**DIRECTIONS: Read the following handout, identifying any important vocabulary, terms, names, and/or events that you think might be historically important. Write content notes in the margins next to the important text that will help you remember the information. You may wish to highlight or underline the important text.**

*During this week’s excitement over the birth of Prince George of Cambridge, a number of commentators have discussed the ‘warming-pan baby’ – James Edward Francis Stuart. It was his birth, in 1688, that led to the now abandoned tradition of Home Secretaries being present at a royal birth. Here, Dr Charles Littleton explains the circumstances and dramatic political consequences of that royal birth…*

In 1673, James Stuart (1633-1701), Duke of York, having lost his first wife Anne Hyde in 1671, married the Italian Catholic princess Mary Beatrice of Modena after several months of indecision and tortuous negotiations. This marriage, coming on top of several other incidents, confirmed decisively to many of the Duke’s countrymen their long-held fear that the heir to the throne was both a practicing Catholic and wedded to the international Catholicizing movement aimed at overthrowing Protestantism.

Mary Beatrice bore several children over the following several years but none survived past early infancy. By the time the Duke of York succeeded to the throne as James II in February 1685 his contemporaries no longer believed that he would be able to have a male heir. They could be sure that his Catholicizing measures would be only temporary, as at his death the crown would pass to his eldest surviving daughter by his first wife, the Protestant Mary, who was married to the Calvinist William of Orange of the United Provinces.

This complacency was disrupted on 10 June 1688 when Mary of Modena upset all expectation and gave birth to a living and healthy boy, James Francis Edward, who would undoubtedly be raised a Catholic and would be next in line to the throne. The birth of this royal baby was largely greeted with fear, dread and outright denial. James’s enemies later developed an elaborate theory that a live newborn from another mother had been slipped into Mary of Modena’s bed in a warming pan to replace her own stillborn child and to be presented as the male heir to the throne.

The birth of the Catholic male heir galvanized James’s enemies, such as the ‘Immortal Seven’ of Whig hagiography, who shortly after the birth addressed their letter to William of Orange ‘asking’ him to invade to ensure the summoning of a ‘free parliament’. William of Orange used the wide-spread doubts surrounding the birth as one of the justifications for his invasion, claiming that he intended to come to England in order to ensure that a proper investigation was made into the circumstances of the infant’s birth. On 22 October James II responded by summoning a special meeting of the privy council where the detailed testimony of those present at the birth, attesting that it was indeed Mary Beatrice’s child, was heard and formally registered in Chancery.

This little availed James, as William’s invasion fleet had already set sail and landed at Torbay on 5 November. James panicked as he saw William’s steady advance on the capital; on 10 December sent the six-month old Prince of Wales with his mother Mary of Modena to France for safety, where they both remained in exile for the rest of their lives. The next day James set out for France himself, but was apprehended at Faversham and had to wait for another opportunity, knowingly offered to him by William of Orange, to make a successful escape in the early hours of 24 December 1688. The Convention Parliament later decided on 6 February 1689 that considering James’s ‘abdication’, William of Orange and his wife Mary should sit on the throne as joint monarchs.

The birth of James Edward Francis Stuart thus led to invasion, his father’s deposition, and ultimately a new constitutional framework. This, in part set out in the Declaration of Rights, later made into law as the ‘Bill of Rights’ of December 1689, was to redraw the relations between monarch and Parliament, and Parliament and the people, which lasts until this day. One royal baby, George Alexander Louis, will one day rule the realm constitutionally transformed by the indirect effects of the birth of a far more unfortunate royal infant, James Francis Edward Stuart.

*Rock-a-bye baby, on the treetop,*

*When the wind blows, the cradle will rock,*

*When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,*

*And down will come baby, cradle and all.*

One theory says the lyrics refer to events immediately preceding the Glorious Revolution.

The baby is supposed to be the son of James VII and II, who was widely believed to be someone else's child smuggled into the birthing room in order to provide a Roman Catholic heir for James.

The "wind" may be that Protestant "wind" or force "blowing" or coming from the Netherlands bringing James' nephew and son-in-law William of Orange, who would eventually depose King James II in the revolution (the same "Protestant Wind" that had saved England from the Spanish Armada a century earlier).

The "cradle" is the royal House of Stuart.

“The ‘warming-pan baby:’ James Edward Francis Stuart.” The History of Parliament. Posted on July 26, 2013. Accessed January 12, 2016. <https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/2013/07/26/the-warming-pan-baby-james-edward-francis-stuart/>