

**144928. HENRY BEAUFORT**

Born c1430

Died 16 May 1464 Hexham, Northumberland, England

Married (never)

Born

Died

Mistress 144929. Joan Hill

Born

Died

Child:

72464. Sir Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester, Lord Herbert, KG

b. c1460

d. 15 Apr 1526

m. (1) Elizabeth Herbert 02 Jun 1492

(2) Elizabeth West

(3) Eleanor Sutton

Sir Henry Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset and Knight of the Garter, was the eldest son of Sir Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and Eleanor Beauchamp, daughter of Richard Beauchamp, 5th Earl of Warwick, and Elizabeth Berkeley, daughter and heiress of Thomas, Lord Berkeley, Viscount Lisle. Never married, Sir Henry Beaufort had no legitimate children. His only child was Charles, known as Somerset, the illegitimate son of his mistress Joan Hill (Jeanne de la Montaigne), whose parents have not been determined.

Elizabeth Herbert, who married Charles Somerset, was the only daughter and heiress of William Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, 1st Earl of Huntingdon, and Mary Wydville, daughter of Richard Wydville. Elizabeth West was a daughter of Thomas West, Lord de la Warre, and Elizabeth Mortimer. Eleanor Sutton was a daughter of Sir Edward Sutton, 6th Baron Dudley, K.G., and Cicely Willoughby, daughter of Sir William Willoughby.

Henry Beaufort was distinguished in the Wars of the Roses on the Lancaster side. He was wounded, and his father was killed, in the Battle of St. Albans on 22 May 1455. Henry was so badly injured that, although he was captured by the Yorkists, he was permitted to be carried home safely in a cart. After recovering, Henry, now 2nd Duke of Somerset, became one of the leaders of the Lancastrians, with other of the young nobility, all in their twenties, who were dedicated to revenging the deaths of their fathers. In 1457 Henry was constituted Governor of the Isle of Wight and Governor of Carisbroke Castle by King Henry VI. The following year, he was named Captain of Calais.

Lord Henry was with the Lancastrians in the Battle of Towton on 29 March 1461, which was described as one of the most ruthless battles on English soil. "The Lancastrians held a good position on rising ground, their right flank being protected by the flooded stream of the Cock, in many places unfordable." The Yorkist army, led by King Edward IV, was incomplete. The troops commanded by the Duke of Norfolk, John Mowbray,

were still approaching, but Edward decided to attack. "The battle began in a blinding snowstorm, which drove in the faces of the Lancastrians. Under this cover clumps of Yorkist spearmen moved up the slope. The wind gave superior range to the archery of the attack and the Lancastrian shafts fell short, while they themselves suffered heavily. Under this pressure the decision was taken to advance downhill upon the foe. For six hours the two sides grappled furiously, with varying success ... until late in the afternoon when the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk's corps upon the exposed flank of the Lancastrians drove the whole mass into retreat, which soon became a rout." The bridge across the swollen river became jammed with fugitives and thousands of heavily armored soldiers plunged into the floodwaters in their attempt to flee the battle. They drowned in such numbers that the corpses piled up into bridges that allowed subsequent escapees to cross the stream successfully. In a letter to his mother, Edward IV claimed that 28,000 Lancastrians died in the battle and retreat. He did not state his losses. The Yorkists executed all their prisoners. The Lancastrian nobility and knighthood was decimated and the Yorkist victory seemed complete. Queen Margaret escaped to York, where she got her husband King Henry VI, who had been observing the rites of Palm Sunday, and fled to the northern border and the strongholds of the Lancastrians.

