

The Abdication of King Edward VIII (1936)

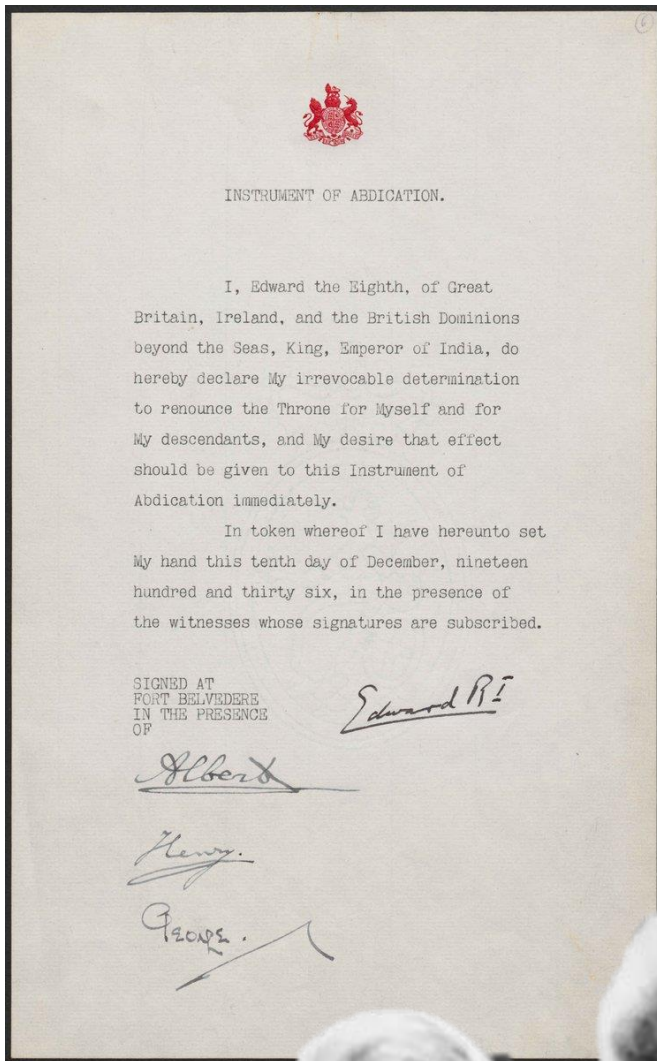
The Year of the Three Kings

On January 20th, 1936, King George V died. Before his death, the George V had prophesized that his oldest son, the Prince of Wales, ". . . will ruin himself within 12 months" of his death.

The old king was right . . .

- ☪ As Prince of Wales, Edward was a man of the 1920s – he was a “ladies man,” especially with married women, who loved jazz, night clubs, dressing well and the Arts. Edward was very popular with the general public and was a trend-setter. The Prince of Wales was not only royal, he was a celebrity of the 1920s & 30s (a party was not a party unless he attended).
- ☪ People became very concerned when he began an affair with a married American woman, Wallis Simpson. Edward was with Wallis when the King died.
- ☪ As King, Edward VIII was determined to marry Wallis, making her Queen. However, the British and Dominion governments (**due to the Statute of Westminster the dominion governments had to be advised about the possibility of the King marrying**) would not tolerate such a union. At that time it was unimaginable that the King would marry a twice-divorced woman.
 - There were also real concerns over Edward VIII’s feeling towards fascism. The King was rumoured to admire how Adolph Hitler had brought Germany out of the Great Recession.
- ☪ British newspapers kept the King’s affair quiet out of respect for the Crown. However, American newspapers loved to publish pictures and articles about “Edward & Wallis.” Remember, there was no Internet back then so it was easier to keep things out of the press.
- ☪ The British Government, after consulting with the Dominion Governments (including Canada), informed King Edward VIII that the Empire & Commonwealth would not support his marriage. Edward issued an ultimatum that if he was not permitted to marry Wallis Simpson he would **abdicate the throne**.





👑 On December 10th, 1936, King Edward VIII abdicated the throne. He had no children of his own, so the Crown passed to his brother Albert who became King George VI (Queen Elizabeth II's father). From this moment Edward would use the title "The Duke of Windsor."

