

A List of Louies, Part 1

Numerically you might wonder, which Louis was Saint Louis, who reigned as King of France? And which Louis was the French monarch in 1682 when Louisiana was claimed for France by LaSalle? Which Louis was King of France when New Orleans was founded in 1718? And which one lost his head during the French Revolution? You can't tell which Louies were "players" without a scorecard. What follows is a fascinating and informative rundown.

Louis I (778 – June 20, 840) was known as **Louis the Pious, the Fair, and the Debonaire**. Makes you wonder, how can one be both pious and debonaire? He reigned as King of the Franks and co-emperor with his larger-than-life dad, Charlemagne, from 813. The only surviving adult son of Charlemagne and Hildegard, he was also King of Aquitaine from 781. After his father died in 814, Louis I became the sole ruler of the Franks until his death, except for the period 833–34, during which time he was deposed.

As for debonaire, it didn't mean he was a charming ladies' man, but "of good disposition" (*de bon aire*), from whence came the Old French *debonaire*.



Charlemagne and Louis I

Louis II, the Stammerer

Louis II (November 1, 846 – April 10, 879), known as **Louis the Stammerer** (in French: **Louis le Bègue**), was the eldest son of Charles the Bald and Ermentrude of Orléans. He reigned as King of Aquitaine and later King of the West Franks (877), though he was never crowned Emperor. Physically frail, he outlived his father by only two years.

Louis III (863/65 – August 5, 882) was King of West Francia from 879 until his death in 882. The eldest son of Louis II and his first wife Ansgarde of Burgundy, he ruled jointly with Carloman II, his younger brother, who became the sole ruler of West Francia when Louis died after fracturing his skull while on horseback. He was pursuing a girl who was running to seek refuge in her father's house, but hit his head on the lintel of a low door and mortally fell. The year before, however, Louis III did have a great victory over raiding Vikings (881).



Louis III battles Viking raiders at the Battle of Saucourt-en-Vimeu.

Louis IV (September 920/921 – September 10, 954), who was called **d'Outremer** or **Transmarinus** (both meaning "from across the sea, or overseas"), reigned as King of West Francia from 936 to 954. A member of the Carolingian Dynasty, as were Louis I, II and III before him, he was the only son of Charles the Simple (Charles III) and his second wife Eadgifu of Wessex. The epithet "Simple" does not mean simple-minded or slow but referred to the king's habit of being honest and straightforward.

Louis V (c. 966 – May 21, 987), also known as **Louis the Do-Nothing** (*Louis le Fainéant* in French), was the King of West Francia for a very short period, from 986 until his death only a year later. The nobility essentially ruled the country, hence his “Do-Nothing” moniker.

Dying childless, Louis V’s reign brought to an end the Carolingian Dynasty, which began with and was named for Charles Martel (c. 688 – October 22, 741) in the 7th century. Before the Carolingian Dynasty, the Franks were ruled by the Merovingian dynasty.

Now a new dynasty would rule France. After the death of Louis V, Hugh Capet, was elected by the nobility as king of France. The Capetian Dynasty, or the male-line descendants of Hugh Capet (c. 939 - 996), ruled France continuously from 987 to 1792 and again from 1814 to 1848.



Louis VI, the Fat



Louis VII, the Young

Louis VI (c. 1081 – August 1, 1137), called **the Fat** (French: *le Gros*) or **the Fighter** (French: *le Batailleur*), ruled as King of the Franks from 1108 to 1137, the fifth French monarch from the House of

Capet. This warrior king made a lasting contribution to the centralizing institutions of royal power, spending most of his reign battling either the "robber barons" who plagued Paris or the Norman kings of England. Still, Louis VI succeeded in reinforcing his power and becoming one of the first truly strong kings of France since Charlemagne. Despite his fighting acumen, corpulence became a challenge for him and affected his ability to lead his men in the field. He also needed to be carried about on a litter or in special carriages.

Louis VII (1120 – September 18, 1180), was married to Eleanor of Aquitaine before she wed Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou. King of the Franks from 1137 to 1180, and sixth from the House of Capet, Louis VII was known as **the Young** (French: **le Jeune**). Eleanor was one of the most powerful and wealthiest women in western Europe during the High Middle Ages, and their marriage temporarily extended Capetian territory all the way to the Pyrenees, but the marriage was annulled in 1152 after no male heir was produced after fifteen years of marriage.

