

## The War of Spanish Succession to the War of Austrian Succession

### H1039

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#### Activity Introduction

Hey there. Today we're going to be taking a look at Europe during the Seventeenth...and Eighteenth Centuries. There was a lot going on during this time, with different countries making alliances...and other countries making war. And today we'll be focusing on two major turning points: The War of Spanish Succession aaaaaaaand The War of Austrian Succession.

During this period, you'll notice there was a lot of switching teams going on. One moment, a country would be on one side, theeeeeeeen, years later they'd move over to the other. {beat} Keeping up with who was with whom could get to be tricky at times, buuuuuut we'll get that all sorted out.

#### Video 1 – Introduction

Now, to begin our study of the War of Spanish Succession, let me start by talking to you about something that can cause a looooot of unneeded complications in your life. It's called "marrying your relatives."

Half-brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews...Yeah, it's happened—And MORE than once! You don't believe me...well just go ahead and take a look back in time at some of the European leaders from the eighteenth century. Trust me. You'll find a few.

You see, the War of Spanish Succession had a lot to do with the fact that European rulers just loooooooved marrying off their kids to relatives.

And while forcing your kid to marry a great uncle...ooooor a second cousin, may have been a great way to create an alliance...it also made for some pre-ty confusing times. Not to mention what it did to the royal gene pool. Buuuuuut let's save that for another time.

Right now, let's get a better understanding of the circumstances and events that led up to the War of Spanish Succession, but I'll go ahead and warn you...pay close attention, cause it's kind of a doozy. Alright, here we go...

## **Video 1**

The death of Charles II of Spain in 1700 led to a war that included not only the major European powers, but also their colonies. It was common practice for European royal families to intermarry in order to create alliances. For this reason, most European rulers were related to one another, some more distantly than others. For example, King Louis XIV of France and Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I were married to the daughters of King Philip IV of Spain. King Philip IV was married to the sister of Leopold I. When there was no clear heir to a throne, it often caused chaos among the many surviving relatives.

Such was the case with Charles II of Spain. Charles II, the only son of Philip IV, ruled the Spanish kingdom including Spain and dominions in Italy, the low-countries, present-day Belgium, and the Netherlands and America. Charles II, who was both mentally and physically ill, could not produce an heir. Louis XIV and Leopold I had equally strong claims to the throne for their descendents. They both had Spanish wives, and their mothers had been Spanish Habsburg princesses. Louis's son, Louis le Grand Dauphin, appeared to be the most direct and legitimate heir to the Spanish throne; however, since he was next in line to the French throne, it would have upset the balance of power in Europe if Spain and France were united under one King. Joseph Ferdinand, Leopold's grandson, emerged as a strong contender for the Spanish throne, because he was neither a Habsburg nor a Bourbon, so his rule would not upset the balance of power.

The issue of Spanish succession became even more critical as the War of the Grand Alliance came to a close in 1697. That conflict had pitted France against the combined forces of England, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden. At the end of the war, England and France signed a treaty without consulting the Spanish. It acknowledged Joseph Ferdinand as heir to the Spanish throne. Charles II agreed to

make Joseph Ferdinand his heir, but he disregarded the breakup of the Spanish Empire. In 1699, a treaty became unnecessary because of the death of Joseph Ferdinand. England and France drew up a second treaty. This one assigned the Spanish throne to Archduke Charles, the younger son of Leopold I, and awarded Italy and Lorraine to France. In 1700, Charles II changed his will, leaving everything to Philip, Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis XIV. When he learned of this, Louis disregarded the treaty with England. When Charles died later that year, Louis proclaimed Philip, his grandson, to be Philip V, King of Spain. In 1701, William III, the King of England, was forced to recognize Philip as King of Spain. Although Louis XIV had placed his grandson on the Spanish throne, he continued to try to expand his power in Europe, so he cut England and Holland off from Spanish trade, threatening their commercial interests. William III negotiated a treaty with Austria, which gave Austria control of Spanish Italy and Spanish Netherlands, thus keeping those areas out of French control. In response, Louis XIV recognized the son of James II, the former King of England who had recently died in France, as the rightful English Monarch. This alienated England further, and gave William III a cause for war. Louis's actions prompted an alliance between England, Austria and the Dutch Republic, Prussia and Hanover on one side against France, Spain, Portugal, Bavaria and Cologne on the other.

The wars that were going on in Europe were not only about dynasties of each Empire, but also over territory and land. The chaos that occurred in the wake of determining the successor of the Spanish throne managed to reach the North American colonies of the warring European Empires.

### **Video 1 – Recap**

It was a common practice for the European royal families to intermarry in order to create alliances, and this sometimes caused chaos when there was no clear heir to a throne. That was the case when the mentally and physically ill Charles the Second of Spain was unable to produce an heir to the Spanish throne.

King Louis the Fourteenth of France and Leopold the First, the Holy Roman Emperor, had equally strong claims to the throne for their descendants.

Eventually a power struggle ensued over the Spanish throne ...which positioned imperial powers of France and Spain...against England and Austria along with various other European countries and provinces choosing sides. This power struggle spilled over into an all-out war: The War of Spanish Succession.

The fighting even spilled all the way over into the Americas. England and her colonies called the war by a different name: Queen Anne's War.

The results of this war impacted each of these regions in unique ways.

Those are just a couple of things to keep in mind about the War of Spanish Succession.

When you've got these, let me know and we'll move on. Or, if you'd like, I can go through this one more time.

