

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Professor McMillan begins the video by asking, “What is the most important date in American history?” What does ‘important’ mean? Important to whom? Important in what way? How do you think that one should go about answering such a question? What factors should one consider when answering this question? Do you think that it is really a subjective question? Why or why not? Clearly July 28th, 1588 is AN important date for the U.S., but what do you think would qualify it, or any other date, as THE most important date?
- We learn from Professor McMillan that, “England was a Protestant nation and Spain was Catholic, as was most of Europe.” Why do you think that being either Catholic or Protestant was such a big deal back then? How big a factor do you think this was in motivating King Phillip to attempt to invade England? Do you think his planned invasion was more for personal reasons? Why or why not?
- Professor McMillan states that, “The defeat of the Spanish Armada on July 28, 1588 made America possible,” because “If the Armada had won, England would have become part of the Spanish Empire“ and “Spain would have ruled America as it did South America. There would have been no thirteen colonies, no thirteen original United States. The America that we know would not exist.” Do you agree with Professor McMillan’s conclusions? Why or why not?
- Some people argue that unlikely, huge events in history resulting in something amazing and good happening can be explained by Divine Providence- the idea that God actually stepped in and acted so as to drastically change the course of history and direct a certain outcome to happen. Professor McMillan shares with us that the struggling Spanish armada’s situation worsened because, “...then the weather turned. Mother Nature finished what the English had started. When it was all over, only 76 of the 130 Spanish ships returned home and half the 30,000 soldiers were on the bottom of the ocean floor. Spain never challenged England again. Spain never challenged anyone again. It was finished as a great power.” Do you think that the defeat of the Spanish armada, and subsequent history that eventually led to the formation of the U.S. can be explained to any degree by Divine Providence, or do you think it was solely due to King Philip’s incompetence, England’s brilliant tactics, luck, etc...? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Lord High Admiral Howard

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Charles Howard,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What was Lord High Admiral Howard’s role in the defeat of the Spanish armada? What qualities of the Lord High Admiral helped him to achieve such success?
- Sir Francis Drake is quoted in the article as stating, “...God hath given us so good a day in forcing the enemy so far to leeward, as I hope in God the Duke of Parma and the Duke of Sidonia shall not shake hands this few days.” Do you think that any of the British officers believed in Divine Providence? Why or why not?
- We learn in the article that, “After the Spanish Armada rounded Scotland it headed south for home. However, a strong gale drove many of the ships onto the Irish rocks. Thousands of Spaniards drowned and even those who reached land were often killed by English soldiers and settlers. Of the 25,000 men that had set out in the Armada, less than 10,000 arrived home safely.” What do you imagine would have become of the region now known as the United States if the English had lost? South America eventually became independent of Spain do you think the same would have happened to North America as well? Why or why not?



QUIZ

IS THIS THE MOST IMPORTANT DATE IN U.S. HISTORY?

1. What is the most important date in American history?

- a. July 28th, 1588
- b. July 4th, 1776
- c. April 12th, 1861
- d. December 7th, 1941

2. Why did Spain attack England?

- a. To prevent the founding of America.
- b. To convert the country from Catholicism to Protestantism.
- c. To discipline Queen Elizabeth and her heretic nation.
- d. To discipline Mary Queen of Scots and her heretic nation.

3. The defeat of the Spanish Armada made America possible.

- a. True
- b. False

4. How did England defeat the Spanish Armada?

- a. England had superior fire power.
- b. England had a larger fleet of ships than the Spanish.
- c. England pre-emptively struck the docked Spanish fleet.
- d. England did not defeat Spain.

5. What was the problem with King Phillip replacing the Marquis de Santa Cruz with Duke Madina Sidonia?

- a. Sidonia had no naval experience.
- b. Sidonia was an Army general.
- c. Sidonia had never been out to sea.
- d. All of the above.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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Charles Howard



Charles Howard, the son of Sir William Howard, 1st Baron of Effingham, was born in 1536. In the House of Commons he represented Surrey and in 1569 was named General of the Horse.

Howard succeeded to his father's title in 1573. Closely related to [Elizabeth I](#) he also became Lord Chamberlain of the Household.

Howard was appointed Lord High Admiral in 1585. The following year he was commissioner at the trial of [Mary, Queen of Scots](#) and afterwards was a strong advocate of her execution.

In July 1588 131 ships in the [Spanish Armada](#) left for England. The large Spanish galleons were filled with 17,000 well-armed soldiers and 180 Catholic priests. The plan was to sail to Dunkirk in France where the Armada would pick up another 16,000 Spanish soldiers.

On hearing the news Charles Howard held a council-of-war. Lord Howard decided to divide the fleet into squadrons. Howard was commander-in-chief and [John Hawkins](#), [Francis Drake](#) and [Martin Frobisher](#) were chosen as the three other commanders of the fleet.

Howard went in his flagship, the Ark Royal (800 tons and a crew of 250). Frobisher was given command of the largest ship in the fleet, the Triumph (1,110 tons and a crew of 500 men) whereas Drake was the captain of the Revenge (500 tons and a crew of 250) and Hawkins was aboard the Victory (800 tons and a crew of 250).

Lord Howard decided that the Spanish Armada should be attacked at both ends of the crescent. The Ark Royal attacked the right wing and the Revenge and the Triumph attacked Juan Martinez, de Recalde, commander of the Biscayan squadron on the left. Recalde on board the San Juan de Portugal decided to come out and fight the English ships. He was followed by Gran Grin and the two ships soon got into trouble and had to be rescued by the [Duke of Medina Sidonia](#) on board the San Martin.

At the end of the first day's fighting, only one ship was sunk. This was Spain's San Salvador when a tremendous explosion tore out its stern castle and killed 200 members of the crew. It was later discovered that a gunner's carelessness resulted in a spark reaching the gunpowder in the rear hold.

