

Bonnie Prince Charlie
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Many years ago, I saw a movie about the Battle of Culloden and was so taken with the main character, Bonnie Prince Charlie, as such a romantic and tragic figure that for a time I became a closet Jacobite. Around the same time, I read that some English officers in the early 18th century would pass their hand over the glass before drinking their daily ration of whiskey as a salute to the “King Across the Water” and I recall actually doing this myself a few times. I’m sure many of you have been to Rome and visited St. Peter’s Church. You might recall the large statue of Constantine the Great just outside the main door on the left side. There are many tombs inside the church but the very first tomb you’ll see when you enter this door is for Jacob III (Latin for James, hence his followers were called Jacobites) king of England, Scotland and Ireland. Of course, there never was a real James III but this man is often called the Old Pretender and it’s interesting to note that the cost of the tomb was partly paid by George IV, the reigning King of England at the time and the grandson of James’ mortal enemy. As my talk proceeds, I will clarify and explain all of these names and concepts.

I will not start my talk with the highlight of Charlie’s life, his 1745 landing in Scotland to instigate an uprising to overthrow what he considered to be a usurper, the so-called Elector of Hanover, and install his father as the true king but I’ll be going back more than 100 years to the beginning of the English Civil War.

When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, the crown passed to her nearest relative, King James VI of Scotland, who was the great-grandson of Margret Tudor, daughter of the English King Henry VII who was also Elizabeth’s grandfather. James was crowned as James I, King of England & Ireland but he retained his title as King of Scotland. The two realms were united by a common crown but continued to have separate parliaments; a situation similar to the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary which existed in the days before World War One. Elisabeth was the last of the Tudor dynasty while James inaugurated the Stuart dynasty.

When James died in 1625 his eldest son who took the name Charles I became king. Charles believed in the divine right of kings and felt that any parliamentary interference against his wishes was a sin against God. Conflict with Parliament was inevitable and after a long series of disputes, Charles fled London and raised his royal standard at Nottingham in August 1642 and thus began the English Civil War.

At first the royalists were successful in the war but after the parliamentary side identified a brilliant military leader in Oliver Cromwell who reorganized the army, they overwhelmed the opposition and forced Charles to sue for peace in 1647. However, Charles had no intention of acceding to parliament's demands and he secretly plotted with the Scots. He agreed to impose or at least encourage Presbyterianism on the English in exchange for a Scottish army. The English had no intention of adopting this alien creed and after Cromwell defeated the Scots, Charles was captured and put on trial for treason. This was a tricky situation since treason was defined as plotting against the king; how could Charles plot against himself? Cromwell and his cohorts finessed this issue and the trial went on. Charles was present throughout but declined to take any part as he refused to recognize the court as legitimate. He was found guilty and even though there was limited support for executing him, Cromwell with the army at his back, strong armed the court to vote for death and Charles was duly executed in January 1649.

Charles' eldest son, then in French exile, quickly declared himself to be Charles II, the rightful king, and stirred up plots to overthrow Cromwell but they came to naught. Cromwell ruthlessly suppressed all opposition, including an Irish revolt which was bloodily put down in 1652. Memories of the massacres which followed are still a bone of contention to the Irish and were a factor in the centuries long Irish opposition to English rule. At first Cromwell worked with what was called the Long or Rump parliament which was still sitting even though it had first been elected way back in 1640. Tensions between the two sides escalated until April 1653 when Cromwell used the army to dissolve Parliament and essentially ruled as a military dictator (he used the term Lord Protector) until his death in 1658 when he was succeeded by his son, Richard Cromwell. Richard did not possess his father's charisma or the unquestioned loyalty of the army. In addition, the country had tired of the religious extremism espoused by the Lord Protector and his supporters and a movement developed to restore the monarchy. General Monck, one of the leaders of the army, began a correspondence with Charles II