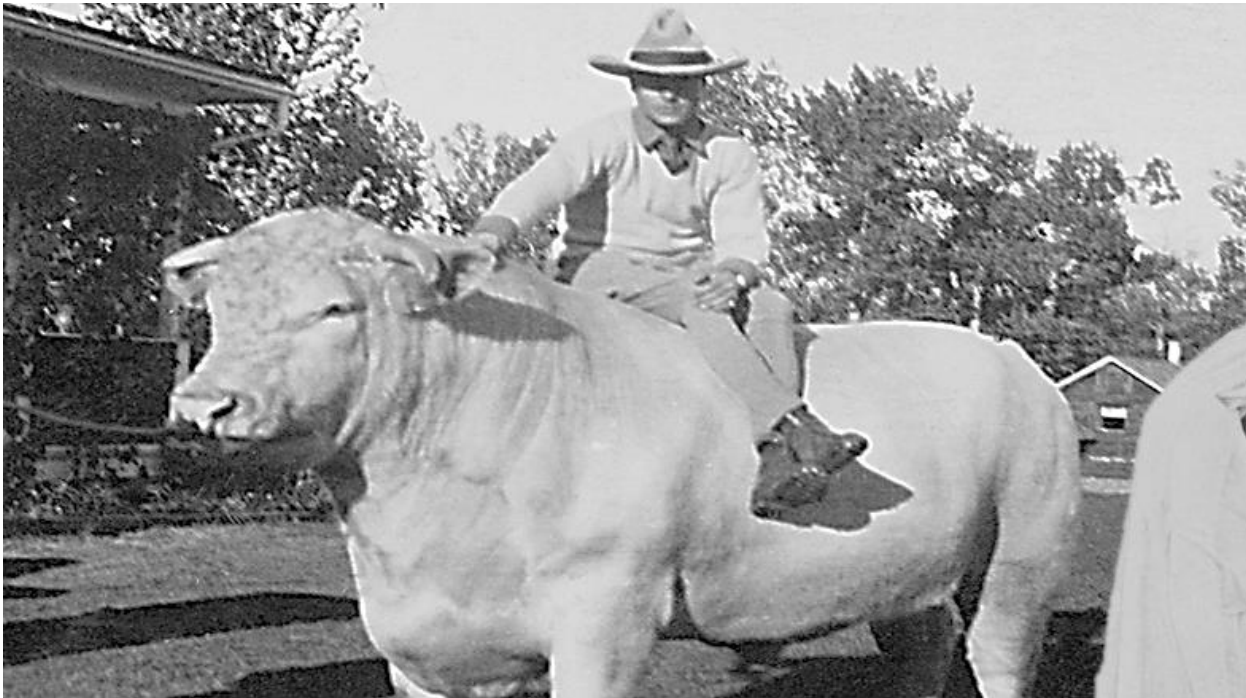
👑 Many people were angry at Edward VIII for abandoning his duty to the Empire & Commonwealth for personal reasons. Edward and Wallis left England for France where they were married – they never moved back to England.

👑 The Duke and Duchess of Windsor outraged the British Government by seeming to support the actions of Hitler's Germany – they even visited Hitler in 1937. The Nazi Government treated the Duke as if he were a visiting Head of State.



Some interesting facts about King Edward VIII and Canada:

- 👑 Following his 1919 tour of Canada, Edward became the first member of the Royal Family to own property in Canada when he purchased “EP Ranch” near Pekisko Creek in the foothills of Alberta. The Prince would visit the ranch in 1923, 1924, 1927 and following his abdication in 1941 and 1955.
 - The ranch became well-known as a centre for cattle breeding excellence.
 - The Ranch was sold in 1962 to Jim Cartwright and is now listed as a Provincial Historic Resource.



Edward, Prince of Wales, sitting on a bull at EP Ranch, Alberta.

- 👑 During his short reign, Edward VIII dedicated the Canadian National Vimy Memorial as the King of Canada on July 26th, 1936, in front of a crowd of 100,000 people (including veterans from Canada).

