

# World history biography: queen elizabeth i



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Golden Age is an era backdating to over four centuries ago when Queen Elizabeth I ruled England which was an economic powerhouse across Europe. She is among the most admired rulers in the history as she was a legend of during her lifetime. Queen Elizabeth I was not only popular due to her authority but also due to her selfless dedication to serve. As a Queen she won battles and influenced the cultural values of her people. The Queen made tremendous achievements through diligent leadership. Nonetheless, the Queen was simply known for her status and there is very little information on her as a woman and she is an enigma in the society. This biography recalls the significant leadership roles that the Queen played in what is referred to as the Elizabethan England as a zenith of cultures that stand to define the English rule.

Elizabeth was born to Anne Boleyn, the second wife to King Henry VIII back in September 7, 1533. She was born in Greenwich Palace; but ironically, the birth of Elizabeth was a disaster to the king as he was expecting a son to inherit his throne. Elizabeth was born after the birth of Mary whose mother Katherine was the first wife of King Henry VIII. Her birth was a disappointment to the father because King Henry VIII married the second wife without divorcing Katherine of Aragon. In addition, the king was forced to change his religion only to have a daughter with the second wife. Anne Boleyn's failure to give a birth to a son led to her execution on false pretence of incest and adultery back almost three years after the birth of Elizabeth. King Henry VIII's marriage to Anne was ended and this marked the beginning of woes for Elizabeth and her sister Mary. They were both declared illegitimate to succeed the king. The execution of Elizabeth's mother was too

painful to bear. The birth of Elizabeth and the subsequent divorce of her mother showed that in the olden days the girl child was less importance in succession (Doernberg, 1961, p. 81). The boy child was a symbol of succession and authority and this explains that the king had to remarry several other wives in search of a son.

Getting a son was the most treasured thing in the society especially for a king. It was considered important in the succession as less significance was attributed to the giving birth to daughters. A son was considered an automatic heir of the throne after the death of a king. The importance of male heir led to the other cultural practices in the old English society. It encouraged polygamy among men. Men could marry and remarry when their wives did not give birth to sons. Moreover, in the process, women were mistreated and seen as less significant. They faced potential execution like the case for Anne Boleyn with King Henry the VIII.

Anne Boleyn is considered among the most famous queens in the history of England amid her short lived period in the throne that only lasted for three years. She was the daughter of knight and the Duke of Norfolk was her uncle. The charming and tender nature of Anne that even attracted King Henry was moulded in France where she spent time as adolescent. Her return to England following the tension between France and England was a culmination of formation of a witty, stylish and charming young woman. She entered the service of Katherine of Aragon and this is where she caught the eyes of the King. Her tragic end as a queen is attributed to failure to give a birth to a son, which the King cherished as a part of succession. She gave a

birth to a daughter who would defy the odds to become the greatest Queen of England (Ives, 2008).

For the most part of her life, King Henry VIII had made her illegitimate in the succession rule of the day. However, before the King's death, the daughters had been reinstated and were eligible to take over in the succession line. In the succession, Elizabeth was to follow Edward and Mary. With Edward as the King, Elizabeth was now the second in line of succession. Elizabeth found herself in a tight corner following her Uncle's attempt to marry her without the consent of the King. She managed to convince her interrogators that she was innocent.

Edwards also passed on after long illness in 1553, Mary took over the throne, and she was not a so popular monarch. Her rule witnessed religious battles as she preferred the Catholic religion. The Protestants were oppressed during Queen Mary's throne. According to Pumfrey (2012) " Leonard Digges and Rowland Dee, were prominent Protestants who were arrested and had their estates confiscated under Mary" (p. 450). The reign of Mary has built relationships between England and Spain as Mary's husband, Philip intervened on freeing Elizabeth who was imprisoned for a conspiracy to oust Queen Mary. This intervention would be critical as Elizabeth's health deteriorated at a time when she was next in succession; hence, it can be argued that Philip played an important role in the life of Elizabeth and rule of Queen Elizabeth I.

In January 15, 1559, Elizabeth was crowned the Queen and it only took a month before she rebuilt Protestant Church of England. She also brought

back the debased coinage. The Queen was weary of the society's perception of a woman's rule and due to this she made herself the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

In the Elizabethan England, the waves of anti-Catholic sentiments were once again rife. This is after Queen Mary restored the mainstream religion to Catholic. Queen Elizabeth was following in the footsteps of her father King Henry VIII who was an ardent Protestant. According to Scott (2008), religious matters and social mobility were as important as " They were issues that affected politics, religion, and society," (p. 5). The Queen had to put strategic measures that favoured Protestants; though this was done indirectly. She used Marlowe as an agent of spreading anti-Catholic sentiments. Restoring Catholic as mainstream religion would imply that the throne of the Queen was under papacy authority. Religion and politics now took a social perspective as the English people in a Catholic country would bear the tax burden imposed by local cardinals.

