

SSWH14: Analyze the Age of Revolutions



Element B: Identify the causes and results of the Haitian Revolution (1791)

Haitian Revolution (1791)

- ❑ The French Revolution spurred revolution in other parts of the world including in their colony Saint Domingue (Haiti).
 - Saint Domingue was the most valuable colony among France's overseas possessions. Slave based plantations produced sugar, cotton, indigo, and coffee.
- ❑ Like France on the verge of the Revolution, Saint Domingue's population was also deeply divided.
 - A small population of white plantation owners controlled the economy and government.
 - A slightly larger free mixed-race population called the gens de couleur constituted a middle class, most of which was of modest means.
 - The majority of the population was made up of African slaves.
- ❑ With the onset of the Revolution in France, the gens de couleur began to demand political equality.



Haitian Revolution (1791)

- ❑ Unrest between the white population and the gens de couleur created an opportunity for the slaves to rise in rebellion.
 - In 1791 Toussaint L'Ouverture, a former house slave, organized the slave rebellion into an effective fighting force that was able free all of the slaves on the island.
- ❑ Meanwhile in France, the National Convention abolished slavery in all of France's overseas possessions making the former slaves of Saint Domingue French citizens.
- ❑ Toussaint L'Ouverture was recognized by the French Republic as the leader of the colony.
- ❑ After Napoleon seized power in France and the radical reforms of the Revolution were undone he turned his attention to Saint Domingue.
 - France was in desperate need of money; Napoleon hoped to supply that money by reestablishing slavery in Saint Domingue.
 - In 1802 a French army invaded Saint Domingue but after two years of bloody conflict the French were defeated and Haiti declared itself an independent republic.



Haitian Revolution

- ❑ The Haitian Revolution had repercussions far greater than establishing the second independent republic in the Americas.
 - The final defeat of the French in 1804 sent a flood of white refugees to the United States.
 - These refugees spread the story of the successful slave revolt in Saint Domingue.
 - These stories bred fear among the slaveholding population of the American south, leading to new legislation strengthening the institution of slavery in America.
- ❑ The fear of slave rebellion also spread to the other islands of the Caribbean.
 - This fear greatly delayed independence movements in the island colonies as the white population feared that they would be unable to suppress a rebellion without the help of their mother country.
- ❑ The Haitian Revolution also caused the United States to double in size.
 - After Napoleon lost Haiti in 1804, he decided to raise the money he hoped to earn in Haiti by selling the Louisiana Territory to the United States.


