

## **Station #3 – Renaissance England: People & Timeline of the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

### **1509: Henry VIII (1509-47) becomes King of England**

Henry, Prince of Wales, succeeds his father to the throne & marries Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow.

### **1533: Henry VII wants a divorce.**

Henry VII wants a divorce from his 1st wife, Catherine of Aragon, he broke from Rome and became "Supreme Head" of the English Church, secretly marries Anne Boleyn because he needs a son to continue the royal line of Tudor kings. He declares marriage to Catherine void & marriage with Anne lawful. Anne crowned queen; Henry is excommunicated (thrown out of the Roman Catholic Church) by pope; Henry sells the Roman Catholic monasteries and lands to the gentry who are below the noble class in the English social class system. Thomas More, the chief advisor to Henry VIII objects to the divorce.

### **1535: Thomas More stands trial for his beliefs and actions.**

Thomas More, refusing the oath of the king's supremacy, tried for treason (going against the government) & executed. Made a Saint in the Roman Catholic Church.

### **1536: Queen Anne Boleyn loses her head.**

Queen Anne Boleyn is sent to Tower of London & executed for treason and adultery. Henry marries Jane Seymour, his 3rd wife. Queen Anne has a daughter with Henry VIII, but this does not allow the Tudor dynasty to continue since only males can rule England.

### **1537: Queen Jane dies in childbirth, Henry has 2 more wives.**

Queen Anne, the beloved of Henry VIII after birth of Prince Edward (later Edward VI)  
In 1540, Henry VIII marries Anne of Cleves because of a portrait painted by Hans Holbein the Younger, who depicted Anne as a beautiful young woman. Henry VIII marries her and is repulsed by her ugliness. Rumor has it that it is Anne who is repulsed by a wound on Henry's leg that would not heal do to a joust, and that is constantly infected. The marriage annulled (voided) by the new Church of England. Henry VII marries his 5<sup>th</sup> wife, Catherine Howard, who is a spry, young, beautifully vibrant teenager (16-17).

### **1541-1542: Henry becomes King of Ireland, and trouble brews for Queen Catherine.**

Henry VIII assumes title of King of Ireland & head of the Irish Church. Queen Catherine Howard sent to the Tower on suspicion of immoral conduct (adultery), her alleged companions, Thomas Culpepper & Francis Dereham, executed. Queen Catherine Howard executed by beheading.

### **1543: Henry takes his last bride.**

Henry VII marries Catherine Parr, his 6th wife who outlives him and who continued to look after his daughter from Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth. Henry VIII dies in 1547, and leaves England with a male heir, and successor to the Tudor dynasty, Edward VI.

**1547-1553: Edward becomes King, and dies childless.**

Edward VI was a sickly child and as teenage king his health was not any better. He had consumption (tuberculosis). He saw England Protestant doctrine more fully accepted, relaxed laws against heretics, allowed clergy to marry. He changes the law in which a woman could rule England as queen, and instead of yielding to his half-sisters, he installs his cousin Lady Jane Grey (r.1553) as queen. She rules for 9 days and Mary his sister sends her army and deposes her. She is put on trial for treason and is executed along with her husband in 1554. Mary becomes Queen Mary I of England in 1553.

**1553-1558: Queen Mary I rules as “Bloody Mary”**

The daughter of Catherine of Aragon, Queen Mary I, introduced a severe, unpopular, Catholic reaction, driving many Protestants to exile & nearly 300 burnt at stake as heretics. She made the Roman Catholic faith the religion of England once again reversing her father's Protestant Church of England.

**1554-1558: Elizabeth suspected of treason, and Mary leaves no heir.**

In 1554, Princess Elizabeth was sent to the Tower for suspected participation in a Protestant rebellion against Mary. Queen Mary I married Phillip of Spain, son of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. In 1558 Queen Mary dies childless, and the crown passes to her half-sister Elizabeth who was not executed by Mary due to the fact she was of the same blood as their father, Henry VIII.

**1558-1571: Elizabeth succeeds Mary I to become Queen Elizabeth I**

Mary I's half-sister, daughter of Anne Boleyn, sought a middle way between the policies of Edward VI and Mary I, attempting to bring peace between the Catholics & the Protestants, but a strongly Protestant parliament forced her to a more extreme view than she intended. Her mother was killed for not bearing Henry VIII a son as a teenager she was accused of having treasonous amorous relationship with Seymour which she managed to survive. She was sent to the Tower by Mary I when thought to be involved in a Protestant rebellion and became Queen when Mary I died childless. She is vain, arrogant, adored adoration, spiteful, frequently unjust & often indecisive, but was brave, intelligent and usually wise. A Protestant queen in a predominantly catholic country (esp. the north) hence was pushed to have a husband and children for the sake of Protestant England. Many rumors abounded that she was sleeping with Dudley, a married man with a sick wife who died after "falling" down stairs, further fueling gossip that it was not accidental. Elizabeth was forced to push Dudley away. Haunted & fascinated by her cousin Mary Queen of Scots with whom she competed for adoration, but also Mary, being a Catholic as well as a Tudor and a Stuart, a competitor for the English throne! She had to contend with: inflation, increasing beggars serious attack of smallpox in 1562, rise of the Puritan, Catholic plots & threats from Scotland, France & Spain, Irish rebellion in northern Ireland, plague kills 20,000 in London.

### **1572-1603: Queen Elizabeth I and the Golden Age**

Mary Queen of Scots is caught in a plan to overthrow Elizabeth. Parliament demands that Elizabeth I execute Mary Queen of Scots. She was ultimately executed in 1587, by a conviction at trial for treason. The queens' advisors want the un-wed Elizabeth to marry. She would continue to refuse. She would call herself the "Virgin Queen" and promote that she needs no man because she is married to England. Meanwhile, the Pope & Spain plot to invade England. Queen Elizabeth faces her greatest threat, a Spanish invasion of England. She gives her famous speech at Tilbury that she has "the heart and soul of a King, and that of a King of England, too". In 1588, the English defeated the Spanish Armada (fleet of ships), and the Spanish Empire would never regain its leadership in the Western World again. England would rule the world for next 350 years. Although, Elizabeth I dies childless, and unmarried, she makes a deal with James Stuart the King of Scotland to keep the country Protestant. The Elizabethan Age is named after her great rule and in the end, she left England more prosperous than when she inherited it. In a twist of fate, James V of Scotland, Mary Queen of Scots whom Elizabeth executed for treason, becomes King James I of England. The next hundred years would see England dominate the world with its colonies, but internally England would face many challenges to its form of government and the only time England would be ruled by a dictator named Oliver Cromwell.