

Mrs. Simpson

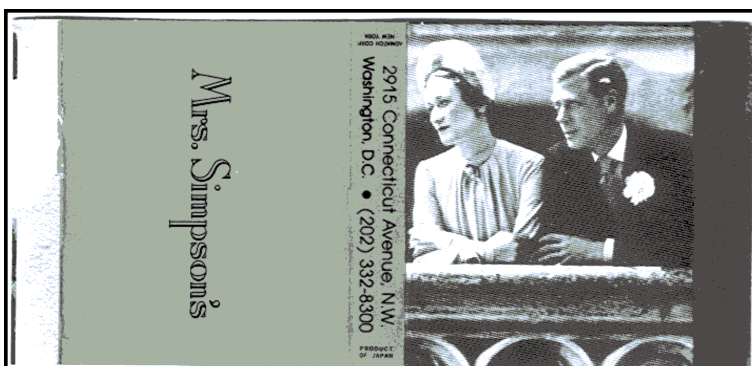
"I, Edward the VIII, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, king, emperor of India, do hereby declare my irrevocable determination to renounce the throne for myself and my decedents, and my desire to that effect should be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately. In token whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 10th day of December, 1936, in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed." ...And thus, Edward VIII, King of England, renounced his throne forever...so he could marry the woman he loved, Wallace Simpson. When my students and I are studying Medieval history, someone usually broaches the topic of nobles marrying commoners. "Never happen!" I declare, but then I have to qualify that with a brief summary of what certainly was the most famous love story in the world of at least the first half of the twentieth century.

Edward lived in an 18th century home called Fort Belvoir, which was given to him by his father, King George V. He enjoyed the privacy of "the Fort" and became an expert on gardening, especially roses. Through his small, private circle of friends who visited him at the Fort, Edward met Wallis Warfield Simpson. At the time, she was married to Ernest Simpson, but by 1934, Edward considered himself "deeply in love." Soon after, on January 20, 1936, George V died, and Edward was proclaimed king. Edward was determined to marry the now-separated Mrs. Simpson, and he attempted to gain the royal family's acceptance of the relationship. However, Edward's family, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and British political leaders were opposed to a marriage. Through government pressure of the press, the relationship was kept secret from the British public until December 2, when the entire matter was revealed. Cries for abdication began the next day. Soon after, on January 20, 1936, George V died, and Edward was proclaimed king. Edward was determined to marry the now-separated Mrs. Simpson, and he attempted to gain the royal family's acceptance of the relationship. However, Edward's family, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and British political leaders were opposed to a marriage. Through government pressure of the press, the relationship was kept secret from the British public until December 2, when the entire matter was revealed. Cries for abdication began the next day.

Edward submitted his abdication on December 10, and announced it to the public during a radio address the next evening, saying "I have found it impossible to carry on the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge the duties of King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love." Mrs. Simpson's divorce became final several months later, and the two were married on June 3, 1937. They lived in France until the outbreak of World War II, at which time Edward accepted the governorship of the Bahamas offered to him by Winston Churchill. Edward remained in the Bahamas until the end of the war. Still, the division between he and his family was not yet remedied.

While living in Paris after the war, Edward returned only twice to Great Britain; in 1952, after the death of his brother, George VI, and in 1953, after the death of his mother, Queen Mary. He was not formally invited to an official public ceremony until 1967, when he and Simpson, now the duchess of Windsor, were invited to the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to his mother, Queen Mary. For the rest of his life, Edward lived with Wallis in both Paris and the United States. He died in Paris on May 28, 1972. She died in Paris nearly 14 years later on April 24, 1986. The duke and duchess were buried side by side within the grounds of Windsor Castle.

*King Edward VIII and
Wallace Simpson*



[<http://www.incwell.com/Biographies/EdwardVIII.html>]