

Fascinating Folks & Exciting Events

Queen Victoria (1819–1901)

When Alexandrina Victoria was born, she was fifth in line behind her uncles and father to inherit the throne. It seemed that it would be a long time before she would ever be queen. However, her father and grandfather (King George III) both died when she was less than a year old, and the last of her uncles died by the time Victoria was eighteen. So she advanced to become Queen of England while still a mere slip of a girl! Now, Queen Victoria took her responsibilities quite seriously, working hard to learn all that was needed about politics and foreign affairs. When she was twenty, she married Albert, a German prince. Queen Victoria's favorite part of life was being a wife and mother. The people in England greatly appreciated having such a solid "homebody" on the throne; it was quite a refreshing change from many of the former monarchs! In 1851, Albert organized the Great Exhibition in London, which displayed the amazing inventions and discoveries of the Industrial Revolution. In six months, nearly six million visitors from all over the world saw the Great Exhibition, which was Albert's crowning achievement. When Albert died ten years later, Queen Victoria was so sad that she decided never to stop mourning. For the rest of her long life and reign she wore black dresses and lived her life as she thought Albert would have wanted. She also kept on working hard. During her sixty-four year reign (the longest in England's history), the British Empire grew to globe-size proportions. As they said, "The sun never sets on the British Empire," because England had colonies in islands and countries all around the world. Victoria was given the title "Empress of India," which pleased

her a great deal. Her children and grandchildren became the reigning monarchs throughout most of Europe. In fact, Queen Victoria's reign was such a monumental, important time in England's history that the whole period took its name from her—The Victorian Age.

David Livingstone (1813–1873)

Can you imagine having to work fourteen hours a day as a ten year old? Or what about having your only chance for education by attending night school after your long hours at work? These were the experiences of a Scottish boy named David Livingstone. When he was twenty years old, David experienced a call of God to missions—to China, he thought. So he studied to become a medical missionary, but, because China was closed to missionaries in 1840, he was sent to South Africa instead. David Livingstone seems to never have missed going to China because he loved Africa and the Africans! He became one of the greatest explorers in the world as he hiked his way across much of the continent, keeping diaries of his experiences, writing scientific reports, and studying the various languages of the different tribal peoples. Even more important than his exploration, however, was his work to end the slave trade—the capturing and selling of African people. Though he is now remembered more as an explorer than as a missionary, he wrote in 1853, "I will place no value on anything I have . . . except in relation to the Kingdom of Christ." David Livingstone was so loved by his native friends that, when he died, they carried his body fifteen hundred miles to a ship on the coast of Africa so he could be buried in England—though his heart belonged to Africa.