Securing support from Scotland, Burgundy and France, the indomitable Queen Margaret landed a force in England in 1462 and occupied the castles at Alnwick, Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. That winter, King Edward IV sent his new artillery north under the command of the formidable Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who became known as "The King Maker," and laid siege to the castles. The siege was conducted so vigorously that Christmas leaves were not granted. The heavy cannons wreaked havoc on the masonry of the fortresses and all three castles fell within a month. Henry Beaumont was associated with the surrender of Bamburgh Castle. In an unusual act for the brutal War of the Roses, Edward IV pardoned the Lancastrian nobles who were caught in the forts. Upon swearing allegiance to Edward, they were not only allowed to go free, but had their estates restored to them. Having made his peace, Henry Beaufort received a high command and a place in the inner councils of the Royal Army. In this role, he gave shrewd advice and received special pensions from Edward. The Duke of Somerset was so high in the favor of King Edward IV that "the King made full much of him, in so much he lodged with the king in his own bed many nights, and sometimes rode a-hunting behind the king, the king having about him not passing six horse at the most, and yet three were of the Duke's men of Somerset."

In the meantime, one of the pardoned Lancastrians, Sir Ralph Percy, who had been put in charge of Bamburgh Castle, opened the gates to Queen Margaret in 1463, when she once again returned to England with fresh troops. This betrayal by Percy apparently did not affect the king's confidence in Henry Beaufort because, in the fall of 1463, when Edward went north to meet this new invasion, his bodyguard was the Duke of Somerset with 200 of his own men. At Northampton, the Yorkists were so infuriated to see their old enemy Beaufort in their midst that the king was barely able to protect him from being killed. After the confrontation at Northampton, the king assigned Henry Beaufort to Holt Castle in Denbighshire for safety. Henry must have decided that even the king's

friendship could not protect him from the rabid Yorkists forever so, at Christmas 1463, he abandoned King Edward IV and returned to the Lancastrians. Edward's experiment with leniency ended and, in subsequent combat, captured Lancastrians were summarily executed. Henry Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset, and a small group of Lancastrians were defeated at the Battle of Hexham on 15 May 1464. Henry was captured and beheaded the next morning.

The Wars of the Roses were so-called because the red rose was the badge of the House of Lancaster and the white rose symbolized the House of York. York and Lancaster were divisions of the royal Plantagenet family so that the war was also known as "the Cousins' War." The series of struggles went on for over a hundred years and affected the reigns of seven English kings, from Richard II to Henry VII. The trouble began when King Edward III had eleven children who married sons and daughters of powerful noble families, thereby establishing potent semi-royal families. When Edward III died in 1377, he was succeeded by his 10-year-old grandson Richard II. The last of the Angevins, Richard II was an extravagant, unjust and faithless ruler who wanted to abandon Parliamentary government. His reign was first contested by his uncle John Plantagenet, also known as John of Gaunt (Ghent), Duke of Lancaster, who was Edward's third son.

When John of Gaunt died in 1399, his son Henry of Bolingbroke returned to England from exile, deposed Richard II and usurped the throne as King Henry IV. Richard II, who was murdered in prison in 1400, left no issue. It could be said that he was the first victim of the Wars of the Roses. Henry IV ruled until his death in 1413 and was succeeded by his son Henry V who died in 1422.

When Henry VI, the only son of King Henry V of Lancaster, succeeded his father to the throne, he was only nine months old and England was ruled by a Council of Lords until he reached his majority. When he took over the reign, he was unfit to rule because of recurring bouts of insanity, which was hereditary in the family of his mother Catherine of Valois, so England continued to be controlled by a Council. Henry VI allowed himself to be managed by anyone who had the courage to assume the conduct of his affairs. His Queen, Margaret of Anjou, was a woman of uncommon abilities and unconquerable determination. She exercised influence over Henry VI which was not beneficial to him or to England.

Because of Henry VI's madness, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, was appointed Regent in 1454. Richard was next in line for the throne after Henry's son, who was born in 1453. The king's recovery and resumption of control in 1455 resulted in an outbreak of hostilities between the families of Lancaster and York at St. Albans. The Yorkists won, Henry VI was captured and York took over as Regent again. The power of the Lancastrians was restored in 1459, when Queen Margaret engineered the departure of York and his chief supporter, Richard Neville, father of "The King Maker." In 1460, the Lancastrians routed the Yorkists at Wakefield, where York and Neville were slain.