and this culminated in his restoration in 1660. The Rump parliament was dissolved and Charles called for new elections which not surprisingly returned a strong royalist majority. Charles was not vindictive and attempted to mitigate the backlash against those who had killed his father but a mini persecution was inevitable and it included digging up the corpse of Oliver Cromwell and ceremoniously beheading it. Charles II was not as committed as his father to the concept of Divine Right and he got along fairly well with Parliament. In fact the new king's main concern was his own personal pleasure as he had a string of mistresses, fathered at least twelve illegitimate children and was known as the Merry Monarch. However, his wife, Catherine of Braganza, a Catholic from the Portuguese royal family was unable to produce an heir. Charles was strongly encouraged by his advisors to divorce her and marry his long-time mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland and thereby legitimize her son, who had been created Duke of Monmouth and was very popular in the country but Charles refused. As a result, his direct heir was his unpopular brother James, who was also a Catholic. Given that there were discriminatory laws against Catholics, this was a very awkward situation but when Charles died in 1685, his brother assumed the throne and took the name James II. A rebellion by the Duke of Monmouth a few months later was brutally suppressed and many of the participants, including Monmouth himself, were executed in grim fashion. Given that the 52-year-old James had two Protestant daughters, Mary and Anne, from a previous marriage (his wife had died in 1671) it was felt that in a few years the threat of a Catholic monarch would fade away with James' death.

James had married Mary of Modena, a 15-year old Italian princess in 1673 but by the time of his accession the union had not yet produced any living children, as Mary had given birth three times but all had died within a few months. James attempted to get around the rules against Catholics in positions of authority and thereby created a serious breach with Parliament which he dismissed or prorogued in November 1685 and did not recall during the balance of his reign. Then in 1688, his wife Mary gave birth to a healthy son who was also named James. Given her past history with childbirth, there was speculation, initiated by his enemies, that this child had been snuck into the royal bedchamber as a ruse and was not actually a royal heir. In any event when it became clear that James intended to raise his son as a Catholic, the crisis came to a head. James' enemies corresponded with his elder daughter Mary who was then married to the Hereditary Stadholder of the United Provinces (in all but name the King of

Holland) and asked them to come to England with a Dutch army and assume the crown. Mary's husband William of Orange was also James' nephew and had a claim to the British throne of his own. William agreed but only on the condition that he and Mary be crowned as co-monarchs, the first and only time in British history this had occurred. Support for James had evaporated and he was unable to muster any significant following, so he fled to France with his wife and infant son but did not officially abdicate which gave him an ongoing legal avenue to pursue his goal of regaining the throne. This episode is known in history as the Glorious Revolution and is looked upon by most historians as a great chapter in the march of human freedom, equivalent to the Magna Carta, as the concept of royal absolutism, at least in Britain, was dealt a mortal blow.

It has been speculated that William was sterile and as a result his marriage yielded no offspring. William and Mary reigned together until her death in 1694, after which William reigned alone until his death in 1702 and he was succeeded by James' younger daughter Anne who was married to Prince George of Denmark. Unlike many of her relatives, Anne was extremely fertile as she was pregnant 17 times, although 12 of these ended in miscarriages or still births. Anne's final pregnancy ended in miscarriage in January 1700 and her sole surviving child, the Duke of Gloucester died in August 1700. This created another succession crisis, especially after James II died in French exile in 1702. Parliament reached out to James' son and his handlers to explore the possibility of his conversion to Protestantism which might then create a situation where the country could consider him as the rightful heir but this was rejected and other options had to be explored. Parliament passed the Act of Settlement in 1701 which named, Sophia, the Electress of Hanover and granddaughter of James I as the rightful heir. The Holy Roman Empire, a relic of the Middle Ages, still existed in the 18th century and even though the crown had been worn by a member of the Habsburg family almost continuously for centuries, it was technically an elective office and the ruler of Hanover, a small German state, was one of the hereditary electors, hence the name.

Another item of note was the Act of Union which passed in 1707. The Scottish parliament in effect voted themselves out of existence and agreed to merge with the parliament in Westminster and unite the two kingdoms into a new United Kingdom of Great Britain adopting the Union Jack as the national flag which combined the cross of St. Andrew (Scotland) with the cross of St. George

(England). The Act of Union was deeply resented by many Scots and was a major plank in the later Jacobite program as they demanded that separate kingdoms under a common monarch be reinstated. In effect that is the same position as the current Scottish Nationalist Party who are advocating a referendum on Scottish independence but want to preserve Queen Elizabeth II as the titular head of state. If the referendum would pass it is highly unlikely that either the Westminster parliament or the Queen herself would agree to this. The recent Brexit vote has stirred up the issue as the Scots voted overwhelmingly to remain in the European Union while England voted to leave.

