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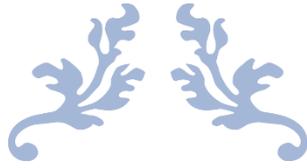


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**TO WHAT EXTENT WAS MARQUIS DE
LAFAYETTE, PRIOR TO 1834,
RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?**



NATIONAL HISTORY CHALLENGE: MAKING A BETTER WORLD

To what extent was Marquis de Lafayette, prior to 1834,
responsible for positive social change?



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Word count: 1956 words

Prior to 1834, Marquis de Lafayette was prominently responsible for positive social change. Given the title “hero of two worlds”¹ Lafayette disobeyed the orders of Louis XXVI to fight for freedom in the American Revolution. Furthermore, influenced by the ideals of the American Revolution Lafayette worked to abolish slavery in America. In addition, with his position in the French National Assembly Lafayette helped install positive social change. Lafayette’s influence on positive social reforms was also present when he incessantly campaigned for the right to religious freedom in France. However, while his influence was predominantly positive, Lafayette’s influence on society plummeted with his involvement in the Champ De Mars Massacre.

On “June 13th, 1777”² Marquis de Lafayette disobeyed the French government and journeyed to America to fight in the American Revolution. By defying the orders of King Louis XVI Lafayette became one of the key individuals who ensured the freedom of America from Britain’s rule. A significant instance of Lafayette’s military prowess in the fight for freedom was at the Battle of the Brandywine beginning “September 11th, 1777”³. Despite being Lafayette’s first battle, and suffering a bullet wound to the leg, the Frenchman “gallantly fought on and rallied the troops, facilitating an orderly retreat”⁴ of the troops that saved many lives. Lafayette’s heroics at the Brandywine, and his devotion to the cause earned him command of his own soldiers. This battle revealed Lafayette’s positive influence on American society, his presence contributing to the eventual freedom of the United States from European control. Months later at Valley Forge, during a reconnaissance mission gone wrong, Lafayette’s strategic thinking at the Battle of Barren Hill “saved many American lives”⁵. His military prowess was proven when he skilfully avoided “the entrapment and the destruction of his forces”⁶. Lafayette gained a considerable reputation as a symbol of the American concepts of fraternity and liberty. It must be acknowledged that the concepts of fraternity and liberty that Lafayette integrated into the fight for equality in France inspired a torrent of duplicity and bloodshed in the French revolution despite the French conflict ending in a democratic society. Following the battle Lafayette, was further honoured as the Pennsylvanian site was renamed from Barren to Lafayette Hill. Lafayette’s experiences at Barren

¹ Libertarianstvo.org. (n.d.). *Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <http://libertarianstvo.org/en/personalities/item/56-marquis-de-lafayette> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

² History.com. (2009). *Lafayette arrives in South Carolina*. [online] Available at: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lafayette-arrives-in-south-carolina> [Accessed 14 Aug. 2017].

³ History.com (2009). *The Battle of Brandywine begins* [online] History.com. Available at: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-battle-of-brandywine-begins> [Accessed 20 Aug. 2017].

⁴ Bluhm, R. (2017). *Battle of Brandywine*. [online] Encyclopedia Britannica. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-the-Brandywine> [Accessed 8 Aug. 2017].

⁵ Totallyhistory.com. (n.d.). *Battle of Barren Hill (May 20, 1778) Summary & Facts*. [online] Available at: <http://totallyhistory.com/battle-of-barren-hill/> [Accessed 7 Aug. 2017].