Their sons, Edward, Duke of York, and Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, "The King

Maker," deposed Henry VI in 1461, after defeating the Lancastrians in the snow storm at Towton. The Duke of York became King Edward IV. He reigned until 1470 when Henry VI regained the crown briefly. Warwick, "The King Maker," became angry over Edward's favoring of his Woodville in-laws, and conspired with Margaret of Anjou and King Louis XI of France to restore Henry VI to puppet power. Edward IV fled to Burgundy but returned the following year to take the crown after winning the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury. Warwick was killed at Barnet on Easter, 1471 and Henry VI's only son Prince Edward was killed later at Tewkesbury. Henry VI was killed after Tewkesbury, probably assassinated by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who later murdered his way to the throne as Richard III.

Edward IV ruled until his death in April 1483. His son, Edward V, aged 13, followed him on the throne for two months before he and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of York, were seized by their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and sent to the Tower, where their skeletons were found hidden under a staircase, during later alterations to the building. Usurping the throne on the grounds that the marriage of his brother Edward V to Elizabeth Woodville was invalid and his nephews were illegitimate, Richard of Gloucester claimed the throne as King Richard III.

However, the intrigue continued. Henry de Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, a former supporter of Richard III, fomented a rebellion in favor of 14-year-old Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, a great-great-grandson of John of Gaunt. Buckingham's plot failed and he was beheaded on 02 November 1483 in the market place at Salisbury.

In 1485, Henry, Earl of Richmond, who had been exiled to France, raised a small army of Lancastrian veterans and other enemies of Richard III to dethrone him. He landed at Milford Haven on 07 August 1485, where his supporters joined him, and marched to Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, where, on 22 August, the last important battle of the Wars of the Roses was fought. King Richard III was killed in the fight and Tudor became King Henry VII. By marrying Elizabeth of York, he united the rival factions and brought internal peace to England. Not only was this exceptional woman the daughter of Edward IV, sister of Edward V, niece of Richard III, wife of Henry VII and mother of Henry VIII, she was Queen of England, Scotland and France.

The thirty years of battle, from St. Albans on 22 May 1455 to Bosworth on 22 August 1485, in this civil war over whom would rule England, were marked by the rapacity of the nobles and their ferocity in the conduct of the fighting.

King Richard III was pictured as a relentless villain by Tudor propaganda, including Shakespeare's play and the writing of Sir Thomas More. His defenders claim that the disappearance his two nephews from their royal apartment in the Tower was the handiwork of Henry de Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and that Richard was not directly involved. They paint him as a paragon of virtue which is a suspect characterization for a man hungry for power in those bloody times. Most historical physical descriptions contradict Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard as a hunchback.

289856. **EDMUND BEAUFORT**

Born c1406

Died 22 May 1455 St. Albans, Hertfordshire, England

Married 289857. Eleanor de Beauchamp Ros c1435

Born 1407 Eddgenoch, Warwick, England

Died 06 Mar 1467/8

Children (order of birth unknown):

144928. Sir Henry Beaumont, 2nd Duke of Somerset, Earl of Morteign, KG

b. c1430

d. 16 May 1464 Hexham, Northumberland, England

m. (never)

nm. 144929. Joan Hill

Edmund Beaufort, 3rd Duke of Somerset

b.

d. 03 May 1471 Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, England

b.

John Beaufort

b.

d. 03 May 1471 Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, England

m.

Thomas Beaufort

b.

d. young

m.

Eleanor (Alianore) Beaufort

b.

d. 16 Aug 1501

m. (1) James Butler, Earl of Wiltshire, 5th Earl of Ormond, KG

(2) Sir Robert Spencer of Spencercombe, Devonshire

Joane Beaufort

b.

d.

m. (1) Lord Howth of Ireland

(2) Sir Richard Fry

Anne Beaufort

b.

d.

m. Sir William Paston

Margaret Beaufort

b.

d.

- m. (1) Humphrey de Stafford, 8th Earl of Stafford  
(2) Sir Richard Darell of Littlecote

Elizabeth Beaufort

b.

d.

