

The French Revolution

- Factors Leading to the French Revolution
- Life in France prior to the Revolution
- Timeline and Important Events

Background

Ancien Regime (former regime)

14th - 18th Century in France

Characterized by the Valois and Bourbon dynasties

Power in Monarchy, Clergy and Aristocracy.

Louis XVI, at the age of 20, became King of France. With his wife of 14, Marie Antoinette, he became the last absolute monarch of France.

Factors Leading to the French Revolution

- Enlightened Thought/ Criticism of the Gov't
- Acceptable for people to question authority
- Reasoning government/politics
- All of society started to move from a medieval point of view to more modern thought
- Salons – more organized groups discussing problems



- 2. The end of the absolute monarch and the Divine Right of Kings
- Louis XVI – R. 1774 – 1791 (Ancien Regieme) Married Marie Antoinette in 1770 at age 15 (she – 14)
- Ill equipped advisors suggested various unsuccessful financial solutions to France's problems
- Louis recalled Estates General to appease the people but unsuccessful – French Revolution began June 1789
- Abolition of monarchy in 1792 – beheaded by the National Convention in 1793

3. Social Problems

- Urban vs rural
- Upper class vs peasants
 - Increase in poverty
 - Increase in taxes (from monarchy and feudal lords!) for peasants
 - Priests and nobles exempt – pay a tithe (usually 10%)
 - Very poor living conditions

4. American Revolutionary War..or the War of Independence

- 1775 – 1783 (July 4th 1776 – Independence Day)
- Began between 13 Colonies and Britain – Britain wanted the right to govern them without representation. Many European nations became involved
- 1778 – France joined to support the Americans. Revolution was supported by French – Enlightened activity!
- 1783 – Treaty of Paris ended the war
- France spent large sums of money spent on ARW.
- Dec. Of Rights of Man and Citizen (pg 182) was inspired by American Dec. Of Independence. Outlined goals of the French Revolution

Gin Lane (W. Hogarth) – What does this tell you about life in England in 18th C. ?



Disparity in France



TOILETTE DE COUR LOUIS XV.