⁶ History.com. (2009). *Battle of Barren Hill, Pennsylvania - May 20, 1778*. [online] Available at: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/battle-of-barren-hill-pennsylvania> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

Hill marked a turning point in the Revolution. Considered the ultimate battle of the American Revolution, the Siege of Yorktown effectively “ended military operations in the American Revolution”⁷ as Lafayette witnessed the surrender of the British troops and the beginning of “peace negotiations”⁸. By witnessing the surrender of the British Lafayette envisioned the ideal of the oppressed triumphing over the oppressors, a concept he later brought back to France during the revolution. Lafayette’s desire for American freedom, signified by his participation in negotiations, was fulfilled when the Treaty of Paris, signed “September 3, 1783”⁹, recognized American Independence, a feat made possible by Lafayette’s unceasing efforts to aid his American compatriots. Lafayette’s involvement in the American Revolution aided him in considering the perspectives of the oppressed and allowed him to formulate views on the rights of man. Hence, Lafayette’s connection to the Revolution influenced positive social change regarding the freedom of America.

Lafayette’s influence in America was not contained to the Revolution itself, inspired by the paradigm of freedom the American Revolution proliferated, Marquis de Lafayette became a committed abolitionist of slavery in America. Communicating with his comrade George Washington, Lafayette proposed an experiment to commence the eradication of slavery. Lafayette understood political attitudes were against slavery’s termination as petitions submitted to the Assembly “could scarcely obtain a reading”¹⁰. He proposed they should “purchase land where Washington's slaves would then work as free tenants”¹¹. Among the first to instigate the process of undermining slavery in America Lafayette’s unprecedented view of emancipating the slaves was defined in a letter from Washington as “generous and noble proof of [Lafayette’s] humanity”¹². These enlightened views established Lafayette as a man of liberal beliefs, influencing social change with his courage to defy a system that was inherently disreputable. To conduct his experiment Lafayette “established a plantation in... [present day]

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Siege of Yorktown | United States history*. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Yorktown> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

⁸ History.com. (2009). *Siege of Yorktown - American Revolution*. [online] Available at: <http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/siege-of-yorktown> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

⁹ History.com. (2009). *Treaty of Paris - American Revolution*. [online] Available at: <http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/treaty-of-paris> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹⁰ Washington, G. (1786). *From George Washington to Lafayette, 10 May 1786*. [Letter] National Archives and Records Administration. [online] Available at: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-04-02-0051> **Original Source:** *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995, pp. 41–45

¹¹ The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington. (n.d.). *Marquis de Lafayette's Plan for Slavery*. [online] Available at: <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/marquis-de-lafayettes-plan-for-slavery/#note1> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹² Washington, G. (1786). *From George Washington to Lafayette, 10 May 1786*. [Letter] National Archives and Records Administration. [online] Available at: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-04-02-0051> **Original Source:** *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995, pp. 41–45

French Guiana”¹³ and ensured that along with receiving payment for the labour that they contributed “the sale of any slave was expressly forbidden [and that] ...schooling was provided”¹⁴ to all under his care. However, despite his efforts, Lafayette’s dream of the abolition of slavery was not accomplished till over a hundred years later, on “December 6, 1865”¹⁵ with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Nevertheless, Lafayette’s open-minded attitude towards the slaves was due to his belief in the rights of man, specifically the right to freedom which he continued to pursue as a member of an “international network of activists”¹⁶ and had a positive impact on the slaves he cared for and those who heard his opinions on the matter of slavery. Therefore, Lafayette’s attempts to abolish slavery, as a result of his progressive beliefs, influenced positive social change.

Additionally, Marquis de Lafayette influenced positive social change in France through his position in the National Assembly. By July 1789, following his return to France in 1785, Lafayette was one of the most prominent “members of the first stage of the revolution”¹⁷. Lafayette’s experiences with the American War of Independence had installed within him the ideals of “Liberty, Equality and the pursuit of happiness”¹⁸. French citizens began to revere Lafayette as the embodiment of freedom and liberty, his influence helping to shape the vision of a truly equal society. A staunch believer in the right to freedom and through that equality Lafayette “advocated for a governing body representing the three social classes”¹⁹. Lafayette’s patronage for “social and political reform”²⁰ increased in speed and visibility as he “joined the rebel deputies within the National Assembly”²¹. A major instance of positive social reform was the National Assembly’s creation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen which espoused the principles of “merit and utility over birth and privilege”²². Lafayette’s influence in the drafting of the Declaration is evident as it promotes the ideology that all “men are born and remain free and equal in rights”²³. Through his contributions to the National Assembly’s

