

The Stuarts



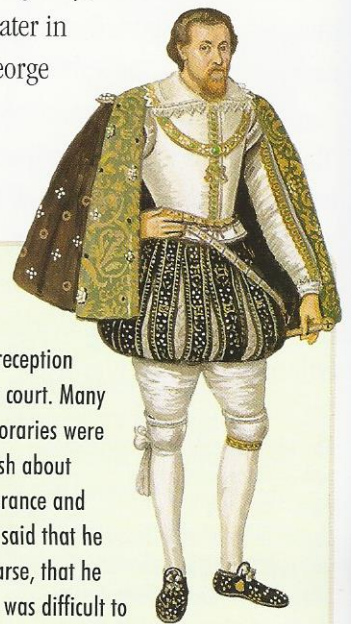
This coin, depicting James VI as a mounted knight, marks the king's accession to the throne of England.

When Elizabeth I died in 1603, she left no son or daughter to succeed her. Her successor was James VI of Scotland and he became the first Stuart king of England. The Stuarts were to reign over both England and Scotland for over 100 years, but not always peacefully.

As James travelled south in 1603, he was welcomed by his new English subjects: later he remembered 'their eyes flaming with nothing but sparkles of affection, their mouths and tongues uttering nothing but sounds of joy'. This enthusiasm was not to last.

The Stuarts had ruled Scotland since 1371. James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, put to death as a possible rival by Elizabeth. Yet he had been the only real choice to succeed the old queen. When he arrived in London, James was already a skilled and experienced ruler. He brought with him many Scottish courtiers, but he was also careful to appoint English ministers to advise him. Nevertheless, many people at the English court remained deeply suspicious of this new Scottish king.

The early years of James I's reign were successful in many ways. He ended the war with Spain, and he managed to achieve a balance between the different religious groups – Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans. But he spent money extravagantly, and his court gained a reputation for scandal and intrigue. Later in his reign, James fell under the spell of one of his courtiers, George Villiers, lavishing money on him and making him Duke of Buckingham. The Duke quickly became powerful in the English court. He also became a friend of James's son, Prince Charles, and in the last year of the old king's life Charles and Buckingham took control of all political decisions.



JAMES I

James I did not receive a warm reception from the English court. Many English contemporaries were rude and snobbish about the king's appearance and behaviour. They said that he was ugly and coarse, that he drank too much, was difficult to understand, and that he dribbled!

This is the lantern that belonged to Guy Fawkes. It was Fawkes who put at least 20 barrels of gunpowder in a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament. But the plot was discovered and he was captured and tortured to reveal the names of the other conspirators.



- 1603** James VI of Scotland (1566–1625) becomes James I.
- 1605** Gunpowder Plot to blow up Parliament fails.
- 1609** 'Plantation of Ulster' Protestant settlers move on to land taken from Irish Catholics.
- 1611** Publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible, known as the King James Bible.
- 1620** The Pilgrims set sail from Plymouth, England, on 16 September. They sign the Mayflower Compact on 11 November. They land at Plymouth Colony, New England, on 21 December.
- 1621** Protestation of House of Commons stating their right to free speech.
- 1621** William Bradford succeeds John Carver as governor of the American colony. He serves as governor until 1656. He negotiates a treaty with the Wampanoag people.
- 1623** Prince Charles and George Villiers (later Duke of Buckingham) travel to Spain and try to secure marriage between Charles and the daughter of King Philip IV.
- 1625** Death of James I.

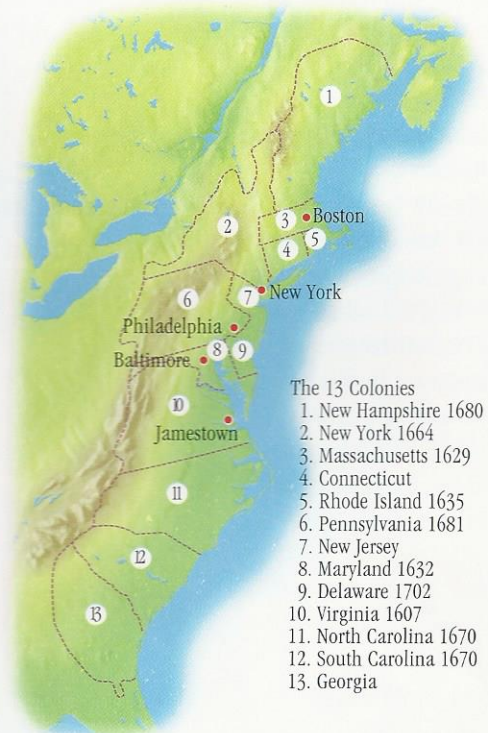


The land on which the Pilgrim Fathers settled was already occupied by Native Americans of the Wampanoag people. The newcomers and the Native Americans negotiated trade agreements. The Native Americans also showed the settlers ways of growing food, hunting and fishing that were an essential part of their survival in this new colony.

In November 1620, a three-masted sailing ship called the *Mayflower* dropped anchor off the coast, near present-day Provincetown, Massachusetts. The ship carried 102 passengers from England. Many of the people on board the *Mayflower* were dissenters. They belonged to a group of English Protestants called Puritans who disagreed with many of the practices of the Church of England. Their leader was William Brewster (1567–1644), who, in 1606, had broken away from the Church of England to form a separate congregation. At this time, it was illegal to set up an independent congregation in England, and Brewster and his followers, known as Separatists, were persecuted. To escape arrest, Brewster and members of his congregation fled to the Netherlands.

In 1619, Brewster and another Separatist called William Bradford (1590–1657) returned to England. The Separatists were dissatisfied with life in the Netherlands and their thoughts turned to the promise of the ‘New World’ far across the Atlantic Ocean. Brewster and Bradford negotiated with the Virginia Company for some land, and found merchants willing to back their venture.

On 16 September, 1620, the would-be colonists boarded the *Mayflower* at Plymouth and set sail for the ‘New World’. They reached Cape Cod in November. Before landing, 41 of the male passengers signed a document which became known as the Mayflower Compact. This document was an agreement for cooperation that became the foundation of the government of the new colony. The first settlers became known as Founders, Forefathers, or – after a term used by William Bradford himself – Pilgrims.



- The 13 Colonies
1. New Hampshire 1680
 2. New York 1664
 3. Massachusetts 1629
 4. Connecticut
 5. Rhode Island 1635
 6. Pennsylvania 1681
 7. New Jersey
 8. Maryland 1632
 9. Delaware 1702
 10. Virginia 1607
 11. North Carolina 1670
 12. South Carolina 1670
 13. Georgia

In 1605, a group of English Catholics plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament and with it King James I, his wife and his eldest son. The plotters were led by Robert Catesby (second from right), but the most famous of them all is Guy Fawkes (third from right). The plotters hoped that in the confusion after the explosion and murder of the king, English Catholics would be able to take over the country.

This map shows the 13 original British colonies on the east coast of North America. Plymouth Colony, in Massachusetts, was the second permanent British settlement after Virginia.

