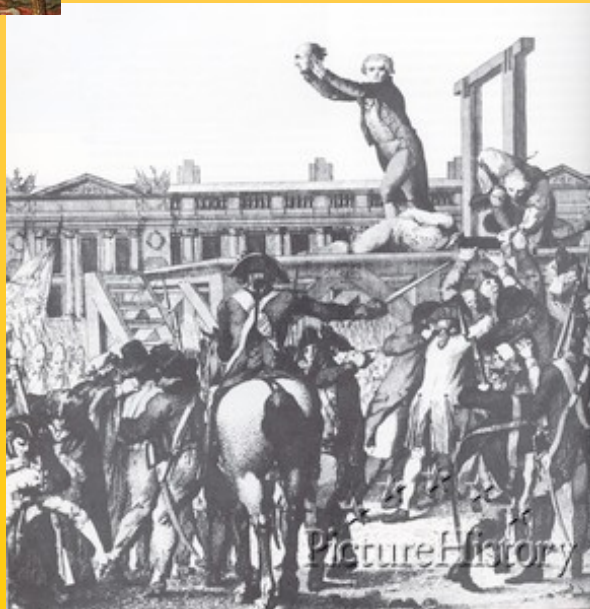


Absolute Monarchs of France

The Bourbons 1589 – 1789



Henry of Navarre, Henry IV the first of the Bourbon Dynasty in France



- Twenty-one years old when he assumed the throne
- Converted to Catholicism to preserve the peace between Catholic and French protestants (Huguenots)
- Issued the Edict of Nantes, a peace between Huguenots and Catholics in France and enforced by the king
- Restored the French monarchy to a position of power
- Assassinated in 1610

Louis XIII



- Young son of Henry IV and Maria de Medici, becomes king
- Appoints Catholic Cardinal Richelieu to run the affairs of state

Cardinal Richelieu



- Had been head of the Catholic Church in France
- As minister to Louis XIII he in effect became the ruler of France
- Weakened the protestant Huguenots by outlawing their armies and walled cities
- Outlawed nobles' private armies
- Increased the power of the government by hiring government agents from the middle class
- Wanted France to be the strongest state in Europe
- Efforts of Henry IV and Richelieu paved the ways for France's most powerful ruler, Louis XIV

Louis XIV Boy King 1643 -1715



- Became King at age 14 after the death of his father Louis XIII in 1643
- Was aided by Richelieu's successor Cardinal Mazarin
- Mazarin protected the young king from threats from the nobles

Louis XIV the “Sun King”




- Cardinal Mazarin died in 1661 and 21-year-old Louis took control of France
- Decreased the power of the nobles
- Increased the power of the central government through the use of agents who collected taxes and administered justice
- Devoted to helping France attain economic, political, and cultural superiority
- 1685 - canceled the Edict of Nantes and Huguenots fled the country
- Spent vast sums to surround himself with luxury
- Constructed the vast palace of Versailles
- Was a patron of the arts

