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Magna Carta Libertatum

25 Barons and a King (1215 - 1297)

Read by: Jim Mowatt Language: English Length: 28 minutes Style: Solo

Genre(s): Non-Fiction, Law, History, Political Philosophy

Format	Package	SKU	UPC/EAN	List
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The document commonly called *Magna Carta* bears the full title *Magna Carta Libertatum*, which is Medieval Latin meaning "the Great Charter of the Liberties". We tend to think of it as a single entity, but it is in fact the product of several iterations over a period of nearly a hundred years. The first *Magna Carta* was drafted in 1215 by the Archbishop of Canterbury to make peace between the unpopular King John and the landowning barons throughout the Kingdom. It consisted of long unbroken text in heavily abbreviated Latin that was later broken into 63 numbered clauses by Sir William Blackstone in 1759. The King met with a council of 25 barons on June 15, 1215 at Runnymede, near Windsor, to review and sign the agreement, which provided for the protection of church rights, protection of the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift process of justice, and limitations on feudal payments to the Crown. Both

sides soon failed to honor the agreement, and the charter was annulled by Pope Innocent III, prompting the First Baron's War. King John died in 1216, and the regency government of his son, Henry III, issued a revised document in 1216 stripped of its more radical elements in an unsuccessful attempt to build political support. Nevertheless, the document formed part of the peace treaty at Lambeth that ended the First Baron's War in 1217 and acquired the name *Magna Carta* at that time to distinguish it from the smaller Charter of the Forest, issued at the same time. Henry reissued the charter in 1225 as part of a deal for a grant of new taxes. His son, Edward I, did the same in 1297, at which time it was confirmed as part of England's statute law. Thereafter it was renewed by each succeeding monarch.

At the end of the 16th century there was a renewed interest in *Magna Carta*. Historians and lawyers believed that there had been an ancient Anglo-Saxon English constitution protecting individual freedoms that had been overthrown by the Norman invasion in 1066 and that *Magna Carta* had been a popular attempt to restore them, thus validating the charter as the source of the powers of Parliament and legal principles such as *habeus corpus*. The principles were used in the early 17th century to counter the claim for the divine right of kings by the Stuart monarchs, who naturally attempted to suppress any discussion of the *Magna Carta*. The issue was curtailed by the execution of King Charles and the English Civil War of the 1640. The document was an important influence in the creation of the royal charters that established the colonies in America, and influenced the framers of the *United States Constitution*. As time went by and the English Parliament grew and passed new laws, however, it lost some practical significance. The first repeal of a clause in the *Magna Carta* was the repeal of clause 39 in 1829. Over the next 140 years nearly all the clauses were repealed, leaving only clauses 1, 9 29 still in force after 1969.