- m. Sir Henry Lewes

Sir Edmund Beaufort, 1st Duke of Somerset, Marquess of Dorset, Knight of the Garter, was a son of Sir John Beaufort, Marquess of Dorset, Earl of Somerset, K.G., and Margaret Holland, daughter of Thomas Holland, 2nd Earl of Kent, Baron Woodstock, Baron Wake, Baron Holland, and Alice FitzAlan, daughter of Sir Richard FitzAlan, 9th Earl of Arundel, K.G. Eleanor (Alianore) Beauchamp was the widow of Thomas de Ros, 9th Baron Ros, who died on 18 August 1431, and a daughter of Sir Richard de Beauchamp, 5th Earl of Warwick, K.G., and Elizabeth Berkeley, daughter and heiress of Thomas Berkeley, 5th Lord Berkeley, Viscount Lisle.

Edmund Beaufort commanded one of the divisions of the army under John Plantagenet, Duke of Bedford, in Normandy in the 10th year of the reign of King Henry VI (1431). In 1435, after the death of the Duke of Bedford, who was a brother of King Henry V, Edmund Beaufort was promoted to Joint Commander, with Richard, Duke of York, of all of the English forces in Normandy. A year later, he commanded the successful siege of Harfleur and, afterwards, crossing the Somme River, joined with Sir John Talbot, 6th Baron Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, to take the fort at Fulleville. Talbot was a famed English military leader in France who had been defeated by the army of Joan of Arc near Patay in 1429 and made prisoner for four years.

A few years after the victory at Fulleville, Edmund Beaufort won renown by driving the Duke of Burgundy from Calais. For this service, he was created Earl of Dorset on 24 August 1441. Continuing to distinguish himself in arms, he was advanced to the Marquisate of Dorset on 24 June 1442. In 1444 he inherited the Earldom of Somerset from his brother John Beaufort. The following year he was appointed Regent of France. On 31 March 1448 he was created Duke of Somerset, a title formerly held by his brother John, but which had expired with John's death in 1444.

These military successes were the English highlights in a long series of defeats which saw England lose all of its possessions on the Continent, except Calais. These defeats were the result of improved French artillery, using a device which hurled 22-inch stone balls and devastated the English-held castles in a few days, whereas past siege tactics were based on starvation of the defenders. Another cause for the English defeats was the political upheaval at home, as the nobles plotted and struggled against each other for power under the ineffectual rule of Henry VI. Edmund Beaufort bore the blame for the defeats and, since he was, in addition to being the King's commander, the friend

and Lancastrian cousin of Henry VI, the king's enemies were able to use the military failures to agitate the people against their monarch. This unrest led to the Wars of the Roses. The opponents of the established regime selected Richard, Duke of York, as their candidate to replace Henry VI, who was on the throne through the usurpation by his grandfather Henry IV. The Lancastrians considered Edmund Beaufort as a possible successor to Henry VI. He had a good direct male descent claim to the throne, excepting that, by an Act of 1404, the legitimized bastards of John of Gaunt were prohibited from succession. Consideration was given to repeal the Act of 1404 to make Edmund eligible but it was never done, due largely to the opposition of Queen Margaret.

In the summer of 1453, King Henry VI lost his memory and ability to communicate for fifteen months. His madness was the undoing of Edmund Beaufort. John Mowbray, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, one of York's supporters, presented a petition against Beaufort to the Council and, in December 1453, Edmund was committed to the Tower of London. York became Protector of the King and gained control over the executive branch of government, as well as both Houses of Parliament. Winston Churchill observed that Norfolk demonstrated great moderation and statesmanship in his position, proving that he was a patriot interested in improving the government. Norfolk did not bring Edmund Beaufort to trial but left him in prison.

As suddenly as he became ill, Henry VI recovered his senses completely about Christmas 1454. He thought he had awakened from asleep. York immediately relinquished power to the king and Queen Margaret took over again. Beaufort was released from confinement and reinstated to his previous position.

