

Analyze the the war  
of the roses essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The War of the Roses was a series of dynastic civil wars fought between the House of Lancaster and the House of York. These two houses fought for the English throne, and both thought it was theirs to take. The houses both claimed the throne due to the fact that they had decent through the sons of Edward III. So they both felt that they were deserving of the throne. This wasn't the first or the last time that these two houses fought each other, but this was by far their biggest encounter. One reason that these two started fighting was the aftermath of the Hundred Years War.

The financial and social troubles hit hard and they thought they could do better job running things. People during this time started to panic and they all wanted a piece of the pie. Prior to the war, heirs to the throne started dying so the number of aristocrats started dropping slowly. Some people suggest that the English aristocracy was destroyed due to the War of the Roses, but I would argue differently. The fact that all these men were fighting over the throne does suggest that there were some deaths, but I don't believe that it was the cause of the removal of the English aristocracy.

Before I make my argument on why I believe the aristocracy was not destroyed by the War of the Roses, I want to give a brief outline of the war. The hostility rose after the death of Henry V and the infant Henry VI was in line to take over. Richard, Duke of York, challenged the right of Henry VI's crown because he wanted it for himself. He had descent through Edward III's surviving sons. There is evidence that shows how important the throne was to the people during this time and they were willing to do anything to try and get it. There was obviously some history behind the people who fought in the war and how the title of the war was named.

The Heraldic badges that associated themselves with the two houses, York and Lancaster, were roses. The House of York was a white rose and the House of Lancaster was a red rose. Early in the conflict, the York picked the white rose as their symbol, but the Lancaster rose was not introduced until after Henry Tudor won the battle of Bosworth. So the war was not called "War of the Roses" until years later after the war. During the war the participants wore badges to show which lord or patron that they were associated with. One example of this that I read was the white boar of Richard III worn by the Yorkist army.

The houses were named after the cities York and Lancaster of course, but the houses didn't have much to do with the city it was named after. The House of Lancaster was established in 1399 by Henry of Bolingbroke. Henry of Bolingbroke was later crowned as Henry IV after he deposed his cousin Richard II. The next Lancaster king was Henry V and he died in 1422, but there was some hostility on who would take over the crown. When Henry V died he only had an infant son to take over. This is when Richard III challenged Henry VI's right to the crown like I mentioned before.

Richard III was a very powerful man and held very important offices within the state. This was the first political disagreement between the two houses and the beginning of a feud that would start a war. In 1453 Henry VI (by now he was old enough to take the throne) went into insanity. Henry's condition was non-violent: as a result of depressive stupor he lost control of his limbs. York, to take over as the protector of the realm. Henry recovered in 1455 and took over his duties, which forced York to take up arms of self-protection. The fighting started with the battle of St.

Albans in 1455. " Their numbers were vaguely estimated t 3000 men, while the Duke of Norfolk and other friends were hastening to their aid; the Kings force was estimated at 2000 men. " 2 Richard, Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick defeated the Lancastrians who was led by Edmund. Edmund was the Duke of Somerset, and he played an important role before the war for the Lancastrians. He was killed in this battle and Henry VI was captured which resulted in Richard being appointed Lord Protector. The queen, Margaret of Anjou, kept pushing the Lancastrians to challenge the York House.

Things were pretty quite over the next few years, but it started heating back up in 1459. York and his followers were forced out of the country, but he would retaliate sooner than people thought he would. One of his strongest followers invaded England and captured Henry at the Battle of Northampton. The heavy rain played in the favor of the Earl of Warwick during this battle and capturing Henry was much easier than people think. This battle resulted in four years of truce between the two houses, but they still didn't like the other one.

There wasn't any major conflict during this time, but it was still uneasy between them. The civil wars between the two houses continued in 1459. York returned to the country becoming the Protector of England, but was not able to take the throne. York moved north with his son Edmund, but the Lancastrian nobles surprised and killed both of them in the Battle of Wakefield. The Lancastrian army went south afterwards but was unsuccessful in the taking of London. York had an eldest son named Edward, Earl of March, who was later named King Edward IV.

He was best known for winning the Battle of Towton. In Anthony Goodman's book he states, " At Towton Edward could muster probably fewer than half the peers that Henry could. " 3 This goes to show ow big of a victory it was for Edward. He crushed the Lancastrian army in March 1461 by gathering the Yorkist armies resulting in a strong force that was too much to handle for the Lancaster's. It was the bloodiest battle of the war, which resulted in Henry, Margaret, and their son fleeing to Scotland. The next series of battles was over disputes within the Yorkists ranks.

Warwick and his followers felt like they were a powerful group, and when they got looked over at Edward's court, it didn't make them very happy. Warwick didn't agree with a foreign policy that the king was putting n place and the tension grew greater. This resulted in another civil war in 1469, where Warwick and the Duke of Clarence instigated risings in the north. Then they defeated the kings supporters at Edgecote. There he held Edward prisoner, but nothing really came out of it. Edward had regained control by 1470 and made Warwick and Clarence fled to France. While in France, they allied themselves with Louis X'.

Here is where things get a little tricky because they also allied themselves with their former enemy Margaret of Anjou. Working together, they went back to England in September of 1470. There, they forced Edward out of his throne and restored the crown to Henry VI. After being stripped of the crown, Edward fled out of England to the Netherlands with his supporters. There he got Burgundian aid and returned to England a year later. Edward outsmarted Warwick due to the fact that he knew the land, and talked Clarence into

Joining his side. Then he easily defeated that Warwick was defeated and her and her son fled west to the safety of Wales.

