In the summer of 1643 Royalist forces commanded by the Marquis of Newcastle were besieging the Parliamentarian stronghold of Hull. Sir Thomas Fairfax and his men were among the Parliamentarians trapped at Hull. The Royalists were having little success so the decision was made to move south into Lincolnshire, to defeat the Parliamentarians and to take control of the county. They left a small force behind them to continue the siege of Hull. The Parliamentarians in Lincolnshire were under the command of Lord Meldrum and the (at that time) still inexperienced Oliver Cromwell. After a series of struggles the Royalists succeeded in taking control of Gainsborough and Lincoln and could probably have continued further south to capture Boston as well, which would have given them control of Lincolnshire. However, Newcastle was worried that he had left his enemy undefeated behind him in Hull and by this time his Yorkshire soldiers were becoming reluctant to go further south. In September he therefore decided to take most of his troops back north to Hull, leaving groups of men (garrisons) behind at the towns and castles he controlled. About 200 men were left behind to defend Bolingbroke Castle.

Despite the Royalists' success in Lincolnshire, the Parliamentarian troops were by no means defeated. Sir Thomas Fairfax escaped with his cavalry from Hull and linked up with Cromwell's remaining troops south of the River Humber. They joined forces with the Earl of Manchester's army at Boston and on 9th October a Parliamentarian army of 6000 men led by Manchester, Fairfax and Cromwell marched north from Boston to begin the re-conquest of Lincolnshire.

Meanwhile the garrison at Bolingbroke had been preparing for a possible siege. The earthwork in the centre of the rout yard could have been constructed at this time, and they had brought in provisions and probably carried out repairs to the castle. Gervase Holles' description of the castle, written in 1640, gives an idea of the condition that the castle was in just before the Civil War:
“Heretofore it was a famous structure, but now gone much into ruin and decay... As for ye frame of the building it lyeth in a square, the area within the walls conteyning about an acre and a half, ye building is very uniforme. It hath four stronge Forts or Ramparts, wherein are many rooms and lodgings, the passage from one to another lying upon ye walls, which are embattled about. There be likewise two watch Towers all covered with lead. If all ye rooms in it were repaired and furnished (as it seems in former times they have bin), it were capable to receyve a very great Prince with all his trayne. The entrance into it is very stately over a slyere drawbridge: The gate house is a very uniforme and strong building. Next within ye porter's lodge is a payre of low stayres which go down into a dungeon, in which some reliques are yet to be scene of a prison house. Other two prisons more on either side. The building itselfe is of a sandy stone, hewn of a great square out of ye rocks thereby, which though it abide the weather longe, yet (in the process of tyme) it will moulder, especially if wett gett within it, which hath been ye decay of many places of ye wall, where ye roofe is uncovered. There be certain rooms within ye castle (built by Queen Elizabeth of freestone), amongst which is a slyere great chamber with other lodgings...”

The Parliamentarian troops arrived at Bolingbroke during the evening of 9th October and at 7pm Major Knight summoned the castle to surrender. This was refused. The Royalists were confident that they could hold out until help arrived and quickly dispatched a messenger to the Royalist stronghold in Newark to fetch a relief force. The Parliamentarians surrounded the castle and took up their posts at strategic points in the area in order to stop anyone entering or leaving the castle, and to keep watch for Royalist reinforcements arriving. They planned an attack on the inside of the castle by using a mortar to launch explosive shells from the roof of the nearby church, but the Royalists stopped their plot by setting fire to the church roof.
The following day, 10th October, firing broke out and there were some casualties. The Parliamentarians strengthened their control of the surrounding area so that Bolingbroke was completely cut off. Meanwhile a Royalist relief force of 1500 men left Newark led by Sir John Henderson and marched towards Bolingbroke. They covered the distance quickly and managed to take the Parliamentarian troops at Horncastle by surprise and take control of the town.

The news of the Royalists’ success reached the Parliamentarian troops at Bolingbroke. The next day, 11th October, they set out to meet the advancing Royalists leaving enough men behind to continue the blockade of the castle. The two armies met at Winceby and the battle started. It was all over within half an hour. The sides were evenly matched in size with about 1200 men each. At first the Royalists were in a strong upland position, but the Parliamentarians lured them down onto flat land by pretending to retreat and they lost the advantage. At one point in the battle Oliver Cromwell fell from his horse and could easily have been killed, but he managed to remount and carry on. As the fighting continued, a misunderstanding over an order led to some of the Royalists retreating, leaving the remaining men with no hope of victory. They had no option but to turn round and flee back towards Horncastle. The escape of some of them was stopped when they became trapped against a parish boundary gate that only opened towards them. Many of these men were either killed or taken prisoner by the following Parliamentarians.
The site of the slaughter is still called Slash Hollow today. In all the pursuit lasted for many miles. It is thought that the Royalists lost about 300 men. The survivors gradually made their way back to Newark or to other Royalist garrisons. The Parliamentarians claimed to have lost only 10 men but the number may have been higher. Either way they had secured a resounding victory, and they were further boosted by the news that the Royalist siege of Hull had been abandoned.

Parliamentarian victory in Lincolnshire now seemed certain. Back at Bolingbroke Castle the Royalist garrison was doomed but it managed to hold out for over a month. With winter approaching and supplies dwindling surrender was the only available course of action. The siege ended on 14th November 1643.

But the Civil War in England was not yet over. The last major battle of the war, the Battle of Naseby, was fought in June 1645. By this time the Parliamentarian armies had been reorganised into the New Model Army and were better funded than the King's troops. The Royalists were defeated at the Battle of Naseby.

In January 1649 Charles I was tried by a special court set up by Parliament and sentenced to death. After his execution the monarchy was abolished and Oliver Cromwell, who had risen to prominence over the course of the war, governed England as Lord Protector. Cromwell died in 1658. Two years later the monarchy was restored and Charles I's son became King Charles II.