Urged by the Nevilles and other lords, the Duke of York denounced Edmund Beaufort as having been responsible for the losses of the French territories and, now, was about to ruin the entire kingdom. The Yorkists agreed to resort to arms. Raising troops in their various localities, they marched toward London to meet at the town of St. Albans. Alerted, the King's soldiers arrived there first and in the ensuing battle Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, was killed. His son Henry was seriously wounded, captured and sent home in a cart. The rank and file soldiers were encouraged to spare one another in the fighting but the leaders fought to the death. The naked bodies of Edmund Somerset and Thomas Clifford, Lord Clifford and Westmoreland, lay in the street of the town for many hours before someone dared to bury them. The King was captured and the Duke of York knelt before him and pledged his loyalty. The Yorkists had the King but Queen Margaret and her son Prince Edward went into sanctuary. The power of the Lancastrians was not to be denied and, although the Yorkists won the Battle of St. Albans, the two sides got together and the next four years was a period of uneasy truce.

Henry Beaufort recovered from his wounds and succeeded his father. When Henry was killed at the Battle of Hexham in 1464, he was followed by his brother Edmund. Edmund Beaufort (Jr.) and his brother John Beaufort were killed at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, dying without issue.

James Butler, who married Eleanor Beaufort, was the son and heir of James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormond in Ireland, and Joan Beauchamp, daughter of William Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny. Created Earl of Wiltshire on 08 July 1449, he succeeded his father as 5th Earl of Ormond in 1452. He married (1) Amy FitzAlan, daughter of John FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; (2) Amicia Stafford, daughter of Sir Richard Stafford and a great heiress; and (3) Eleanor Beaufort, but never had issue. A Lancastrian who survived numerous battles, he was captured at Towton Field and beheaded at Newcastle on 01 May 1461.

Humphrey de Stafford, who married Margaret Beaufort, was the eldest son of Sir Humphrey de Stafford, 7th Baron Stafford, 6th Earl of Stafford and Duke of Buckingham, K.G., and Anne Neville, daughter of Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmoreland. Humphrey the younger was killed in the Battle of St. Albans on 22 May 1455, leaving by his wife Margaret Beaufort, a son Henry de Stafford, who succeeded his grandfather as 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and who some hold responsible for the deaths of young King Edward V and his brother Richard, Duke of York.

Sir Richard Darell, the second husband of Margaret Beaufort, was a son of William Darell, sub-treasurer of England under King Richard II, and Elizabeth Calston, daughter and heiress of Thomas Calston, Esquire, Lord of Littlecote in Wiltshire. Sir Richard, who also was sub-treasurer of England, and Margaret Beaufort had a daughter Margaret Darell who married James Touchet, Lord Audley.

Sir William Paston and Lady Anne Beaufort were the parents of Anne Paston who married Sir Gilbert Talbot. Their daughter Mary Talbot married Thomas Astley, Esquire, of Patshull.



**579712. JOHN BEAUFORT**

Born c1370

Died 16 Mar 1409/10

Married 579713. Margaret Holland before 28 Sep 1397

Born

Died 30 Dec 1439

Children (order of birth unknown):

Henry Beaufort, 2nd Earl of Somerset

b. c1400

d. 1418

m.

John Beaufort, 3rd Earl of Somerset, Earl of Kendall, Duke of Somerset

b.

d. 1444

m. Margaret de Beauchamp

Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Perche

b.

d. 1432

m.

**289856. Edmund Beaufort**

b. c1406

d. 22 May 1455 St. Albans, Hertfordshire, England

m. 289857. Eleanor de Beauchamp

Joan (Jane) Beaufort

b.

d. 1445

m. (1) King James I (Stewart) of Scotland

(2) Sir James Stewart

Margaret Beaufort

b.

d.

m. Thomas Courtenay, Earl of Devon

Sir John Beaufort, Marquess of Dorset, Earl of Somerset, Knight of the Garter, was the eldest son of John Plantagenet, was known as John of Gaunt (Ghent), Duke of Lancaster, K.G., King of Castile and Leon, by his third wife and former mistress, Katherine Rouet Swynford, daughter of Sir Paon Roet (Payne Rouet) and widow of Sir Hugh Swynford. Margaret Holland was a daughter of Thomas Holland, 2nd Earl of Kent, Baron Woodstock, Baron Wake, Baron Holland, and Alice FitzAlan, daughter of Sir Richard FitzAlan, 9th Earl of Arundel, K.G.