### **Reading Passage 1 Introduction**

Alright, so you know all the sordid details that led to the War of Spanish Succession.

Well, now it's time to ask that all-important question...

What exactly happened in the war and how did it end? Well, let's take a look beneath the surface and see if we can get some answers.

To keep things simple, I've boiled it down to just the facts. It's short and sweet and by the end of it, you'll have all you need to know about the War of Spanish Succession.

Take a look...

### **Reading Passage 2 Introduction**

Okey dokey, so after the Treaty of Utrecht, the powers of Europe and many of their outlying colonies experienced some changes. Some won territory aaaaaand...some lost territory. England in particular gained quite a bit.

After Seventeen-thirteen, however, England laid low and rode the peace train for about twenty-five years. However...in Seventeen-forty, England got involved in another war of succession, except this time it had to do with the Austrian throne.

And guess what! England got to go toe-to-toe again with their best frienemy, France and, as you might have guessed, it too managed to spill over into the colonies. You'd think by now the European powers would know how to hold their warfare, but I guess not. Buncha drunks!!! And by "drunk," I mean, on power. Let's learn a bit more about the War of Austrian Succession.

## **Video 2 - Introduction**

Alright! So the war of Austrian Succession officially ended in Seventeen-forty eight with the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. But what exactly were the conditions of that interestingly named treaty? And what were the short-term and long-term effects of this treaty?

Well, let's find out....

## **Video 2**

The War of the Austrian Succession brought an end to longstanding diplomatic alliances in Europe. The aftermath of the war led to another worldwide conflict, the Seven Years' War.

The War of the Austrian Succession was officially ended by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. The terms of the treaty, negotiated mostly by France and England, returned wartime acquisitions to their pre-war status. France gave up the Austrian Netherlands and Dutch barrier towns and returned Madras, India to England. England returned Louisburg, Canada to France, and Austria returned northern Italian lands to Spain. In addition, England's trading rights with Spanish colonies, which had been guaranteed in 1713, were renewed, and Maria Theresa was recognized as the ruler of Austria. Silesia, which was a valuable wartime gain for Prussia, was to be returned to Austria. Silesia is a mineral rich area in present-day southwest Poland. Prussia refused to return it, ensuring another war. Because disputes between England and France regarding their colonies in Africa, India, the West Indies and North America remained unsettled, there was little chance for a lasting peace between the two

empires. The end of the War of the Austrian Succession also proved to be the end of several historical alliances, and this caused the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756.

The longstanding European alliances that had fought one another in conflicts dating back to the 1680s came to an end in 1756. The old system included alliances between England and Holland against France, Spain and Prussia on the side of France, Austria and, at times Russia, on the side of England. For the most part, the main conflict was between England and France, the two strongest of the imperial powers of the 18th century. After the War of the Austrian Succession, cracks started to appear in the old system of alliances. France and England continued to compete for the colonies as they had done since the late 16th century. England tried to gain support in Europe against France. Austria was not asked, having shown its weakness in the last war. England entered into an agreement with Prussia to avoid war in Germany. Prussia had proved its military might in the last war. In response, France broke its traditional alliance with Prussia. In 1756, Louis XV entered into an alliance with Maria Theresa of Austria, his previous enemy, to prevent attacks against each other and to defend against attacks from Prussia. This new Franco-Austrian alliance endured until the French Revolution. This new system of alliances became known as the Diplomatic Revolution. The end of the War of the Austrian Succession did not end the conflicts between the opposing sides, leaving the possibility of another war on the horizon. So what was the prelude to the Seven Years' War?

Well, because the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle returned wartime gains to pre-war status, the main powers were not satisfied with the outcome. England and France continued to compete for colonies in North America, India, West Indies, and Africa. The most threatening result of the war was Prussia's refusal to give Silesia back to Austria. Prussia, surrounded by Russia, Austria and France, believed they were planning to attack it, as in fact Austria was in order to get Silesia back.

The war of the Austrian Succession was fought all over the world. In North America, the conflict was called King George's War. Throughout the conflict, the Algonquin tribes tended to support the French, while the formally neutral Iroquois maintained close ties to Britain. Many of these alliances would be sustained during the French and Indian

War, which was the North American part of the Seven Years' War. The War of the Austrian Succession led to new alliances, but left many longstanding conflicts, especially those between Britain and France, unresolved. In North America, the conflicts ultimately concerned who would control the continent. The French and Indian War would answer that question.

## **Video 2 – Recap**

As a result of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Marie Theresa was recognized as the ruler of Austria.

The land of Silesia—which Prussia had snagged—was to be returned to its previous owner: Austria.

BUUUUUUT nothing's ever that easy, and Prussia went against the treaty and refused to return Silesia, and that ended up laying the groundwork for another war.

Also, it didn't help that many of the colonial disputes between France and England still remained unsettled.

So most of the European powers weren't exactly happy with the terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

As a result of the War of Austrian Succession, many cracks in the old alliance system of Europe began to form, which led to new alliances among different political powers, and THIS in turn led to the diplomatic revolution of seventeen-fifty-six.

And while the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was intended to solve the problems of one conflict...it would be only eight years before this discontent in Europe would lead to a new conflict. Another war. The Seven Years' War.

## **Reading Passage 1 Thought Bubble**

Marie Theresa was the mother of Marie Antoinette. You know, the queen consort of France who lost her head to the guillotine during the French Revolution.