The Old Pretender (aka James III) from his base at St. Germain outside Paris presided over a court in exile, financed primarily by the French King Louis XIV. He and his followers continuously plotted to overthrow the Hanoverian usurpers and restore the Stuart dynasty. Several prominent English notables, including the Duke of Marlborough tried to play both sides of the fence by regular correspondence with St. Germain. The Jacobites tried to take advantage of the Scottish opposition to the Act of Union by attempting an expedition in 1708 and another in 1715, ostensibly led by James himself but both came to grief. The 1715 revolt was also in response to the 1714 death of Anne and the coronation of the son of Sophia who had died earlier in the year and took the name George I, even though he did not speak a word of English. Jacobites in England but especially Scotland had promised that thousands of supporters would come out of the shadows and overthrow the usurpers as soon as James landed on British soil but more importantly in the company of French troops. This was one of the primary weaknesses of the Jacobite position from the beginning. It would only be successful when combined with an invasion of foreign troops. Even those people who might be sympathetic to the cause were wary of welcoming a foreign army who might not easily be persuaded to leave.

However, a combination of bad weather, the inability of the French to land a large force and the lack of a spontaneous uprising doomed the episode which went down in history as the "15" just as Bonnie Prince Charlie's invasion is popularly known as the "45". When James returned to the continent in early 1716 he was confronted with the situation that he was no longer welcomed in France. His patron, Louis XIV had died the previous year and the regency set up for his infant great-grandson Louis XV was in the process of negotiating peace with Britain and did not need James and his court in exile as a distraction. As a result, he was

banished and ended up in Rome where he was welcomed by Pope Clement XI which reinforced the English fear of popery.

By 1718 James was thirty years old and seemed no closer than ever to his goal of recovering the throne. His efforts shifted to finding an acceptable bride and begetting an heir to perpetuate the dynasty. Clearly the bride had to be of noble, if not royal blood but most of the European courts were reluctant to commit to a Pretender rather than an actual king. Religion was another major factor as the majority of James' supporters were Catholic as were the French and the Vatican, who were among the most enthusiastic. However, A Catholic bride would alienate many sympathetic British supporters. James finally decided on Clementina Sobieski, a granddaughter of the valiant John Sobieski, King of Poland who lifted the siege of Vienna in 1683 and saved Europe from the advances of the Ottoman Turks. Clementina was very devout and this raised more suspicions among James' Protestant supporters. The marriage took place in May 1719 in Rome and the fact that Clementina was the goddaughter of Pope Clement XI also did not sit well with James' Protestant supporters. On December 31, 1720, the hero of my talk, Charles Edward Louis John Casimir Silvester Maria Stuart, was born.

Another son, Henry was born in 1725. When George I died in 1727, the Jacobite cause attempted to take advantage of the situation and launch another invasion but could get no support from the French and the second Hanoverian king George II was duly crowned. By this time, James was nearly forty and his enthusiasm for the cause was flagging. He was also experiencing domestic troubles as his wife Clementina, never happy with her taciturn and brooding husband, turned increasingly fanatical in her devotions and seriously weakened her health with severe fasting; eventually dying in 1735 at the age of 33. Her death was an occasion of great lamentation in Rome, where she had been revered as a near saint. Her dying wish was a demand to her husband and sons that they never renounce their Catholic faith. Despite their differences, James was disconsolate at her death and it drove him even deeper into despair at ever succeeding in his life long quest to secure his legacy. Leadership of the Jacobite cause gradually moved to his eldest son.

Charles was very precocious as a youngster and had learned three languages (French, Italian & English) by the time he was seven years old. He grew to be a strong, hearty youth who possessed great energy and charisma with an unshakeable faith in his great mission. He became an outstanding hunter and horseman with incredible stamina for thriving in rough conditions, traits that would serve him well in his great adventure. However even in his adolescent years it was obvious that he lacked self-discipline and was very reluctant to follow orders, even from his father. He was feted as the Prince of Wales and heir to the throne wherever he went which he greatly enjoyed and began to feel that this adulation was his natural right. That made it very frustrating when he was denied these honors in non-papal controlled territories, especially in France during her periodic bouts of peace with Britain. One of the consistent clauses of any peace treaty was that the French disavow support for the Jacobites and refuse to allow them into French controlled territory.