¹³ The New Yorker. (n.d.) *A True Friend of the Cause: Lafayette and the Antislavery Movement*. [online] Available at: <http://www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/art/a-true-friend-of-the-cause-lafayette-and-the-antislavery-movement> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹⁴ Academic Museum. (2002). *Lafayette and Slavery - La Belle Gabrielle*. [online] Available at: <http://academicmuseum.lafayette.edu/special/specialexhibits/slaveryexhibit/onlineexhibit/gabrielle.htm> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹⁵ National Archives. (2016). *13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery*. [online] Available at: <https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/13th-amendment> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹⁶ Cornell University - Lafayette: Citizen of Two Worlds. (2017). *Lafayette The Abolitionist*. [online] Available at: <http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/lafayette/exhibition/english/abolitionist/index.html> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

¹⁷ Adcock, M. (2009). *Analysing the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, page 90.

¹⁸ Fenwick, J. and Anderson, J. (2010). *Liberating France*. 1st ed. Collingwood, Vic.: History Teachers' Association of Victoria, page 67.

¹⁹ Biography.com. (2015). *Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <https://www.biography.com/people/marquis-de-lafayette-21271783> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²⁰ PBS. (2006). *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution - America's Sweetheart: Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/faces/lafayette.html> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²¹ Fenwick, J. and Anderson, J. (2010). *Liberating France*. 1st ed. Collingwood, Vic.: History Teachers' Association of Victoria, page 79.

²² Adcock, M. (2009). *Analysing the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, page 104.

²³ Ergang, R. (1968). *Europe from the Renaissance to Waterloo*. 3rd ed. Boston: D. C. Heath Company, page 659.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, Lafayette both opposed the past inequality of the classes in France and established his personal beliefs of the right to freedom regardless of position in life. Thus, Lafayette was a considerable influence on the introduction of positive social reforms through his position on the National Assembly in France.

Furthermore, Lafayette's positive social influence was demonstrated when he incessantly appealed for the right to religious freedom, specifically Protestant, in France. As a staunch believer in the importance of freedom Lafayette's campaign to restore the right to religious autonomy was a significant aspect of his social influence. Lafayette's incessant promotion of social issues was instrumental in ensuring "religious freedom be granted to Protestants, Jews, and other non-Catholics"²⁴ throughout France. Lafayette's religious tolerance during the turmoil of the revolution proved that his "various philanthropic and humanitarian causes"²⁵ were a crucial factor in changing French society for the better. As the author of one of the first proposed Declarations of the Rights of Man and the Citizen Lafayette relied heavily only the philosophy of the right to religious expression, asserting his demands for freedom of faith "displeased...the priests of all sorts by claiming religious liberty"²⁶. Religion was a substantially important aspect of the French Revolution as it facilitated a rise in regulations surrounding the control of faith and worship. Lafayette's opposition of the established doctrines regulating religious practises influenced the introduction of positive social reforms. France underwent religious upheaval during the Revolution with the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy"²⁷ restricting the Church's influence and creating a schism between France's ruling body and the Catholic Church. Despite these restrictions Lafayette fought for what he called the "natural rights inherent in every society"²⁸ that an individual could not be deprived of, among these was religious tolerance. Therefore, Lafayette's influence regarding religious freedom was the cause of positive social change in French society.

However, while Lafayette's influence on social change was predominantly positive, as the French Revolution progressed public opinion of him began to decline, aided by his role in the Champ De

²⁴ Lafayette College. (n.d.). *The Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <https://about.lafayette.edu/mission-and-history/the-marquis-de-lafayette/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²⁵ Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia. (1996). *Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/marquis-de-lafayette> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²⁶ BrainyQuote. (n.d.). *Marquis de Lafayette Quotes*. [online] Available at: <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marquisdel740886.html> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Civil Constitution of the Clergy | France*. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Civil-Constitution-of-the-Clergy> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

