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The Abdication of Richard II - II

Lead: Coming to the throne as a boy of ten in 1377, Richard II had to bide his time until before he could rule over England, but when he asserted his power, he went too far and lost it all.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: In order to get the money to fight the Hundred Years War in France, Richard's grandfather King Edward III had given up a great deal of royal power to Parliament and the

nobility. Having come to the throne at such a young age, Richard could do very little about it, but by the time he was 15 he was ready to try. Instead of attempting to win the support of the nobles, he began to build a network of allies and to assert his power as absolute. Not surprisingly, this united many of the greatest nobles against him. His uncle John of Gaunt had enough clout to keep peace between the two factions, but in 1386 John left the country and for three years open conflict between the young king's forces and those of the so-called "lord's appellant" ended with Richard forced to submit.

For eight years Richard behaved himself, but all the while he was plotting his revenge. In 1387 he was ready. A Parliament packed with his supporters went after the Lord's appellant, and Richard executed some, exiled some, and confiscated the lands of his enemies on an immense scale, distributing them to his friends and supporters. As is often the case, he abandoned caution and went too far. One of the exiled lords whose land was taken was Henry Bolingbroke, the king's cousin, son and heir of John of Gaunt. When Richard recklessly left the country on an Irish expedition, Henry returned, claimed his lands, united Richard's enemies, defeated the King's armies and forced him to

abdicate and was proclaimed Henry IV. Richard later died, probably murdered, in the Tower of London. The king was dead, but his death put a usurper on the throne and ushered in a century of bloodletting and civil war.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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