Charles was extremely handsome and women were said to swoon at his feet but he took little interest in the opposite sex as he was devoted to hunting and his great quest to regain his legacy. He lusted for military glory and was given his first chance at the age of thirteen when he was allowed to join the forces of Phillip V of Spain who were engaged in a conflict with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI over the territories of Naples and Sicily in southern Italy. He did come under fire but showed himself to be fearless and greatly impressed his hosts with his courage and bravery which inflated his already outsized ego. James' younger son, Henry, adored his older brother but the two couldn't be more dissimilar in character and temperament. Although Charles had a great affection for the opera, he had little appreciation for any aspect of art, literature or other normal leisure pursuits of his class. Henry on the other hand was the exact opposite as he was a great patron of the arts and gloried in the kind of activities beloved by the aristocratic circles in which he moved. In addition, Henry took after his mother in his devotions to the Catholic faith. He often attended several masses each day and set aside large parts of his day to silent devotion, even when this activity was at the expense of planning and discussing the Jacobite cause. In later years, this would create serious problems for Charles.

As Charles advanced from boyhood to adulthood, he focused more and more on his historic mission. During the gaps between his plotting, he threw himself into an orgy of hunting and horseback riding, often rising at dawn and actively

pursuing these activities until dusk. However, according to his father, he had not developed the depths and moods of adulthood; he remained a sunny, irrepressible boy, infectiously positive yet without the dignity and weight of burgeoning maturity.

The British victory in the Battle of Dettingen in June 1743 infuriated Louis XV and made him even more sympathetic to Jacobite entreaties for another invasion to be followed by a general uprising in Britain. Plans were drawn up for a landing to take place in 1744 and for a time things proceeded according to plan with Charles as the designated leader of the expedition. On January 9, 1744 Charles rose early to embark on another day of shooting but this was a ruse and taking just a few loyal followers and assuming an alias as Don Biagio, an Italian officer in the service of Spain, he made his way to France, dodging English spies all along the way. However, upon his arrival in Paris he discovered that the French were having second thoughts and the invasion plans were nowhere near complete plus the English had been alerted to the plot and began to take counter measures. Charles moved from Paris to the coast where he observed the buildup of ships and men but bad weather and the arrival of an English fleet scattered the French and caused Louis XV to divert the troops and supplies to Flanders and leave the Jacobites high and dry once again.

Charles was very disappointed at this setback to his great quest but rather than retreating into despair, which was his father's reaction, he rededicated himself to the cause. In order to keep his dream alive and to keep himself in the living style he felt appropriate to his station as heir to a great kingdom, Charles turned to moneylenders, which would become a life-long problem. Dissent among his followers was also an ongoing issue as they seemed more interested in squabbling with themselves rather than plotting against the Hanoverians. Some, especially Murray of Broughton (to be differentiated from Lord George Murray who will appear later) were enthusiastic about the level of support, especially in Scotland, just waiting for Charles to show his face and thousands of supporters would flock to his banner while others told him to wait for cooperation from the French.

Charles vacillated between these two extremes but good news from the war front in Flanders in early 1745 raised his spirits. The French were willing to allow him to utilize privateers to transport him to Scotland and Murray of Broughton was

assigned the task of raising money and gathering supplies in Holland. Finally, on July 15th, Charles set sail with two ships, the Elisabeth and Du Tilley. It was decided to take the long route around the west coast of Britain and through the Irish Sea to land on the west coast of Scotland. Charles and his entourage were in the Du Tilley while most of the arms, money and supplies were in the Elisabeth. At first things seemed to go according to plan but an English warship, the Lyon, spotted the small armada and eventually engaged the Elisabeth in a running gun battle. The captain of the Du Tilley refused to join the fight as this would endanger his passengers. Both the Lyon and the Elisabeth began to take on water and the Lyon withdrew. It was felt that the Elisabeth would have to return to port as she was in no shape to continue all the way to Scotland. Therefore, all her supplies were therefore unavailable for the uprising. The crew of the Du Tilley debated where or not to abort the entire mission but Charles insisted on going forward. Finally on August 4th he landed on the Scottish coast near Loch an Uamh where his first news was that several clans he had been counting on for support would not do so. Undaunted he persisted in believing that his quest was destined to succeed; his personal magnetism and charisma were the most significant elements in the rest of the story.