²⁸ Powell, J. (1997). *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds*. *Foundation for Economic Education*. [online] Available at: <https://fee.org/articles/lafayette-hero-of-two-worlds/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

Mars massacre. On “July 17th, 1791”²⁹ at the Champ de Mars Parisians gathered to sign a petition to depose King Louis XVI. Originally intended as a peaceful protest of the royal family the situation escalated to violence when the crowd “turned on two suspicious individuals and prepared to murder them”³⁰. Jean-Sylvain Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, decided to “call out a battalion of the National Guard and declare martial law”³¹ after the crowd aggravated the peaceful protest and turned their anger on innocent citizens. Lafayette arrived at the Champ De Mars to the unrestrainable ferocity of a mob mentality. Despite attempts to calm the crowd, and orders for them to disperse without any further violence, Lafayette felt that further actions were needed and ordered the National Guard to “fire directly on the crowd”³². While Lafayette believed his actions were for the good of the Parisians at risk of violence from the mob most French citizens viewed his actions as a betrayal of the common people. Approximately “50 people were killed and a dozen wounded”³³ on Lafayette’s orders. While before the massacre Lafayette’s position had instigated prominently positive social change his actions at the Champ De Mars had inspired a negative influx of social opinion. Following the Champ De Mars Massacre public opinion of Lafayette decreased dramatically, his allegiance was interpreted to belong to the royal family. Due to this as Parisians’ “became progressively more suspicious of the King, they became increasingly suspicious of Lafayette himself”³⁴ which diminished his ability to influence positive change. Lafayette’s actions at Champ De Mars saw a schism in the Revolution and the Jacobin club as the moderates of the Revolution succumbed “to the growing demands”³⁵ of the radical San-Culottes. While previously influencing positive change his actions at the massacre instigated the bloodiest period of the Revolution as Parisians lost “faith in the Assembly and the Commune”³⁶. This had far reaching consequences, later inspiring the Reign of Terror mission to cleanse France of deceit with the “executions of presumed enemies of the state”³⁷. Lafayette fled France and the crises he had unwittingly instigated. His absence inspired further violence from the citizens who believed he was a traitor and now a coward. Hence,

²⁹ Llewellyn, J. and Thompson, S. (2015). *The Champ de Mars massacre*. [online] Alpha History - French Revolution. Available at: <http://alphahistory.com/frenchrevolution/champ-de-mars-massacre/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³⁰ Adcock, M. (2009). *Analysing the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, page 134.

³¹ Llewellyn, J. and Thompson, S. (2015). *The Champ de Mars massacre*. [online] Alpha History - French Revolution. Available at: <http://alphahistory.com/frenchrevolution/champ-de-mars-massacre/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³² Revolvly. (n.d.). *Champ de Mars Massacre*. [online] Available at: https://www.revolvly.com/main/index.php?s=Champ%20de%20Mars%20Massacre&item_type=topic [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³³ Summons, C. (2015). *Champs de Mars Massacre*. [online] The Student Network. Available at: <http://thestudentnetwork.org/Resources/?r=54dc406136510> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³⁴ Adcock, M. (2009). *Analysing the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, page 135.

³⁵ Summons, C. (2015). *Champs de Mars Massacre*. [online] The Student Network. Available at: <http://thestudentnetwork.org/Resources/?r=54dc406136510> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³⁶ Llewellyn, J. and Thompson, S. (2015). *The Champ de Mars massacre*. [online] AlphaHistory. Available at: <http://alphahistory.com/frenchrevolution/champ-de-mars-massacre/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

³⁷ Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). *Reign of Terror facts, information, pictures*. [online] Available at: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/french-history/reign-terror> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

Lafayette's involvement at the Champ De Mars Massacre inspired a legacy of bloodshed and had a negative social influence with the formation of radicalized factions.