The children of John and Gaunt and Katherine Rouet Swynford were surnamed Beaufort from the Castle of Beaufort in France, which came to the Plantagenet family through the marriage of Edmund Plantagenet, called Crouchback, and Blanche of Artois. Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster, was a brother of King Edward I of England.

In 1396, the 20th year of the reign of King Richard II, it was announced to Parliament by the Lord Chancellor that the King had created Sir John Beaufort, Knight, the Earl of Somerset. The following year, Sir John was named Marquess of Dorset in open Parliament. Shortly thereafter, he resigned that dignity to become Marquess of Somerset. Nevertheless, he continued to use the former title. He was identified as the Marquess of Dorset later when he was appointed Constable of Wallingford Castle, Constable of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports. He received extensive grants from the Crown and was commissioned Admiral of the King's Fleet, both for the north and to the west.

When his half-brother, Henry Bolingbroke, usurped the throne of England from King Richard II and became King Henry IV, Sir John Beaufort was stripped of his right to the Marquisate of Dorset by Parliament. The action occurred because Sir John had been one of the accusers of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, during the power struggle between Richard II and some of the nobles. Sir John retained the earldom of Somerset and, despite the penalty by Parliament, was appointed as Lord Chamberlain of England by Henry IV in the first year of his reign, 1399. Four years later he was reinstated as Marquess of Dorset. Later he became Lord High Admiral of England. Among his other honors, Sir John Beaufort was a Knight of the Garter.

Sir John Beaufort died on 16 March 1409/10. His widow Margaret Holland Beaufort married (2) Sir Thomas Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, K.G., son of King Henry IV by his first wife Mary de Bohun, daughter and co-heir of Humphrey de Bohun, 2nd Earl of Northampton, Earl of Hereford, K.G., and Joan FitzAlan. Sir Thomas Plantagenet was killed at the Battle of Beauge in 1423, when the Scots and French led by Lord Buchan defeated the English.

At his death, Sir John was succeeded by his eldest son, Henry Beaufort as 2nd Earl of Somerset. Henry, who was a godson of King Henry IV, died in 1418, while still in his minority. His successor was his brother, John Beaufort, 3rd earl of Somerset, Earl of Kendal, Duke of Somerset, K.G.

Sir John Beaufort, the younger, was a distinguished military commander during the reigns of Henry V and Henry VI. He became Lieutenant General of Aquitaine, Normandy and the entire realm of France. His wife Margaret Beauchamp was the daughter of Sir John Beauchamp of Bletsho and heiress of her brother John Beauchamp. Sir John Beaufort and Margaret Beauchamp had one child and heiress, Margaret, who married Edmund Tudor of Hadham, Earl of Richmond. Margaret Beaufort and Edmund Tudor were the parents of Henry Tudor, 2nd Earl of Richmond, who ascended to the throne of England as Henry VII after defeating King Richard III at

Bosworth and ending the Wars of the Roses.

After the death of Edmund Tudor, Margaret Beaufort Tudor married (2) Sir Henry de Stafford, second son of Sir Humphrey de Stafford, 7th Baron and 6th Earl of Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, K.G.; and (3) Thomas Stanley, 2nd Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby.

Margaret Beauchamp Beaufort married (2) Sir Leode Welles and died in 1482.

When Sir John Beaufort, 3rd Earl of Somerset, died in 1444, the dignities, Duke of Somerset and Earl of Kendal expired, but the earldom of Somerset devolved upon his brother Edmund Beaufort, 4th Earl of Somerset.

Eleanor (Alianore) Beauchamp, who married Edmund Beaufort, was the widow of Thomas de Ros, 9th Baron Ros, who died on 18 August 1431, and a daughter of Sir Richard de Beauchamp, 5th Earl of Warwick, K.G., and Elizabeth Berkeley, daughter and heiress of Thomas Berkeley, 5th Lord Berkeley, Viscount Lisle. Eleanor died in 1467.