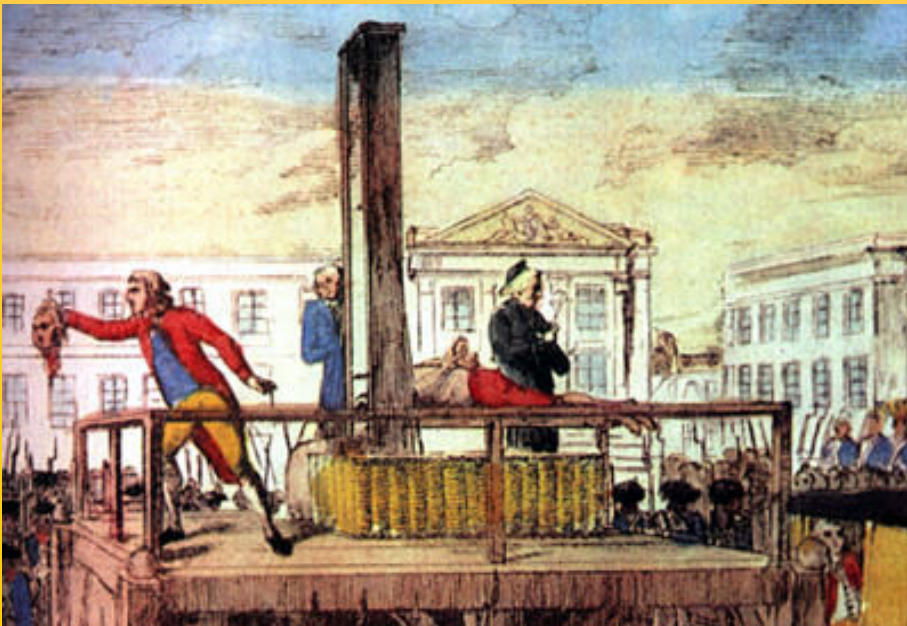
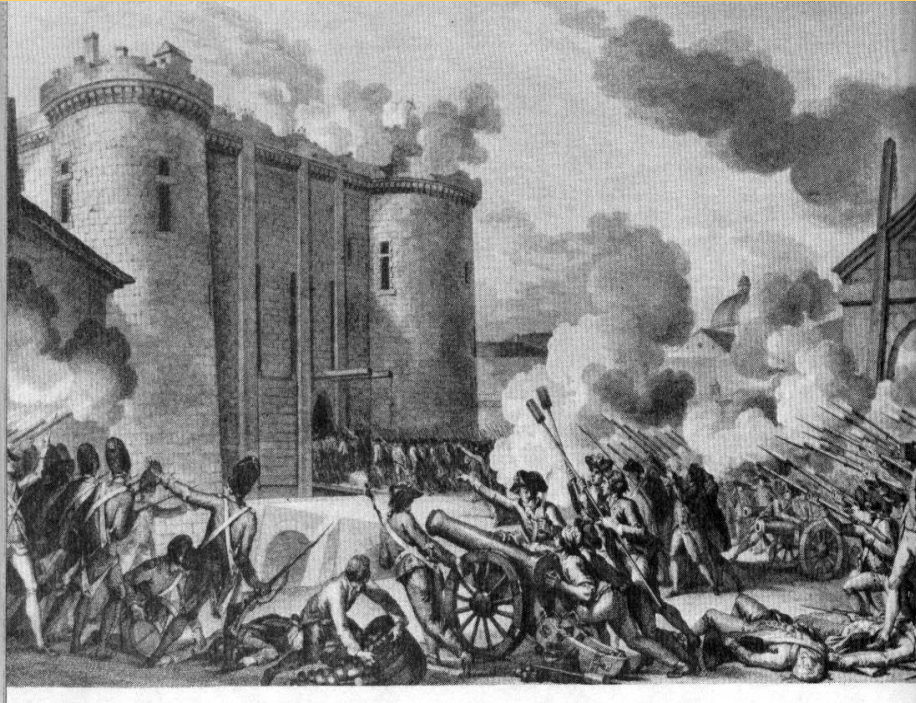
Louis XIV Problems



- 1660 France was a country of 20 million and the most powerful in Europe
- Attempted to extend France into the Netherlands
- Imposed new taxes to finance the wars
- War of Spanish Succession further drained France of money
- France was left in debt due to high cost of wars and Louis' life of luxury

 *War of the Spanish Succession. The great British victories in this war were in the Spanish Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire and they established Britain as a great power.*

Louis XVI



- Grandson and successor of Louis XV
- He was 20 when he took the throne in 1770
- He was married to Marie Antoinette, daughter of the empress Maria Theresa
- Recalled the old parliament in 1774
- Faced the same problems of : war costs, debt, deficit, new taxes, and resistance from parliament
- Nobility had regained power
- Called for Estates General to meet in 1789 at Versailles
- Closed the Estates General and in protest the National Assembly was formed
- In a dispute between the nobles and the commoners, he sided with the nobles
- Louis XVI failed to exert his powers to restore order in France
- Economic depression, food shortages, and political turmoil quickly led to the French Revolution
- The French people hated Marie Antoinette, his Austrian wife
- Louis XVI and his wife Marie were both executed by guillotine, Louis on January 21, 1793, Marie on October 16, 1793.