

English Kingdoms

Henry VI

Born in 1421

Ascended in 1422

Deposed in 1461

Re-ascended in 1470

Died in 1471, aged 50

Reigned for 40 years

Married to Margaret of Anjou, bearing 1 son.

Henry VI was only a year old when he ascended. The Duke of Gloucester therefore acted as protector and regent of England and the Duke of Bedford the regent of France. England did not retain France for long as the one hundred years war was almost over. In 1429 Joan of Arc started the rebellion in Orleans that was to push the English back until their total withdrawal in 1453.

Henry was a calm, placid man whose main interests were architecture and education. It was he who ordered the building of the Kings College in Cambridge. Henry unfortunately lost his grip on sanity and another regent, Richard, Duke of York, was appointed to take care of matters. He was removed after only one year but then rebelled and took over the government after the battle of St Albans in 1455. This marked the beginning of the War of the Roses; the confusing set of battles between the Plantagenets, with Henry's House of Lancaster on one side and the House of York on the other.

During the Plantagenet period, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI were all in the House of Lancaster, while Edward IV, Edward V, and Richard III were all in the House of York. The standard of the House of Lancaster was taken up by Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou. She was a very strong, warlike woman who defeated the Earl of Warwick at the battle of St. Albans and reinstated her husband as King. Later she was defeated and the son of Richard was crowned Edward IV for the second time.