King James I of Scotland, who married Joan Beaufort, was born in 1394 and only 11 years old when he succeeded to the throne of Scotland in 1406. He was the son of King Robert III of Scotland, who had been christened John Stewart but changed his name when he became king, and Annabella Drummond, daughter of Sir John Drummond. When John Stewart was crowned at Scone on 14 August 1390, as King Robert III, the country was being governed by his brother Robert Stewart, Earl of Fife, who had been elected as Guardian of Scotland in 1388. Robert III was handicapped as a ruler because of physical disabilities suffered in a riding accident. Scotland was a chaotic place during the reign of Robert III, with clans fighting for power within the kingdom while Henry IV was attacking it from England.

Robert III created Scotland's first Dukedoms by elevating his brother, the Earl of Fife, to the Duke of Albany, and naming his son David, Duke of Rothesay. Rothesay was appointed King's Lieutenant and charged with running the country for three years. Although he was intelligent and able, Rothesay's profligacy produced many enemies, including his uncle, the Duke of Albany, who was naturally disaffected by being superseded. He angered the Earl of March by breaking a contract to marry the Earl's daughter which sent the outraged Earl to England to find patronage at the court of Henry IV. Marrying Marjorie Douglas, daughter of Archibald, 3rd Earl of Douglas, Rothesay proceeded to alienate Douglas immediately by being unfaithful to his bride. In 1400 Henry IV invaded Scotland, without much effect, but it resulted in the arrest of Rothesay, who was imprisoned at Falkland in early 1402, where he died in March.

The fighting with England continued and Albany retook power. Fearing for the safety of his young son, King Robert III decided to send James to France. The Prince sailed secretly from the Bass Rock, on a Danzig ship, but the voyage was intercepted by English pirates off Flamborough Head on 22 March 1406. James was taken to the English court, where he remained for eighteen years. The news of his capture hastened

the demise of his father, who died at Dundonald on 04 April 1406.

Albany ran the kingdom until his death in 1420, when his son Murdoch took over. In 1424, when King Henry V died, the English decided to release James in an attempt to stop the Scots from helping France fight England. They presented a huge bill to Scotland for the costs of educating and maintaining James for eighteen years but it was never paid in full. James and his bride Joan Beaufort crossed the border in early April 1424 and their coronation occurred at Scone on 21 May. Highly educated and knowledgeable about English government, James also had some experience in war, fighting in France beside Henry V, who hoped James' presence would dissuade the Scots from supporting the French. He wrote poetry about his bride but was a tough ruler who blamed the House of Albany for his long captivity and quickly had the Duke, his two sons and his father-in-law, the Earl of Lenox, executed on Heading Hill at Stirling for high treason in 1425. He disciplined the unruly Highland chiefs with wholesale arrests and three executions at a parliament at Inverness in 1427. Subsequently, other opponents were penalized. The 5th Earl of Douglas was imprisoned and the Earl of March was dispossessed because of his father's previous defection. Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, was forced to surrender himself during Mass at Holyrood, dressed as a penitent and carrying his sword by the point.

King James I tried to model his country's government on the English Parliament but was unsuccessful. He did pass legislation that dealt with commerce, currency, beggars, archery, salmon, agriculture and the depredations of crows, wolves and poachers. He also created a committee to combat legal delays, which evolved in Scotland's supreme court, the Court of Sessions, and founded a Charterhouse (monastery of the strict Carthusian order) at Perth to encourage discipline in the church.

The baronage grew restive under his vigorous and ruthless administration. Walter Stewart, Earl of Athol, who was a son of King Robert II by Euphemia Ross and considered himself the legitimate king of Scotland because James I's grandmother Elizabeth Mure, didn't marry Robert II until after her bastard children were born. Athol, his grandson Sir Robert Stewart and Sir Robert Graham found the opportunity to murder King James I at Perth on 21 February 1437. The assassination was successful but the plot failed. The killers were brutally executed and James I's son James II ascended to the throne at age six.

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