

THE ENGLISH DELAY, 1497-1607

The Protestant Reformation in England

Here we will be trying to explain why the English took so long to establish their colonial system in the New World. The Spanish had established their colonial system in 1496 with Columbus's second voyage to the New World. The English did not set their system up until 1607. What took them so long? They had a New World claim based on John Cabot's voyages of the late 1490s?

I. Some English Background

- A. England became unified in the late ninth and tenth centuries under Alfred the Great.
- B. In 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, crossed the English Channel to conquer England. William became the Conqueror, the King of England.
- C. Political stability under a feudal system in the medieval period.
- D. During the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), Parliaments were called by him to make paying taxes more palatable. Form of propaganda. Seated in the Parliament were high lords, but as more and more commoners were sent from the country, they sat in their own house (mid-fourteenth century).
 - 1. Edward conquered Wales and Scotland (which soon revolted again)
 - 2. Between 1307 and 1485, political and civil wars in England, five kings were killed by rebels or conspirators.
- E. 1455 to 1485: The War of Roses between the House of Lancaster (present king Henry VI) and the House of York. The House of York won for a time and put up kings, but in 1485 they were replaced by the Tudors, whose first king was Henry VII.
- F. Henry VII (1485-1509): eliminated rival claimants to the throne, avoided expensive foreign wars (no attempts to get back lands in France--remember William had been from Normandy), built up a financial surplus, and reasserted royal power over the aristocracy.
- G. Henry VIII (1509-1547), inherits a relatively stable system.

II. Exploration under the Early Tudors

- A. The English claim to North America was established in 1497-98 when **John Cabot**, commissioned by Henry VII, had begun the exploration of Newfoundland, Labrador, and Nova Scotia.
- B. Cabot's son **Sebastian** had continued the exploration into the Hudson Bay region of Canada in 1508-09.
- C. However, throughout the reign of Henry VIII (1509-47) neither the crown nor private enterprise showed any interest in developing these distant territories.
- D. For no less than fifty years then, between 1497 and 1550, while Spain was conquering and exploiting vast areas of Central America and South America, England did nothing to develop its claim to North America.

III. Why did the English not move to colonize North America in the early sixteenth century?

- A. Henry VIII (1509-1547) was caught up in his attempts to secure his dynasty by having a male heir.
- B. Henry had married Catherine of Aragon – the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain – in June 1509 two months after becoming King.
- C. By the mid-1520s he was troubled however. He was tired of Catherine, he was restricted by the Spanish alliance which she represented, and most of all he was worried about the absence of a male heir. Catherine had

not given him any male children in 18 years (one female-Mary, but Henry was worried she could not carry on the Tudor dynasty).

D. Also crucial was the fact that Henry had fallen in love with one of his mistresses, Anne Boleyn.

E. Anne was determined to become Queen, not just another mistress, and she insisted on marriage. In 1527 Henry began his six-year quest for annulment of his marriage from Catherine.

F. Henry argued that his marriage to Catherine had never been valid. She had been briefly married to his older brother Arthur in November 1501, but Arthur had died in April 1502.

G. Henry's conscience often followed where his wishes led. He became convinced that his marriage to Catherine contravened the law of God. Henry argued for annulment based on Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21: which says that a man shall not marry his brother's wife. His inability to have a male child was evidence of God's punishment, he thought.

H. Henry asked the Catholic church (Pope Clement VII) to allow him to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon.

I. The Pope did not want to give the annulment because Catherine was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and the aunt of Charles V (the Holy Roman Emperor) the most powerful man in Europe. In addition, Charles V sacked Rome in 1527 and subsequently controlled Clement VII.

J. When the Catholic church made delay and did not approve the annulment; Henry did not know what to do.

K. Henry had been given – at his own request – the Title "Defender of the Faith" by Pope Leo X in 1521 for his book *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, in which with the assistance of various leading theologians, he had defended the doctrine of the seven sacraments against Martin Luther.

L. However, in 1533, when the position of Archbishop of Canterbury came open, Henry replaced the deceased Catholic leader, William Warham, with **Thomas Cranmer**, a close friend of Anne Boleyn.

M. Then, when Anne Boleyn became pregnant in 1532, the "King's Great Matter" could no longer await legal resolution.

N. **Thomas Cromwell**, one of the king's closest advisers, counseled Henry to break with Rome.

O. The English Parliament, at Henry's request, had already passed several pieces of legislation shifting authority over Catholic affairs within England to the King.

P. Parliament now passed a law prohibiting appeals to the pope in matters of marriage. Such questions were to be decided by the archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, who declared Henry's union with Catherine void.

Q. Henry then married Anne Boleyn on May 28, 1533. Elizabeth was born in September 1533.

R. Henry then carried out the break with Rome through the Parliament. He issued the **Act of Supremacy** (1534) making himself head of the new English Church.

S. Henry created the Church of England (Anglican Church) with himself at its head. His reformation of the Catholic Church was slight.

T. In fact, the Six Articles of 1539, supported by Henry, were imposed to prevent the spread of Reformation doctrines and practices. Among other things, they:

1. Maintained transubstantiation
2. Enforced Clerical Celibacy
3. Upheld Monastic vows

4. Catholic rituals like confession, clerical celibacy, and the belief in transubstantiation were retained.

U. Henry did authorize an English translation of the Bible in 1539.

V. Henry also seized church lands, bringing about one-sixth of the total land in England under his control.

W. Anne did not give Henry a son either. In 1536, he brought trumped-up charges of adultery against her.

X. On 2 May, Anne was arrested and taken to the Tower of London. On 15 May, she was condemned to death. On 19 May, Anne was executed. On 20 May, the king was formally betrothed to his new love, Jane Seymour. They married ten days later on 30 May and Jane was publicly declared queen on 4 June.

Y. Jane finally gave Henry the male heir he longed for, Edward (born October 12, 1537) , but she died as a result of childbirth (on October 24, 1537).

Z. Henry continued to rule until 1547.

IV. The Aftermath of Henry VIII's Rule: Continued Delay

A. Further religious reforms were carried out under Henry's son Edward VI (1547-53).

1. Archbishop Cranmer carried out the reformation of the Church - Edward was sickly and still a minor.

2. Clerical marriage was approved. Images were removed from the church. Communion tables replaced alters. Also, the Book of Common Prayer was published in 1549, followed by a more reformed second book in 1552. Shortly before he died, Edward also approved the Forty-Two Articles, a thoroughly Protestant codification of church doctrine.

B. Mary Tudor (1553-58), tried to restore Catholicism to England. She executed several hundred Protestant leaders during her reign and forced more to leave England for safety.

C. Henry's divorce and England's growing economic rivalry with Spain led Mary to marry Philip II of Spain.

D. Upon Mary's death in 1558, Elizabeth I became Queen (ruled 1558-1603). She was concerned with bringing stability to England.

E. The Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 sought a middle road between the Protestant and Catholic radicals. The Church under Elizabeth was Protestant in doctrine but retained much of the ceremony and structure of Catholicism.

F. Elizabeth was able to stabilize England because of this middle road and her long reign 1558-1603.

G. Elizabeth pursued an anti-Spanish foreign policy. 1) She supported the pirate raids of Sir Francis Drake and John Hawkins, and she defeated (with a good deal of luck) the Spanish Armada in 1588.

H. Elizabeth's temporary solution to the religious turmoil dividing the nation, and her pursuit of an anti-Catholic foreign policy enabled the English to begin colonial experiments in the 1580s.