As word spread of Charles' landing a few hundred Highlanders drifted into his camp, now located at Glenfinnan which was the agreed upon rendezvous point but then on August 19th over a thousand members of the fearsome Cameron clan marched into camp and Charles felt confident in unfurling his banner and reading aloud the Regency proclamation signed by his father which named Charles as Regent until his father could be summoned to his rightful place in London. In effect the proclamation "pardoned" all those who had pledged allegiance to the usurper, assuming they now pledged support to the true king, James III. Luckily for the cause, the government forces in Scotland were very weak and those troops available were ill-trained. The British commander, General Sir John Cope was detested by his men and clearly not up to the task of opposing the rebellion. Reports, later proven false, of a French landing caused many of his troops to desert. Charles' forces were swelled by the addition of the Duke of Athol and his retainers. With Cope hopelessly confused, Charles marched triumphantly into Edinburgh, the hereditary seat of the ancient kings of Scotland on September 4th.

Even though Charles was greeted by cheering crowds, which greatly stoked his already massive ego and belief in the rightness of his cause, it was ominous that this did not translate into a commensurate increase in volunteers. Most of the Highland clans rallied to his banner but there were holdouts and he received minimal real support from the Lowlands, another bad sign which was ignored in the excitement of the moment. The British commander General Cope had about 2,000 troops which were stationed just north of Charles' forces who numbered a few hundred more. Cope secured a fine defensive position at Prestonpans and the Jacobites advanced to meet them. Under Lord George Murray, a recent recruit and a fine military leader, the Jacobites succeeded in routing the government forces with a surprise Highland charge and their opponents fled in disorder with only about 400 surviving death or capture for a loss of only 300 men of Murray's army. Jacobite morale was now at its' peak but a serious decision had to be made as to what comes next.

Charles had now secured almost all of Scotland and new recruits swelled his army to about 5,000. One option was to secure his base, gather more troops and supplies, wait until spring and the hoped-for French landing, then move south. However, to the impetuous Charles this was anathema and with the encouragement of his more hot-headed supporters such as Murray of Broughton he decided to head south and invade England proper. Lord George Murray was violently opposed and thus began a serious rift with Murray of Broughton and his followers, a flaw which deeply impacted the ultimate fate of the cause.

On November 9th, with winter rapidly approaching, a factor not properly taken into account by the hotheads, the Jacobite force crossed into England and easily captured the city of Carlisle and then pressed southward against meager opposition passing through Manchester to reach Derby, only 100 miles from London. Panic overtook the royalists and plans were put into place to evacuate the government and orders were rushed to Flanders to recall troops to defend the capital. Wild rumors of a French landing on the Kentish coast added to the chaos and sense of pandemonium. It was early December and serious decisions as to future action now had to be taken. The Duke of Cumberland, the second son of George II, commanded 10,000 troops and was within striking distance of Charles' army. Some Highlanders were upset at moving into England as they had joined up only to defend Scotland and desertions reduced the Jacobite force to around 4,000. The hoped-for volunteers had not yet arrived to augment the

invaders although certain of Charles' advisors insisted it was just a matter of time. Winter weather was approaching and the tenuous Jacobite supply system was breaking down. A lack of discipline in the ranks meant that troops looted nearby farms and villages for food and other supplies which did not endear the inhabitants to the Jacobite cause.

If I could digress for a moment; in the opening comments, it was mentioned that I took a vacation to Scotland and Ireland in 2013. Culloden was one of the stops on the tour and in the half hour or so prior to our arrival, the tour guide filled us in on the situation leading up to the battle. He made three errors of fact, only one of which was material but then expressed an opinion with which I seriously disagreed. He stated that Charles' "good advisors" encouraged him to press on to London while the "bad advisors" advocated a retreat back to Scotland. Especially since the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Party in the last 15 years or so, Bonnie Prince Charlie has been rehabilitated as a folk hero, almost on a par with William Wallace of Braveheart fame. Therefore many Scots, including possibly the tour guide, mythologize him and his invasion, overlooking any unpleasant alternative facts. In reality, almost every reliable source I have ever come across has concluded that the Jacobites had no choice but to retreat and a further advance toward London would have almost certainly ended the escapade disastrously months earlier than Culloden. It is crucial that very few men flocked to his banner after he crossed into England and his small force would never have been able to besiege and capture a city as large as London without the benefit of a mass uprising, and no evidence of that was forthcoming or apparent. A similar situation in more recent times was the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. The CIA "can-do" advisors insisted that the sight of an invading force of anti-Castro Cubans would touch off a mass uprising but this was tragically wrong and caused a significant loss of American prestige and was a serious blow to the infant Kennedy administration.