The following morning [Francis Drake](#) and the crew of Revenge captured the crippled Rosario. This included Admiral Pedro de Vales and all his crew. Drake also found 55,000 gold ducats on board. That afternoon Medina Sidonia announced that if any Spanish ship broke formation the captain would be hanged immediately. He also told his captains that they must maintain a tight formation in order to prevent further attacks from the English ships. This decision meant that they could only move towards Dunkirk at the speed of the slowest ship.

Constantly harassed by the English ships the slow moving [Spanish Armada](#) eventually reached Calais without further loss. The English fleet now dropped anchor half a mile away. Soon afterwards they were joined by Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron of ships that had been controlling the seas off Dunkirk. This increased the English fleet by a third and was now similar in size to that of the Spanish fleet.

The [Duke of Medina Sidonia](#) now sent a message to the [Duke of Parma](#) in Dunkirk: "I am anchored here two leagues from Calais with the enemy's fleet on my flank. They can cannonade me whenever they like, and I shall be unable to do them much harm in return." He asked Parma to send fifty ships to help him break out of Calais. Parma was unable to help as he had less than twenty ships and most of those were not yet ready to sail.

That night Medina Sidonia sent out a warning to his captains that he expected a fire-ship attack. This tactic had been successfully used by [Francis Drake](#) in Cadiz in 1587 and the fresh breeze blowing steadily from the English fleet towards Calais, meant the conditions were ideal for such an attack. He warned his captains not to panic and not to head out to the open sea. Medina Sidonia confidently told them that his patrol boats would be able to protect them from any fire-ship attack that took place.

Medina Sidonia had rightly calculated what would happen. Charles Howard and [Francis Drake](#) were already organizing the fire-ship attack. It was decided to use eight fairly large ships for the operation. All the masts and rigging were tarred and all the guns were left on board and were primed to go off of their own accord when the fire reached them. John Young, one of Drake's men, was put in charge of the fire-ships.

Soon after midnight the eight ships were set fire to and sent on their way. The Spaniards were shocked by the size of the vessels. Nor had they expected the English to use as many as eight ships. The Spanish patrol ships were unable to act fast enough to deal with the problem. The Spanish captains also began to panic when the guns began exploding. They believed that the English were using hell-burners (ships crammed with gunpowder). This tactic had been used against the Spanish in 1585 during the siege of Antwerp when over a thousand men had been killed by exploding ships.

The fire-ships did not in fact cause any material damage to the Spanish ships at all. They drifted until they reached the beach where they continued to burn until the fire reached the water line. [Medina Sidonia](#), on board the San Martin, had remained near his original anchorage. However, only a few captains had followed his orders and the vast majority had broken formation and sailed into the open sea.

At first light Medina Sidonia and his six remaining ships left Calais and attempted to catch up with the 130 ships strung out eastwards towards the Dunkirk sandbanks. Some Spanish ships had already been reached

by the English fleet and were under heavy attack. San Lorenzo, a ship carrying 312 oarsmen, 134 sailors and 235 soldiers, was stranded on the beach and was about to be taken by the English.

With their formation broken, the Spanish ships were easy targets for the English ships loaded with guns that could fire very large cannon balls. The Spanish captains tried to get their ships in close so that their soldiers could board the English vessels. However, the English ships were quicker than the Spanish galleons and were able to keep their distance.

The battle of Gravelines continued all day. One of the most exciting contests was between [Francis Drake](#) in the Revenge and [Duke of Medina Sidonia](#) in the San Martin. Drake's ship was hit several times before being replaced by Thomas Fenner in the Nonpareil and Edmund Sheffield in the White Bear, who continued the fight without success.

All over the area of sea between Gravelines and Dunkirk fights took place between English and Spanish ships. By late afternoon most ships were out of gunpowder. The Duke of Medina Sidonia was now forced to head north with what was left of the [Spanish Armada](#). The English ships did not follow as Charles Howard was convinced that most Spanish ships were so badly damaged they would probably sink before they reached a safe port.

That evening [Francis Drake](#) wrote to a friend: "God hath given us so good a day in forcing the enemy so far to leeward, as I hope in God the Duke of Parma and the Duke of Sidonia shall not shake hands this few days". [John Hawkins](#) was also pleased with his day's work: "All that day Monday we followed the Spaniards with a long and great fight, wherein there was great valour showed generally by our company... Our ships, God be thanked, have received little hurt."

Hawkins also showed concern for his men: "The men have long been unpaid and need relief." Charles Howard was also angry that his men had not received their wages. He was also disturbed by the condition of his men. The lack of fresh water caused an outbreak of disease. As they were still waiting for their wages to be paid they were even unable to buy fresh food for themselves. Howard wrote bitterly: "It is a most pitiful sight to see, here at Margate, how the men, having no place to receive them into here, die in the streets. I am driven myself, of force, to come a-land, to see them bestowed in some lodging; and the best I can get is barns and outhouses. It would grieve any man's heart to see them that have served so valiantly to die so miserably."

After the [Spanish Armada](#) rounded Scotland it headed south for home. However, a strong gale drove many of the ships onto the Irish rocks. Thousands of Spaniards drowned and even those who reached land were often killed by English soldiers and settlers. Of the 25,000 men that had set out in the Armada, less than 10,000 arrived home safely.

Howard led the expedition with [Robert Devereux](#), 2nd Earl of Essex, that sacked Cadiz in 1596. The following year he was created the Earl of Nottingham and given command of both land and sea forces. In 1601 he led the forces that defeated the Earl of Essex's rebellion.

Howard remained Lord High Admiral during the reign of [James I](#). Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Nottingham and 2nd Baron Howard of Effingham, died in Halling House, Surrey, on 14th December, 1624.