Queen Elizabeth remained non-committal to the many marriage proposals that she received when she was at the throne (The British Monarchy, 2008-2009). The decision to remain single was another leadership tool she used in her favour. Her decision was based on the experience she had as her own mother was executed for failure to sire a male heir. Her country benefited from her single state as she could negotiate political deals using marriage as a bait to either draw enemies or scare them away by suggesting she would marry their foes. Of all her suitors, the most serious one was Robert Dudley whom she knew in her while in prison in Tower of London. They were both in the same prison. Even though Dudley expressed genuine love for the Queen

and political implications made it impossible. The created Earl of Leicester was the son of Northumberland. Moreover, there were allegations that he murdered his wife so that he could marry the Queen. The Queen's personal preference and the complicated relationships meant that succession was an unsettled issue. Just as she never wanted her religious preferences to be discussed, the Queen tried so hard to suppress any discussions on succession regardless of the people's call for someone to take over in case she died. Regardless of the Queen's desires not to let her affairs and marriage to be discussed, the public were right to be worried about their future. The Queen should have just given up and clarify the matter to the subjects.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I symbolises an era of significant roles played by female patrons and brokers. In the late 1500s, the significant number of natural philosophers faced exclusion from institutions of learning on grounds of marriage or religion. Harkness (1997) observes that "work moved into the household and into domestic and female sphere" in the analysis of gender relations," (Pumfrey, 2012, p. 450). Women were patrons and the Queen too was a very influential patron of John Dee, the greatest Chemistry scholar. This helped Dee to lure more women and this later on played to be an important gender roles. The elites in England now accepted women rule at the national level and at in the judicial system. The church leaders, noble men and courtiers were male dominated but the women took over the operation of patronage. Elizabeth's influence led to the rising number of female patronages as she devolved more females than during the King's reign. Women had right of entry into the monarch and according to Pumfrey

(2012), “ The gentlemen of the bedchambers were now the gentlewomen, and ladies-in-waiting became an important route to the Queen’s attention,” (p. 451).

Plays were very significant form of entertainment in the Elizabethan England. During her rule, plays were partially legal as most people preferred going to the theatres for entertainment. Entertainers played a crucial role during the epidemics; for instance when London was ravaged with diseases, it was the responsibility of actors to traverse the countryside and entertain the farmers. Songs and dances were popular as people got into the pubs for sing-alongs. Reading as a culture was in the society is evidenced from the Queen’s own life and fellow countrymen. The well-educated people could read their preferred literature in more than one language. While the upper class loved the tournament of fencing, the bear-baiting was loved by everybody as a form of entertainment and it is considered the Queen’s best pastime event. The gentility was expected to offer hospitality, and to entertain the royal family when the Queen made a progress through the country (Scott, 2008, p. 5). This went on despite the expensive nature of the events and the expected lifestyle of the gentry as they had to use very expensive dressing. The gentility was not only under social pressure to have a lavish lifestyle but also succumbed to the Queen’s political undertones, something that led to the surging number of gentry in the House of Commons (Scott, 2008, p. 5).

The education in the Elizabethan Inns of Court was never influenced by the external aspects like availability of reading materials. Moots and readings were the conventional from of legal education, which according to Raffield (2010), “ J. H. Baker has noted that the readings themselves contributed to

the corpus of English law, particularly in relation to criminal jurisdiction,” (p. 258). Knowledge acquisition in common law was significant during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and it took the form of moots and readings. This is an indication that the Inns had incorporated the principles of Aristotelian commonwealth to which the polis was founded on basis of friendship. Moreover, the cultural tenets in the Inns were an extension of the whole sector of education that was intricately bonded with rites of hall dining (Raffield, 2010, p. 258). The legal profession was approved; in the Inns there was a training to create technocrats and rhetoricians in favour of philosophers or humanists. In the last moments of the Queen’s reign, sacerdotal purpose of the lawyer had been conquered by the imperatives of a fully regimented legal profession. This made the lawyers not to be perceived as prophetic and divine beings but as legal technocrats with ordinary rhetoric skills. The era of Queen Elizabeth I had significant impact on cultural perception of legal education given the peculiarities of English law and custom in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean ages (Gurnham, 2010, p. 441).

## Conclusion

The Queen’s rule transformed England from an impoverished nation into a one big prosperous nation (Briscoe, 2011). She won significant battles in Europe, for example, the war with Spain under King Phillip that started from religious differences. The defeat of Spain made her popularity to reach its zenith. She showed that women could not just rule but rule with dedication and live up to the political conundrums of the day. She made a name for England as it became one of the most successful and powerful countries



across Europe and the entire world. Queen Elizabeth died at Richmond Palace in 24 March, 1603. The “Era of the Golden Rule” was indeed the story of a successful period when Queen Elizabeth I was at the throne. The Queen was an enigma to be emulated in the modern world.