The French Revolution and Napoleon
French Society Divided

• Ancien regime- old order, everyone in France was divided into one of three social classes

• Estates- social classes
  • Clergy: enjoy great wealth
  • Nobility: hold top government jobs
  • Rest of the population: is vastly diverse
The Clergy Enjoy Wealth

• The clergy enjoy great wealth and privilege
• Church owned about 10% of the land, collected tithe, and paid no direct taxes to the state
• Provided social services: ran schools, hospitals, and orphanages
Nobles Hold Top Government Jobs

• The titled nobility of French society held top jobs in government, the army, the courts, and the Church.

• At Versailles nobles competed for royal appointments.

• Many nobles hated absolutism and resented the royal bureaucracy that employed middle-class men.
Third Estate is Vastly Diverse

• Most diverse social class:
  • Bourgeoisie: middle class that included bankers, merchants, manufacturers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and professors
  • Rural peasants: made up the majority of the third class who were prosperous landowners, tenant farmers, or day laborers
  • Urban workers were the poorest members who worked as journeymen, apprentices, and cloth makers
Financial Troubles

• Deficit spending - government spends more money than it takes in
• National debt soared to where more than half the government’s income from taxes went to paying interest on the enormous debt
• Economic reform fails - Jacques Necker, financial expert, advised against extravagant spending and to reform government
• Estates-General - legislative body consisting of reps of the three estates
Louis XVI Calls the Estates-General

- Estates-General to meet in 1789 at Versailles
- Cahiers- notebooks, listing estates grievances
  - Fairer taxes, freedom of the press, and regular meetings of the Estates-General
- National Assembly who represented France
- Tennis Court Oath- “swore to never separate and to meet whenever the circumstances might require until we have established a sound a just constitution.”
Parisians Storm the Bastille

- 800 Parisians assembled outside the Bastille, which was a grim medieval fortress used as a prison for political and other prisoners.
- Mob broke through the gates and killed the commander and five guards and released a few prisoners who were being held there.
- Symbol to the people of France representing years of abuse by the monarchy.
Political Crisis Leads to Revolt

• The “Great Fear” spread of tales of attacks on villages and towns
• Other rumors said government troops were seizing peasant crops
• Angered peasants unleashed their fury on nobles who were trying to re-impose medieval dues
• Factions, dissenting groups of people
• Marquis de Lafayette- the aristocratic “hero of two worlds” who fought alongside George Washington in the American Revolution
Political Crisis Leads to Revolt

• Marquis de Lafayette’s National Guard was the first to don the tricolor—red, white, and blue badge that eventually became the national flag of France
The National Assembly Acts

• Nobles voted to end their own privileges; gave up manorial dues, exclusive hunting rights, special legal status, and exemption from taxes

• This action met a key Enlightenment goal—equality of all male citizens before the law

• Declaring of the Rights of Man- all French men were born and remain free and equal in rights
New Constitution

Constitutional monarchy
- New Legislative Assembly
- **Sans-culottes** ("those without knee breeches"), so named because they wore long trousers instead of the knee-length style of pants worn by the upper classes

Painting depicting the 1791 constitution
The Constitution

The National Guard

The Citizens of France
War With Austria

• War of the First Coalition: as a response to the Declaration of Pillnitz

• *Levee en masse*: involved conscription of all able-bodied men between 18 and 25 into the army, which grew to 800,000 by 1794. The *levee* represented the first mass draft of soldiers on the European continent.

Painting of the Battle of Valmy, 1792
The Radicals Take Over

- Paris mob stormed Tuileries (royal family)
- Louis and family seek aid of Legislative Assembly
- Arrested and deposed
The National Convention

• First met on September 21, 1792
• Revolutionary Calendar
• **Monarchy abolished; France officially becomes a republic**
• Factions: Jacobins vs. Girondins

A Jacobin club
Leaders in the National Convention

Jean-Paul Marat

Georges Danton
Robespierre

• Maximilien Robespierre who would come to symbolize much of the fanaticism of the French Revolution

• Head of the infamous Committee of Public Safety, he sought to have all of the ideals of the Revolution enforced

• Lawyer

• Radical

• Most controversial figure of the French Revolution
The Guillotine

• Dr. Joseph Guillotin
• Intended as a more humane method of execution
• Thousands guillotined during the French Revolution
Execution of the King

- On January 17, 1793, Louis XVI was convicted of treason.
- He went to the guillotine four days later on January 21, 1793.
The Committee of Public Safety

• Created to cease an internal rebellion in 1793
• Given dictatorial power
• Ruled France for nearly a year
The Reign of Terror

- July 1793–July 1794
- (93,000 Executions)
- Death of Robespierre

$93,000 / 365 = 255$ a day!!

