Henry The 8th

A Notable Figure

Henry VIII was a significant figure in the history of the English monarchy. During his thirty- eight years as king, his reign was marked by events that would shape England’s history. He has been noted for many significant changes in government that affect England today. The circumstances of he arrival as king later became the basis for decisions and changes that included establishing the Anglican church and separating from the pope. As well as his spectacular six marriage, two of which ended in beheading of the wives. Even after his death, choices made by this monarch continued to affect the peace of the country, until it was later settled by his daughter, Queen Elizabeth.

Becoming king

Henty was born the second son , his older brother, Author, having been groomed to become king all his life. Author, however, died suddenly at the age of 15, shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, the youngest daughter of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile. This alliance with powerful Spain was in England’s best interests, and Author’s death caused a difficulty. It became desirable that young Henry, now the Prince of Wales, would marry his brother’s widow in order to maintain this alliance.

Marriage to Catherine of Aragon

It was no easy thing to get this marriage arranged. Catherine swore that her marriage to Prince Author had never been consummated-indeed, if it had, she could ever have married his brother according to the laws of the church. Fourteen months after Author’s death, Catherine was betrothed to the young Henry, then only eleven years of age, after the Pope had granted a dispensation. However, the King then lost interest in an alliance with Spain, and the marriage did not actually occur.

The marriage did not occur until 1509, seven years after betrothal. Henry, now 17 married Catherine at Westminster Abbey shortly after his father’s death. Shortly thereafter, he arrested his father’s two most unpopular ministers, who were groundlessly charged with high treason and executed. This tactic becomes a common one during Henry’s reign for dealing with those who stood his way.

Establishing a Church

Need for an heir

Over time, Henry became increasingly frustrated with Catherine’s inability to provide him with an heir. All of Catherine’s children died in infancy except their doughter Mary, who would later become queen and be known as Bloody Mary. In 1525, he became enamored with a lady of the court, Anne Boleyn. It became his desire to annul his marriage to Catherine and marry Anne, whom he believed would be able to provide him with a male heir. He attempted to get the annulment from the pope and was denied.

Breaking form the church

It would be eight years before Henry was able to marry Anne. His attempts to get through to the pope on legal grounds were unsuccessful. Eventually an act was passed in parliament, called the Supplication against the Ordinaries, which recognized that Henry had royal supremacy aver the church. This meant that the King now ruled the church and not the pope on British soil. Henry was finally able to have his wish, and married Anne on January 25,1533. Henry was 42.

Marriages

Henry the 8th is also known for his numerous marriages, which also shaped the religious views and lead to great religious strife during and after his reign. His desire to marry who he wanted, when he wanted, and his obsession with gaining a male heir, were the foundation for much bloodshed after his reign.

Six wives

During his reign, Henry would marry six different women, and depart from them in various ways. Using stealth, executions, and new church laws, Henry was able to flout all law and tradition to get what he wanted. Ironically, when all was said and done, he was still unable to provide a lasting a male heir to the English throne.

Catherine Of Aragon

Catherine was known as the most beloved of all henry’s wives by the people. She married Henry after his brother Author died. In the years the followed , she was not able to provide him with a male heir. She was eventually banished and her marriage of 24 years over a technicality which eventually lead to the split of the Catholic and Anglican churches. This also branded their one surviving daughter, Mary, as a bastard child. Catherine died in 1536.

Anne Boleyn

Anne married Henry in 1533, when he was 42f years old. She was able to quickly become pregnant and provide him with a second living heir, Elizabeth. Henry was very upset by the gender of his new child, and was soon paying court to Jane Seymour, another woman in the court. By 1536, despite all that he had gone through to wed Anne, he was having her investigated for treason. She was beheaded on the 19th of May that same year.

Jane Seymour

Jane bears the distinction of being the only wife of henry who actually did bear him a male heir. The act, however, took her life. Henry married her only ten days after the execution of his previous wife, Anne. Jane, a devout Catholic, was noted for her attempts to reconcile her husband with his daughter Mary and restore her as heir. She bore her son Edward in October 1537, and died herself only a few days later. Henry waited three years before he married again. His son, unfortunately, died before he was able to become king.

Anne of Cleves