the two friends had an irreparable argument, Anne replaced Sarah with a new favorite. Anne was obese, to the point that she required the help of pulleys and levers to get around. Sadly, only one of her eighteen pregnancies resulted in a living child, but that child, a boy, died at the age of eleven. Under Anne's reign, new political tensions began to mount. England participated in the War of Spanish Succession (1702-13) under the duke of Marlborough (John Churchill). Marlborough and the Whigs dominated the queen for a while but were dismissed in 1710. She then relied upon the Tories, particularly Robert Harley (earl of Oxford) and Henry St. John (earl of Bolingbroke). They employed writers like Swift but then had a falling out with one another. Ultimately, the Whigs returned to power with the accession of George I (son of Sophia, Anne's cousin, and first Hanoverian king).

George I 1714-1717: George, the son of Anne's cousin Sophia, was the first of the Hanoverian kings and a Protestant. He was German and knew no English. His wife, Princess Dorothea, never joined him in London. She was imprisoned for life and prevented from seeing her children, after George accused her of adultery. Under his reign, the prime minister, Robert Walpole, began to gain strength.

George II 1727-1760: Despite what must have been an unhappy childhood (his mother was imprisoned most of his life), George II was generally thought to be a good king. His father had not allowed him any responsibility, so as a young man, George II and his wife kept a rival court. During his thirty-three year reign, England's military conquests included Canada and India. He died of a heart attack (apparently while sitting on the toilet). He had hated his son Frederick, who had died playing cricket. Upon the death of George II, the throne passed to his grandson, George III.

George III 1760-1820: George III, who was grandson to George II, had a very long and eventful reign which, unfortunately, ended with George III becoming insane. During his reign, in America, the Louisiana Purchase led to Western expansion; the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar established naval supremacy; and in 1806, the British occupied South Africa.