All throughout the campaign, Charles shared the hardships of his men, marching beside them and inspiring them with talk about the cause. He was always the last one to retire for the night as he insisted on seeing that all the troops were as comfortable as possible before retiring. This bred a deep respect between Charles and the ordinary soldiers, unlike the divisions and squabbling between his commanders. The soldiers were unable to understand the strategic issues and based on Charles encouraging comments to them they were convinced that the

army would march to London and sweep all before them. On December 5th, Charles convened a council of war to decide what to do next. Dispatches had been received that additional forces were gathering in Scotland and a small French force, assumed to be the vanguard of a larger invasion, was also reported. Using this information plus the presence of Cumberland's army as fodder, Lord George Murray and almost the entirety of the commanders urged a retreat to link up with these forces and after consolidating during the winter, return in the spring of 1746. Charles was violently opposed to this course of action and knew that it would seriously demoralize the soldiers. A final decision was postponed until the next day, but at that time Murray and the clan chiefs were unanimous in their decision to return to Scotland. Some of the leaders insisted later that they had counseled against retreat but this was not what happened at the time. Charles shouted to his commanders "You ruin, abandon and betray me if you do not march on", but in effect he had no choice and ordered the retreat. When the men were roused to awaken they thought at first they would be moving south but when it became obvious they were moving north, their cheerfulness turned to expressions of rage and lamentation.

Ten days after Charles and his demoralized troops left Derby, a large flotilla of French ships put to sea from Dunkirk, part of a vast design to concentrate men and ships at Calais and Boulogne for the invasion of England. If all went according to plan, twelve thousand French soldiers would be on English soil by the end of December. The titular leader of the expedition was Henry Stuart, Charles younger brother. When news of this invasion force reached England, additional panic ensued as the opposing English fleet would have to position itself to intercept but if they guessed wrong about the location, the French would be able to land unopposed. However, the French preparations were not well coordinated and the winter weather did not help. When news of Charles retreat reached the French coast it necessitated a change in plans, causing more delay. There was additional frustration at the actions of Henry Stuart, who refused to modify his elaborate daily routine of devotions to accommodate planning for the invasion. English privateers sank several French supply ships and the weather was not cooperative. The French high command, totally disgusted with the antics of Henry and the lateness of the season, finally decided to suspend the expedition indefinitely. As had happened previously in 1708 and 1715, the folly of relying on a foreign invasion force was shown to be a serious flaw in the Jacobite program. In fact the Jacobite cause was always a "sideshow" for the French.

The Jacobite army crossed the River Esk on December 20th and reentered Scotland. However, Charles discovered that in his absence and even with the newly raised Highland contingents and the small French force very little of Scotland remained in rebel hands. Edinburgh was occupied by a considerable Hanoverian contingent and Charles' forces were received coolly in Glasgow where the army halted for a week and replenished their supplies as best they could. The plan was to reduce the town of Stirling, garrison it with the newly acquired French artillery and then use it as a base to reconquer Scotland. General Hawley was in command of a royalist force of about 7,500 men while the reinforced Jacobites now had about 8,000. Hawley marched to relieve the siege of Stirling and Lord George Murray moved south from Perth to intercept them. They met on January 17th in a driving rainstorm at Falkirk and once again a surprise Highland charge routed the government army, although most were able to escape. This victory had little impact on the campaign as a whole but it did lift the spirits of the men and more importantly (and ominously) greatly raised Charlie's opinion of his troops as invincible, an attitude that would have disastrous consequences at Culloden.

