

**ENGLAND AND WALES.
PARLIAMENT. HOUSE OF LORDS.
England and Wales Parliament House of
Lords Anti-Catholic proclamations, 1679-1689**

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: England and Wales. Parliament. House of Lords.
Title: England and Wales Parliament House of Lords Anti-Catholic proclamations, 1679-1689
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 139
Extent: 0.2 cubic ft. (1 oversize folder)
Abstract: Contains three broadsides of proclamations issued by the House of Lords.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

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Citation

[after identification of item(s)], England and Wales Parliament House of Lords Anti-Catholic Proclamations, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Jim Cooper, 1994.

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Collection Description

Biographical Note

Charles II took the throne of England in 1660 with two goals: to secure toleration for Catholics and to escape the control of Parliament. The English legislative body refused to comply with these goals and in 1672 forced Charles to accept a Test Act that excluded Roman Catholics from holding office under the Crown. Additional laws and proclamations were issued revoking Catholic participation in English government, and by 1678 England was in an atmosphere of panic and suspicion. The realm was shocked by the revelations by two disreputable informers, Titus Oates and Israel Tonge, of a Jesuit plot to assassinate Charles II and place James, his Catholic brother, on the throne. As a result of these false accusations, a wave of anti-catholic sentiment and legislation swept across the land.

James II came to the throne in 1685. He summoned his first Parliament in May of 1685 and promised "to preserve the government in Church and State as it is now by law established". James' right to the throne was challenged almost immediately by the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth in July 1685. This revolt was savagely crushed and its participants severely punished.

In November the king summoned Parliament for the second and last time. James demanded money for the army that contained a large number of Catholic officers. Parliament, hoping to remove these officers, offered a large grant if the king would enforce the Test Act. James declined and prorogued Parliament ten days later.

James then tried to control the clergy of the Church of England by illegally creating the court of Ecclesiastical Commission. The commission suspended Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and placed three colleges at the University of Oxford under Roman Catholic control. Since Oxford was a Tory stronghold, James alienated many of his Tory supporters.

James attempted to win the support of the religious non-conformists by issuing a Declaration of Indulgence in April 1687. This act suspended all the penal laws, thus enabling Catholics and non-conformists to worship in public and hold public office. The king tried to gain the support of Parliament by packing the Commons. James replaced many prominent Tory ministers with Catholics and began a vigorous campaign to repeal the Test Act.

These acts along with the birth of a male heir in June of 1688 prompted a group of Whig and Tory leaders to invite William III, husband to James' daughter Mary, to invade England. William accepted their invitation and landed with his army on November 5 in Devon. James was eventually captured but was allowed to escape. William summoned a free Parliament in February 1689, which crowned William and Mary joint sovereigns, but placed the administration of the realm in William's hands.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of three broadsides of proclamations issued by the House of Lords in 1679, 1680, and 1689. The two earliest proclamations ordered all papist, including Peers, to leave the cities of London and Westminster. The 1689 proclamation forbids papist entry into the lobby, Painted Chamber, Court of Requests, or Westminster Hall while Parliament was in session.