Henry became King of England two years after his marriage to Eleanor, and to him she conveyed Aquitaine and produced five sons, three of whom became kings. Henry's efforts to preserve and expand the holdings of the English Crown were just the beginning of a long rivalry between France and England.

Louis VII's reign saw the founding of the University of Paris and losses during the ill-fated Second Crusade. Construction of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, the historic medieval Gothic cathedral on the *île de la Cité*, began in 1163. It was not completed until 1345 and suffered a major fire recently on April 15, 2019. Louis's troops were defeated by the Turks (January 6, 1148), but the French king survived by climbing up upon a rock. The Turks failed to recognize him and therefore just ignored him. He lived for another three decades and died in 1180, and was succeeded by his son Philip II.

Louis VIII (September 5, 1187 – November 8, 1226), son of Philip II of France and Isabelle of Hainault, reigned only three years. After fighting in the First Barons' War of 1215-17 against King John of England (Eleanor and Henry's son), he earned the epithet **the Lion** for his military prowess. After his victory at the Battle of Roche-au-Moine in 1214, he invaded southern England and was proclaimed "King of England" in London by rebellious barons on June 2, 1216. He was never crowned and later renounced his claim. He and his wife,

Blanche of Castille, however, were the parents of a saint: Louis IX, King of France.

Louis IX (April 25, 1214 –August 25, 1270), known as **Saint Louis, King of France**, is definitely a Louis to remember. He was also the ninth French monarch from the House of Capet. St. Louis, Missouri, and the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans bear his name.



Louis IX, St. Louis, King of France St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans

Louis was not yet a teen when he was crowned king in 1226 upon the death of his father, Louis VIII. His mother, Blanche of Castile, became Regent. Louis assumed the throne in his own right in 1234, most historians concede, the year of his marriage to Marguerite of Provence by whom he would father eleven children. France's only king-made-saint (canonized in 1297), Louis led the Seventh Crusade to the Holy Land in 1248-1250 and became ill and died on another crusade near Tunis on August 25, 1270.

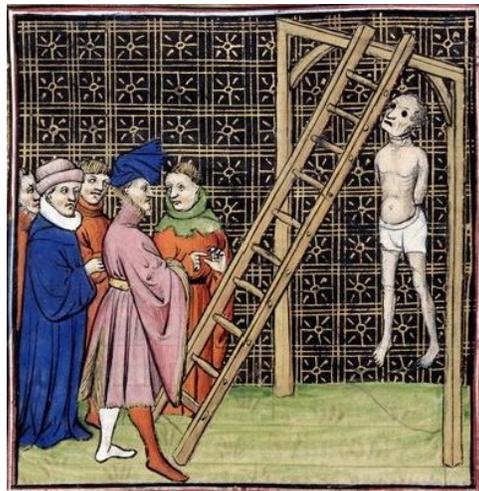
A follower of St. Francis of Assisi, this humble and pious man's life was devoted not only to statesmanship but also to charitable works, fasting, prayer and penance. Revered as a great lawgiver, Louis instituted the *curia regis* (or court of the king), which was a fully organized court of justice. The king was also a patron of Gothic architecture and art, and this influence permeated throughout Europe.

Sainte Chappelle, an architectural masterpiece with stunning stained-glass windows, was built during the reign of Saint Louis, and it was under his patronage that the *Collège de la Sorbonne* was founded and became the seat of the theological faculty of Paris.

Saint Louis is the patron saint of builders and parenthood, but you probably didn't know that he is also the patron saint of barbers, hairdressers and lacemakers, and is also honored as a saint in the Anglican Church.

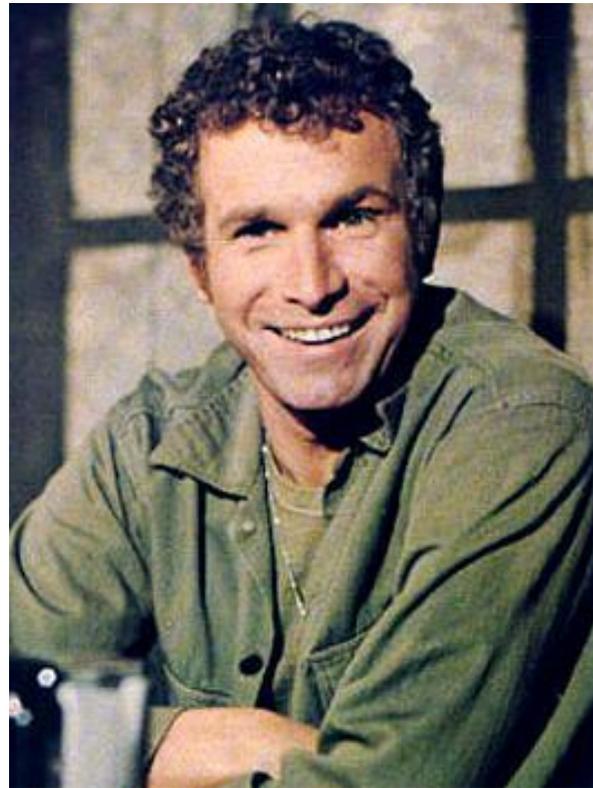
Louis X (October 4, 1289 – June 5, 1316) could be disagreeable. Called **the Stubborn** (French: **le Hutin**), **the Quarrelsome** or **the Headstrong**, Louis X was King of France from 1314 until his death (and twelfth from the House of Capet). After the death of his mother, Joan I of Navarre, he became Louis I, King of Navarre, from 1305 until his death in 1316.