Cumberland, who had been diverted south due to the French invasion scare then marched north with reinforcements and the Jacobites were forced to retreat to Inverness, deep in the Highlands. Cumberland followed to Aberdeen where he camped for the winter. During this same time, the animosity between Charles and his high command, especially Lord George Murray, intensified causing additional confusion in the rebel army. The supply system had collapsed due largely to command disputes and disorganization and the men often went hungry while the royal troops in Aberdeen were lavishly supplied.

By mid-April 1746, the opposing armies were maneuvering around Inverness. Desertions and lack of food reduced the Jacobite army to less than 7,000 while Cumberland had at least 9,000 well-trained and well fed troops. On the night of April 15th, Lord George Murray attempted to duplicate his successes at Prestonpans and Falkirk by means of a surprise night assault. However, abysmal coordination between his subordinate commanders meant that his forces were still several miles from the British lines at daybreak, ruining the possibility of

surprise and the Jacobites retreated in despair. Upon arriving back at their camp on Culloden Moor, the troops hadn't eaten in almost two days and were exhausted from lack of sleep. Murray had argued strenuously against Culloden as a battlefield as its open plain afforded great lines of sight for the vastly superior British artillery but Charles felt that his men were invincible and the open area would facilitate the fearsome Highland charge. Another complicating factor was the weather, as a driving rain, combined with sleet was blowing directly into the faces of the Jacobites and the ground was sodden. All this was a prelude to disaster.

When arriving back at Culloden, the army hoped for a respite to get some rest but after just a few hours, the Duke of Cumberland's army was sighted and the Jacobite forces were quickly mustered into a makeshift line. This exacerbated the divisions among the clan leaders as the powerful MacDonald clan insisted on their rightful place of honor of the right flank but there was no time for this and they were placed on the left and were quite upset about it. The artillery on both sides opened up about 1:00 and within 15 minutes the Jacobite guns, manned by amateurs, were silenced by the superior British weapons. The open moor afforded a wonderful line of sight for the Hanoverians and the Jacobites became enraged at taking casualties and being unable to respond. When the British guns switched to grapeshot, a lethal rain of leaden balls and nails, the men could stand it no longer and spontaneously charged the British lines. Due to the wet ground, the Highland charge became concentrated on just a small portion of the British line, exposing them to enfilading fire which devastated their ranks. Even though Culloden is one of the most famous battles in British history it was also one of the shortest and most one sided. The actual combat only took 20 minutes and the royalists lost less than 1,000 men while the Jacobites were completely routed, suffering casualties of more than 2,500. Charles had to be led from the field as he vainly attempted to rally his "invincible" soldiers. As fearsome as the Highland charge may have been, the key element of surprise present at Prestonpans and Falkirk was utterly lacking at Culloden.

In the aftermath of Culloden, Cumberland proceeded with the so-called pacification of the Highlands. All those believed to be rebels were summarily executed; rebel settlements were burned and all the livestock confiscated. Over a hundred Jacobites were hanged and scores of women and other non-combatants were imprisoned and then sent to London for trial but many died on the way.

This earned the British commander the nickname of “Butcher Cumberland” but his actions decimated the traditional clan system in the Highlands and made another uprising highly unlikely as many of Charlie’s troops had been commandeered against their will into the army by order of the clan chiefs. Although it did not become obvious for several years, in reality Culloden was the death knell for the Jacobite cause as no serious uprising ever again occurred. Charles’ increasingly bizarre behavior, which I will discuss below, disheartened his dwindling group of supporters.

Charlie evaded capture for four months and his adventures became the stuff of legend as he was spirited around the Highlands, always one step ahead of his pursuers. Despite a reward of 30,000 pounds, he was never betrayed and eventually linked up with a French frigate and arrived back in France in September. Upon reporting to his father he blamed everyone but himself but especially Lord George Murray and his brother Henry who he accused of not pushing hard enough for a French invasion,

Bonnie Prince Charlie was the quintessential “one-hit wonder”. He was 24 years old when he first landed in Scotland and 25 at the time of Culloden but spend the rest of his life in a long slow decline into drunkenness and debauchery. At first, he was lionized on the continent, especially in France, as a dashing but ultimately unsuccessful hero and he gloried in this attention. In order to preserve his princely lifestyle, he again turned to ravenous moneylenders. He made a visit to the Spanish court, attempting to convince King Ferdinand to sponsor another invasion attempt but this was met with incredulity and Charles left in a huff. Meanwhile other setbacks piled up as upon returning to Paris, he was astonished to find a letter from his father in which it was disclosed that his brother Henry, despite never having previously taken Holy Orders, was being named as a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, a severe blow to the Jacobite cause as it solidified in the minds of many English Protestants that a restoration would mean the return of Catholicism. Charles was stunned by this news and shut himself up for several days before emerging to carry on the cause, his will to victory undiminished although the practical reality was now severely compromised.

