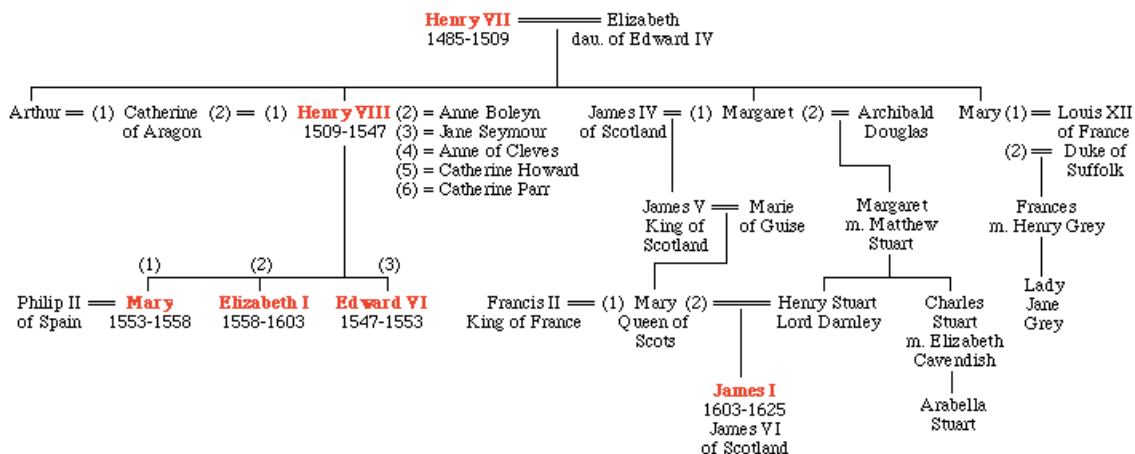




The House of Tudor

by Ed Stephan

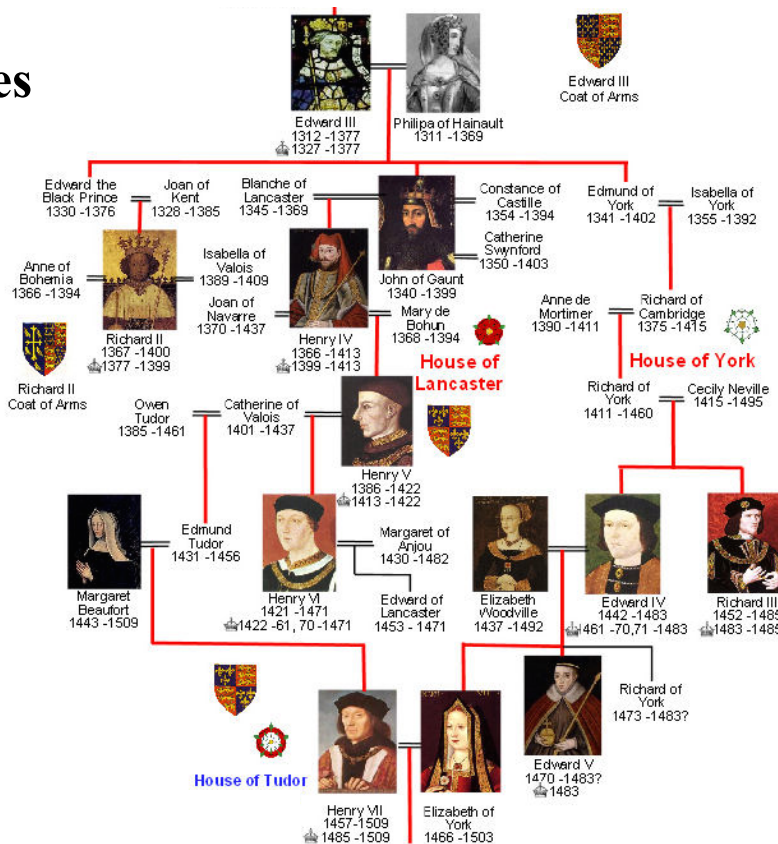


The Wars of the Roses

1455-1487

In 1455 Richard, Duke of York challenged the right to the throne of Lancastrian King Henry VI, a pious but weak king prone to bouts of insanity. Thirty years of civil war ensued in the struggle for the English crown between these two families.