The brief reign of Louis X was marked by baronial unrest that was already serious during the reign of his father, Philip the Fair. Louis dismissed and imprisoned many of his father's unpopular ministers and advisers. Enguerrand de Marigny (1260 - 1315), the Grand Chamberlain of France, was accused of receiving bribes, as well as other charges, and was to be banished; but Charles of Valois, Louis's uncle, brought a charge of sorcery against Marigny and convinced the king to have this unfortunate minister executed.



*Enguerrand de Marigny executed by hanging,
from the Chroniques de France ou de St Denis*

Yes, that's the same Marigny family that made its way to New Orleans, as in the "Faubourg Marigny". A Norman family of the smaller baronage called *Le Portier*, it took the name of Marigny about the year 1200. French-Creole *bon vivant*, politician, duelist and real estate developer, Bernard de Marigny (1785 - 1868) was the son of Pierre Enguerrand Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville (1751 - 1800), *Ecuyer* and *Chevalier de St. Louis*, who also had Enguerrand in his name. Bernard not only developed the Faubourg Marigny and founded the city of Mandeville on the Northshore (1834), but he also served as President of the Louisiana State Senate. Actor Wayne Rogers (1933 - 2015), who played "Trapper" John in the television series M*A*S*H, was Bernard's great, great, great grandson.



Bernard de Marigny and great, great, great grandson, Wayne Rogers

The Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis (*Chevalier de St. Louis*), to which Bernard de Marigny's father belonged, is a chivalric order founded in 1693 by King Louis XIV (more on him shortly), and named after Saint Louis, King of France. It was intended as a reward for exceptional officers.

Louis X instituted a program whereby serfs could buy their freedom (which was the first step towards the abolition of serfdom), abolished slavery and readmitted French Jews into the kingdom.

Totally bypassing The Hundred Years' War, we come to:

Louis XI (July 3, 1423 – August 30, 1483), called **Louis the Prudent**, who did not take the throne until 145 years after the death of the previous King Louis. The Hundred Years' War was a series of conflicts that actually lasted more than 100 years. These battles were waged from 1337 to 1453 by the Plantagenet kings of England against the French House of Valois. There were no French Kings named Louis during this long period, a time in which another French saint, Joan of Arc, entered the field of battle, only to be executed by burning on May 30, 1431.



Louis XI the Prudent and Louis XII, Kings of France

Louis XI, King of France from 1461 to 1483, was the sixth French monarch from the House of Valois (which began with Philip VI in 1328). The House of Valois was a cadet branch of the Capetian

dynasty, i.e, male-line descendants through a monarch or patriarch's younger sons (cadets). Louis XI succeeded his father, Charles VII, but not without some drama.

Louis entered into open rebellion against his *cher père* in a short-lived revolt in 1440 and was banished from court. Upon his father's death in 1461, Louis began to consolidate power. His aptitude for intrigue earned him the epithets **the Cunning** (or **le rusé**) and **the Universal Spider** (***l'universelle aragne***) for his skill at spinning webs of plots and conspiracies.

One adversary, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, died in 1477, and the dynasty of the dukes of Burgundy died out. Louis took advantage of this situation to seize a number of Burgundian territories. Without any direct foreign threats and by eliminating his rebellious vassals, Louis was able to expand royal power and strengthen his country's economic development. Upon his death in 1483, Louis XI was succeeded by his minor son, Charles VIII. During the reign of Charles VIII and his successor, The explorer Christopher Columbus made four trips across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain: in 1492, 1493, 1498 and 1502. Charles died in 1498 without a closer heir than his cousin, Louis of Orléans, who took the throne as Louis XII.