In 1748 Charles fell in love with Louise Rohan, a wealthy heiress, who unfortunately was then married to the Duke of Rohan and had a two-year old son. Both Charles and his lover were descended from the Polish hero John Sobieski.

Although adultery was rampant in Europe at the time, discretion was prized but Charles was too impetuous for that. Louise became pregnant after only a few months and Charles demanded to see her but her family, after discovering the true nature of the pregnancy, forced her to write a letter ending the affair. They did have one more meeting a few months later where Louise pledged her undying love, but Charles informed her that he already had a new mistress, Princess Marie-Louise de Talmont. Louise Rohan bore a son who was accepted by her husband but the child died less than a year later. Madame de Talmont was twenty years older than Charles and well-schooled in the art of seduction and had been a lover of Voltaire earlier in her notorious career. For several years she sheltered Charles from his many enemies but the affair ended badly in 1752.

The peace treaty signed in 1748 obligated France to divest themselves of the Jacobites and Charles was hounded before finally leaving in late December. He was forced to flee from one hiding place to another as even the Vatican during times of peace between France and Britain was closed to him since three-fourths of the papal revenue came from France and could be cut off by the stroke of a pen. Charles made a secret journey to London in September 1750 where he was assured there was great support for the cause but he was disappointed once again and the plot fizzled. The only significant aspect of the trip was that Charles converted to Anglicanism which he felt would be a positive factor in his acceptance by the English people but it was far too late and the "conversion" had no impact. He continued to plot throughout the 1750's but his complete divorce from reality meant that nothing was accomplished.

After his breakup with Madame de Talmont, he began an eight-year affair with Clementina Walkinshaw which produced a daughter named Charlotte. However, Charles increasingly erratic behavior and chronic drunkenness eventually drove mother and daughter away. On January 1, 1766, the Old Pretender died in Rome and Charles immediately began calling himself King Charles III although he was popularly referred to as the Young Pretender. He expected the Roman authorities to accord him the same royal honors given his father but Pope Clement XIII refused to do so and even cut the amount of pension he had paid to James. This was deeply mortifying to Charles and he descended even more into a drunken stupor. Since he had not been to Rome in 16 years, the inhabitants were shocked to see the vigorous young man they had remembered as now a middle-aged cripple.

James' death eased Charles' financial problems somewhat but he was galled by the fact that the will had given his brother Henry sole control of the estate and this drove him into an increasingly downward spiral of drunkenness. In his frequent visits to the opera he often engaged in drunken encounters with patrons who did not show him what he considered due respect for his position. Then in 1772 he finally decided to marry and chose a 19-year old named Princess Louise of Stolberg-Gedern whose father was a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. By this time, Charles was 52 years old and possibly impotent due to his long history of alcohol abuse. His relations with women had never been good, tending to veer from demanding infatuation to abusive tyranny with no middle ground between the two extremes. The toll this took on his young and vivacious wife was enormous and she sought solace in several adulterous affairs which enraged Charles even more. Finally, in 1780 Louise fled to the sanctuary of a local convent and then later moved to Rome, never to see Charles again.

At this time, when his fortunes were at their nadir, his daughter Charlotte reentered his life and provided some solace in his last days. The one title which Charles was accorded near universal recognition was the Duke of Albany and he bestowed it upon Charlotte who was then known as the Duchess of Albany. Shortly after his sixty-seventh birthday, he suffered a stroke and died on January 31, 1788. By this time, he had become a legendary figure in Scotland where songs were sung about his exploits which would outlast his unsavory reputation in Italy. In the popular mind, he had come full circle, from youthful hero to aging debauchee to deathless eternally youthful hero once again.