



The Commonwealth of England (1649-1660) aka The Interregnum

- Fact: Oliver Cromwell was a Puritan.
- Following the execution of King Charles I, the Rump Parliament tried to rule the Commonwealth of England, until they were dismissed by Oliver Cromwell in 1653. Puritanical rule is introduced in England.
- Charles I's heir, Prince Charles, is proclaimed king by Scotland, but is defeated by Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651. Prince Charles flees to Europe (mainly France).
- Cromwell ruled England for a short time before he was declared Lord Protector – he ruled along with the Parliament under England's first written constitution.



Oliver Cromwell

Puritan Laws Under Cromwell

Cromwell enforced many laws in England, with penalty of fine, imprisonment, or death for those who would not comply. Some of the laws under Cromwell included:

Make-up was banned: women found wearing make-up would have their faces forcibly scrubbed.

Colorful dress was not permitted: women were expected to wear long black dresses with a white head covering, and men wore black clothes and short hair. This is the archetypal fashion associated with American Pilgrims (also Puritans).

Women caught doing unnecessary work on Sunday could be put in stocks.

Most sports were banned: boys caught playing football on Sunday could be whipped.

Christmas was banned: Cromwell's soldiers were sent among the streets to remove food cooking for Christmas dinner, and decorations for Christmas were not allowed.

All other Christian Holy Days were disallowed, including Easter. In January 1645, a group of ministers declared: "festival days, vulgarly called Holy Days, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued."¹

- Scotland is brought into the Commonwealth in 1654.
- In 1657 Oliver Cromwell is offered the Crown, but rejects it.
- Oliver Cromwell dies in 1658, and his son Richard Cromwell inherits the title. However, Richard is incapable to hold power (did not have the support of the military). The Protectorate, and republicanism, collapses into chaos. Parliament assumes control over the Commonwealth.
- The exiled Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda which promised no one would be held accountable for their part in the English Civil War. The declaration was read to Parliament which then invited Charles II to return as king.
- Charles II, the Merry Monarch, breathed new life into England. His court was known for its liveliness and indulgence – people were relieved at the return to normality after over a decade of rule by Cromwell and the Puritans. Charles II acknowledged at least twelve illegitimate children by various mistresses, but fathered no legal heir. He was succeeded by his brother James.



It's good to be the king.

King Charles II

¹ "When Easter And Christmas Were Banned: The Rise Of Puritan Beliefs". Owlcation. N.p., 2016. Web. 16 Nov. 2016.