The execution of Marie Antoinette
The Thermidorean Reaction

• Robespierre overthrown on 9 Thermidor
• Committee of Public Safety dismantled
• Jacobin clubs disbanded
• New constitution adopted in August 1795
• Executive branch known as the Directory

9 Thermidor meeting of the National Convention
The Directory

- Promoted middle class interests
- Financial crisis
- Food shortages
- Riots in Paris
- Rise of Napoleon

Cartoon depicting the errors and bad judgment of the Directory
The Revolutionary Period in France

- Mob invades royal palace: Aug. 1792
- September massacres take place: Sept. 1792
- National Convention abolishes the monarchy and establishes the French Republic: Jan. 1793
- Louis XVI is executed: Sept. 1793
- The Reign of Terror begins: July 1794
- The Reign of Terror ends: 1795
- Robespierre is arrested and executed: 1795
- Moderates write the Constitution of 1795
Napoleon Bonaparte

• Popularity rises after victories over the Austrians
• Conflict with Britain
• 1799 Coup d’etat
  (What does this mean?)
• The Consulate
Napoleon advances quickly through the military ranks

1802 Napoleon names himself consul for life then
1804, Emperor of the French.

He strengthens the central government and his
power and most people support him.
From 1804-1812 Napoleon creates a vast empire.

In 1812, he invades Russia and “Europe” makes an alliance against him and defeat him in Leipzig Germany.

Napoleon steps down in 1814 but returns in 1815 triumphly!

Oh well. 100 Days later he is CRUSHED at Waterloo by the British and Prussians. He leaves for good!
Legacies of the French Revolution

• End of absolutism
• Power of nobles ended
• Peasants became landowners
• Nationalism
• Enlightenment ideals
Napoleon Becomes Emperor

1804: Napoleon crowns himself emperor
Napoleon Bonaparte

Hero or Villain?
Megalomania

A psychopathological condition characterized by delusional fantasies of wealth, power, or all-knowing.

An obsession with grandiose or extravagant things or actions.
Successes of Napoleon

• Brought military successes against threats during revolutionary period. Began to believe he couldn’t be defeated
• Brought order to the country after 10 years of civil war
• Set forth the policies based on the Enlightenment ideals that would become the *Napoleonic Code*
Napoleon’s Successes and The Napoleonic Code

- Encouraged French Nationalism
- Public Schools
- Allowed people to keep land acquired during the revolution.
- Improved public roads and canals
- Strengthened central constitutional government
- Controlled prices and encouraged new industry
- Jobs based on talent
- Return of émigrés
- Peace with the Catholic Church
- Abolished feudalism
- Religious toleration
- Equality of all citizens - except women
Failures

• Encouraged the Nationalism of his foes
• Failed to make Europe a French empire
• Women lost rights
• Millions killed in battles
• Never captured England as he desired.
• Started doing “too much” which led to his ultimate defeat.
• Responsible for the return of the monarchy
Exiled the final time to St. Helens

• Was there 1815-1821
• Circumstances surrounding the death was suspicious
• Official cause—stomach cancer—his father had died of the same cancer
• History Mystery—Symptoms suggest poisoning—nothing ever proven.
• Buried on St Helens then in 1840 he was moved to Paris
Napoleon’s Final Resting Place
Les Invalides-Paris, France
Josephine
1762-1814

• From a rich family in the Caribbean
• Widowed by the guillotine—escaped herself by the fall of Robespierre
• Met Napoleon but was not impressed
• Married because it was the best thing to do for her and her kids.
• Kept partying!
She became the Empress of France

- Was not faithful until Napoleon threatened to throw her out. (she embarrassed him!!) Then she was but he wasn’t. Not very “normal” but they remained loyal and “in love until the end.” He wrote letter after letter—all very romantic.

- Napoleon divorced her because she couldn’t give him kids (1810—he married the daughter of the Austrian King)
• Josephine returned to Malmaison—her home with Napoleon after the divorce.
• She died of pneumonia.
• She is the grandmother of many kings and queens.
• Napoleon’s last words were supposed to be of her.

"France, the Army, the Head of the Army, Joséphine."

Not very romantic but...