

Oliver Cromwell; From Peasant to Protector of the Realm



When Oliver Cromwell was born in 1599, there was nothing to show that he would become one of the most influential men in the history of Britain.

His parents belonged to the lower ranks of the gentry and he grew up to be a farmer. He was a peasant. A commoner. He had no royal bloodline. He should have amounted to nothing. But the winds of change were brewing in England, and Oliver Cromwell would soon find himself amidst the biggest upheaval in the history of the English Monarchy.

Cromwell became interested in politics in his early 30's. However, it was his success as a soldier in the Civil Wars that lifted him to power.

Cromwell had no previous training as a soldier, but he rose through the ranks of the Parliamentary Army to become one of its leading commanders. His rise to popularity stemmed

from his support of lower-class men. As he became more powerful, he still remembered where he had come from.

His legacy...

Oliver Cromwell's extraordinary rule have divided historians.

To some, Oliver was a defender of principles and liberties, the champion of fairness and religious tolerance.

To others, he was nothing more than a tyrant, a Kingkiller, a dictator that rivals Hitler.

There are few people today who haven't heard the name Oliver Cromwell. The man who played such a crucial role in the history of Britain. Cromwell himself understood that history might not be kind to him, but he didn't care. He knew that his religious and moral reforms, along with killing the King of England, might make him a villain to many.

Throughout different periods in history, Oliver Cromwell has been portrayed in very different lights.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, Cromwell was an evil character. But recently, historians have recognised that Cromwell is one of England's greatest sons. In an age when one person (usually a man) held ALL the power, and used this power for whatever they wanted, Cromwell showed England a different way.

Under Cromwell's rule, England's justice system became less corrupt. In matters of religion, he allowed freedom of worship. However, Oliver Cromwell's legacy always takes a dark turn when you look to Ireland. He ordered the massacres of almost 3,500 men who had already surrendered. He did this often. His actions replicating that of an evil dictator.

The effect Oliver Cromwell had on the British political system can still be seen today. In winning the Civil War, Parliament proved that no King or Queen could rule England without their help and permission. The power of the English throne began to shift, from the hands of a single monarch, to the hands of the people.

History remembers Oliver Cromwell; a peasant, a soldier, a man bent on doing good for his country. He was the Protector of the Realme.