Richard, Duke of York, argued that Henry IV's descendants had no right to the throne because Henry IV usurped the position unlawfully.





The House of York

The White Rose of York



Families in the North of England who descended from the House of York were members of the Yorkist faction, led by Richard, Duke of York, and his son Edward.



When Richard died in 1460, his son Edward became the leader of the York forces.

Edward became King Edward IV in 1461 when Henry VI fled the country for nine years.



In 1464 Edward secretly married Elizabeth Woodville. The marriage infuriated Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. In alliance with Margaret of Anjou, Warwick forced Edward to flee England.

The House of Lancaster

The Red Rose of Lancaster



Henry IV's descendants and their supporters were the Lancastrian faction.



The Lancaster faction was led by Queen Margaret of Anjou, the wife of the King of England, Henry VI.



Henry VI returned in 1470 with an army and briefly regained the throne, but Edward IV raised a large army in the Netherlands and wrestled power away from Henry VI again, defeating the Yorkist forces and killing the Earl of Warwick.

Princes in the Tower

Edward IV ruled England without challenge from 1471 to his death in 1483.

Upon Edward IV's death, his brother Richard was named Lord Protector of the realm for Edward's son and successor, the 12-year-old King Edward V.

Before the young king could be crowned, however, his father's marriage to his mother Elizabeth Woodville was declared invalid, making their children illegitimate and ineligible for the throne.



Richard then declared himself King Richard III as the next Yorkist in line for the throne. However, while he had strong support in the northern regions of England, many southerners were outraged by the (presumed) murders of the young princes in the tower.

Richard III then began his reign. The young princes were not seen in public again, and accusations circulated that the boys had been murdered on Richard's orders.



Battle of Bosworth Field

1485

The new leader of the Lancastrian forces, Henry Tudor, an obscure Welsh prince, led the house of Lancaster as it continued its warfare against Richard III.

The Tudors had blood-ties to the House of Lancaster, and Henry Tudor had a strong claim to the throne (especially since most of the major Lancastrian and Yorkist candidates had killed each other during the previous thirty years of warfare!).



King Richard III v. Henry Tudor

The struggle ended at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 when the Lancastrian faction won a decisive victory.

Richard was slain during the battle by with a blow to the head from major Welsh landowner Rhys ap Thomas.

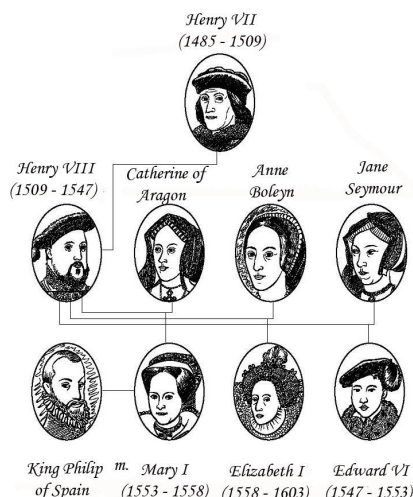
The Yorkist army melted away, while Richard was killed

The Tudor Dynasty Begins

Henry Tudor declared himself King Henry VII, King of England.

In the first few years of his reign, Henry VII eliminated all his rivals and married Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth to strengthen his descendant's claim to the throne.

The marriage was a brilliant move politically; Elizabeth carried matrilineally the Yorkist claim to the throne, and Henry carried patrilineally the Lancastrian claim to the throne: Henry VII's children would have both Yorkist and Lancastrian blood.



Their son became Henry VIII, and he in turn fathered Queen Elizabeth I, the illustrious monarch who ruled during Shakespeare's early career.

The House of Tudor ruled England and Wales until 1603.



The Tudor Rose combined the Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York.