Edward anticipated that Margaret would do this and beat her there. She was captured as a prisoner, and her supporters were defeated. There her son was killed and Margaret didn't have much power or support after these series of events. Very soon after these events, Henry VI was murdered in the Tower of London. It is thought that Henry heard of the death of his son, and when Edward IV was re-crowned, he ordered Henry's death. Edward's throne was secure for the rest of his life and was never challenged or taken away. When Edward died in 1483, hostility begins again.

Richard III took over the throne and he first moved to prevent the unpopular Woodville family of Edward's widow from participating in the government. Richard used the suspicious Edward IV's marriage as pretext. To stop Richard, Henry Tudor (a distant relative of the Lancastrian king) was brought in and defeated him at Bosworth. He was then crowned Henry VII, and married Elizabeth of York to unite the two rival houses. Yorkists revolted and these were the last few battles of the war, but nothing really came out of it. These battles weren't very big or important; it was just the fact that the Yorkists were upset that they were united.

Many historians like to believe that the Wars of the Roses were the result of the English aristocracy being destroyed. After reading material on these wars and reading Kington Oliphant's article, I can't help but to think otherwise. According to Oliphant there are 27 historic houses. " There are about twenty-seven great historic houses that belong to the former division, if we adopt a

fair test for the term " Historic House," and excluded from it all those families which have not held an Earldom in the male line continuously for at least one hundred years, or thereabouts, before the Reformation. 4 The houses in the 13th century really started getting recognized, and this is the period that begins hostility between houses. This also is the period that you see a rapid decline in houses. " The Earls of Albermarle had died out so early as the Twelfth Century, and four great historic Earldoms dropped in the Thirteenth. The Century of Edward the Third swept away at least seven Norman Houses of the very first class; among which were those of Clare, Bigod, and Bohun,- names intertwined with the brightest achievements of our early history.

In the first and more peaceful part of Henry the Sixth's reign, before Englishmen had dreamt of civil war, the process of decay was just as rapid. The last Mortimer, Earl of March, the rightful heir of the crown died a prisoner in 1424; the last Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, was struck down by a cannon ball at the siege of Orleans, not long before the appearance of the immortal Maid; the last Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, passed away in 1445. " 5 So what Oliphant is getting to is the fact that there were 12 houses that were already disappeared before the war even started.

Well you might ask well there are still a number of houses to be counted for during the war so what is your point? Well from the start of the war (1455) to the end of the war (1487) there were a number of houses that died that was unrelated to the war. Oliphant mentions the houses that died during the war but not because of the war. " Foremost in this category comes the name of Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, who died in 1475. To this we may add the less known names of Bromflete, Harington, Scales, and

<https://assignbuster.com/analyze-the-the-war-of-the-roses-essay/>

Sudeley. The Wars of the Roses had nothing to do with the extinction of these five houses in Roses.

The Bonville, Tiptoft, Beaufort, Holland, and Lovell all died during the strife. Oliphant tells the story behind each of these names and how they died to end their ouse. The point that I want to make clear throughout this paper is the fact that the number of houses that had died out before the Wars of the Roses, clearly outweigh the number of houses that have failed since the beginning of it. Well you might ask, Why did this happen? YouVe gave me numbers and the fact that the Wars of the Roses didn't cause the fail of the English aristocracy, but how did it happen.

Oliphant does a great Job of comparing another countries aristocracy to England's. He uses old Scottish houses and what they did compared to what the old English houses did. Two causes have preserved the old Scottish houses from sharing the fate of their English brethren. The first was the prejudice in favour of heirs male, which would not allow the lands of a noble family to be split up among co-heiresses; the second cause was the practice of allotting small estates to younger sons, whereby the chance of always having an heir male at hand was much increased. 7 Showing the old Scottish houses and how they did things like this proves that there was a way to save the old English houses, but they failed to do so. Land was a big issue back then and it still is today. The Scottish houses knew that and knew they had to do something to preserve that land. They had to find a way to keep in the heir's family so it wouldn't eventually die out like most of the old English houses did. The next way the Scottish " preserved" their houses was the practice of allotting small estates to younger sons.



The probability of always having a male take over the heir was a lot higher than if they didn't do this. These are just some ways that the Scottish houses did to ensure that they didn't run into the same mistake that the English did. To me the English houses didn't invest in themselves very much. They didn't have a back up plan in case something happen to them and they died out. Historians studying this era tend to think that the Wars of the Roses wiped out these houses so they weren't really thinking about investing in themselves.

Oliphant proves that most of these houses were already died out ten years prior to the war so that assumption is inaccurate. There was a lack of effort in making sure that the houses never died out, but there shouldn't be any excuse for it. They should be prepared for the freak accidents or the natural causes that may come their way for the sake of the house. I believe that it was a little about pride, and the old Scottish aristocracy had that. They were proud of their houses and they wanted to keep it going.

The English were to caught up in other things to think about, what happens to the house if something happens to me? What I wanted to get out of this paper was to know more about the War of the Roses and to dig deeper inside the war. I wanted to find something worth arguing about and giving evidence on my point of view. I found out that the English houses started to die out and historians had suggestions for why this was happening. Some had the same mindset I had, and others thought it was because of the war.

I believe that the war had an effect on some of the houses during time, but it didn't have the extinction effect that people said it did. The Wars of the

Roses was a great time period and had a lot of conflict that went with it. I'm positive that the conflict did have a little effect on the old English aristocracy dying out, but to say the war was the reason why it was destroyed makes no sense at all. In my opinion it was irresponsible of the men to not something special like the Scottish did, and who knows what the English could have been today.