Louis XII (June 27, 1462 – 1 January 1, 1515), the eighth French king from the House of Valois, was the son of Charles, Duke of Orléans, and Maria of Cleves. He not only reigned as King of France from 1498 to 1515, but he was also King of Naples from 1501 to 1504.

Before becoming king, Louis was a strong feudal lord who opposed the French monarchy in the conflict known as the Mad War. Louis was captured in battle in 1488, but Charles VIII pardoned him and released him. Louis later took part in the Italian War of 1494-1498 as one of the French commanders.

Although he arrived late (and unexpectedly) to the throne, Louis was a vigorous monarch, who reformed the French legal system, lowered taxes and improved the workings of the government. To offset the revenues lost by decreasing taxes, Louis reduced the pensions for the nobility and for foreign princes. To do this effectively he had to be skillful in managing his nobility, which included the powerful Bourbon faction. He was also successful in his efforts to curb corruption in the law. But when it came to Spain, Louis faced a powerful new coalition gathered by Ferdinand II of Aragon and was forced to cede Naples to Spain in 1504.

Having married twice before, Louis (in 1514) married the much younger Mary Tudor of England, sister of Henry VIII. He died the following year without a male heir. The French throne next went to Louis XI's cousin (and son-in-law), Francis, from the Angoulême cadet branch of the House of Valois.

Almost a century went by before another Louis took the throne. This new monarch, Louis XIII, was from the House of Bourbon. Although it sounds like a nightspot in the French Quarter, the House of Bourbon was in fact a significant European royal house, a branch of the Capetian dynasty.

The royal Bourbons had their origins in 1272, when the youngest son of Saint Louis, King of France (Louis IX), married the heiress of the lordship of Bourbon. The house continued for three centuries as a cadet branch until 1589 when Henry III died and the House of Valois became extinct in the male line.

Under Salic law, the head of the House of Bourbon became the next King of France as Henry IV. Baptized as a Catholic but reared as a Protestant by his mother, Henry is famous for saying:

"Paris vaut bien une messe" ("Paris is well worth a mass"), although there is some doubt whether he actually said this.

Henry permanently renounced Protestantism and became a Roman Catholic — in order to obtain the French crown. This did not sit well with the Huguenots, nor with his former ally Queen Elizabeth I of England. Henry ruled France from 1589 to 1610. There were many attempts on his life and was finally killed on May 14, 1610, not by a Protestant but by a Catholic fanatic.

After his assassination, Henry's second wife and widow, Marie de' Medici, served as Regent for their nine-year-old son, Louis XIII, until 1617, when he came of age.

Louis XIII (September 27, 1601 – May 14, 1643) was the first Louis to rule France from the House of Bourbon. His reign lasted from 1610 to 1643, and he was also King of Navarre (as Louis II) from 1610 to 1620, when the crown of Navarre was merged with the French crown.

Mother and Regent Marie de' Medici mismanaged the kingdom through ceaseless political intrigues involving her Italian favorites, which led

the young king to take power in 1617 by exiling his mother and executing her followers.

Beginning in 1624, Cardinal Richelieu played a major role in Louis XIII's reign and determined France's direction over the course of the next eighteen years. This resulted in Louis XIII becoming one of the first examples of an absolute monarch. The Cardinal, Louis and his wife, Anne of Austria, became central figures in Alexandre Dumas *père's* novel, *The Three Musketeers*. In real life, the crown successfully intervened in the Thirty Years' War against the Hapsburgs, and across the Atlantic in New France (Canada) a peaceful coexistence was promoted between the colonists and native American Indians. The development of Acadia in what is present-day Nova Scotia took place during the reign of Louis XIII. The descendants of these Acadian colonists would later become a vital part of "Cajun" South Louisiana.



Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu

In 1635, Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu founded the *Académie Française*, the pre-eminent council for matters concerning the French language. The *Académie* consists of forty members, known informally as *les immortels* (the immortals).

Louis greatly influenced men's fashion by introducing the wearing of wigs in 1624. This style would be dominant among European men and men in European-influenced countries for nearly 200 years until the fashion changes brought about by the French Revolution.

Louis XIII died in Paris on May 14, 1643, the 33rd anniversary of his father's death. His four-year-old son, Louis XIV, would begin a long reign as the next French king and transform France into a dominant European power.

Next week: **A List of Louies, Part 2**

NED HÉMARD

New Orleans Nostalgia
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