Lafayette's direct influence in French society was obsolete after his involvement in the 1791 Champ De Mars Massacre. Despite his fall from favour his influence continued in society as the ideals he espoused were still followed as an inherent foundation of the Revolution. However, Lafayette's societal influences were predominantly positive in nature. As an avid believer in freedom and the rights of man Lafayette fought for religious tolerance of all faiths in France. Additionally, Lafayette's position on the National Assembly and his role in drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen produced primarily positive social reforms. Not only did Lafayette campaign for the rights of French citizens but he also advocated for the progressive social change of the abolishment of slavery in America to align with his ambitions of freedom for all men. Lafayette's positive social influences derived from his influence in the American Revolution when he fought for the freedom of America from the British and adopted the ideologies espousing liberty and equality for all people in accordance with the French ideals of merit and utility over birth and privilege.

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2. Ergang, R. (1968). *Europe from the Renaissance to Waterloo*. 3rd ed. Boston: D. C. Heath Company, page 659.
 - Ergang's book is a reliable source as it was published as a source of information in 1968 and has since been through 2 more editions. As the book is reprinted the information would be checked and found correct before it would be reprinted which means the content can be trusted
3. Fenwick, J. and Anderson, J. (2010). *Liberating France*. 1st ed. Collingwood, Vic.: History Teachers' Association of Victoria, page 67, 79.
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 - The Encyclopedia Britannica is a source that can be trusted as it is a world-renowned source of information that is expected to have a certain standard of information. While the encyclopedia itself has reliable content, it is the nature of pressure from the audience to be correct that makes certain the information is credible
5. The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington. (n.d.). *Marquis de Lafayette's Plan for Slavery*. [online] Available at: <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital->

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- This source is a well-researched publication by a reliable and authentic business focusing on the life of George Washington. It's in depth information and relevant cross referencing makes it a valid and credible source of information

6. Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). *Reign of Terror facts, information, pictures*. [online] Available at: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/french-history/reign-terror> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

- Published by the Columbia University Press this source is relied upon to be factual and unbiased in its information which made it useful for the purpose of gathering information

7. Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia. (1996). *Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/marquis-de-lafayette> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

- While not as credible as the Encyclopedia Britannica this is still a legible source of information as it was cross reference with several other sources and the information was the same in those sources, giving it a degree of credibility

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- As a media publication this source has a slight bias as it is intended as a form of entertainment for the audience however the intellectual orientated tone and the factual information provided about Lafayette make it an excellent source of information towards Lafayette's involvement in the abolishment of slavery

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- This source was created and published by the Cornell University. As an institute of not just higher learning but also research this source can be considered reliable as it has the motivation of requiring as little chance of mistakes as possible in order to be published by the institute

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- This source was taken from the National Archives of America that have a reputation for being precise and factual as they contain primary information from the period of creation

14. PBS. (2006). *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution - America's Sweetheart:*

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<http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/faces/lafayette.html> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

- This source, while a branch of the entertainment industry, was intended as a simple fact-based resource and therefore, can be reliable in regard to the information it publishes since the business would be cross referencing all of their facts with other sources

15. Powell, J. (1997). *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds*. Foundation for Economic Education. [online] Available at: <https://fee.org/articles/lafayette-hero-of-two-worlds/> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].
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16. Washington, G. (1786). *From George Washington to Lafayette, 10 May 1786*. [Letter] National Archives and Records Administration. [online] Available at: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-04-02-0051> **Original Source:** *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995, pp. 41–45
- This source, while published online, comes directly from the National American Archives. A primary source, it is a letter between Washington and Lafayette which gives it direct insight into both the attitudes of the time as well as the actions of Lafayette and how it affected the world at the time. These aspects make the source an incredibly reliable and credible source to be utilised in this essay. However, it must be considered that as a personal correspondence between two friends there is the chance of bias towards a certain opinion that can influence the information gleaned from the source

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- While not an entirely credible source the information within the source was cross referenced and had multiple perspectives on the situation which made it useful for the topic of the essay
18. Biography.com. (2015). *Marquis de Lafayette*. [online] Available at: <https://www.biography.com/people/marquis-de-lafayette-21271783> [Accessed 25 Aug. 2017].

- This site has no personal bias towards the issue nor does it attempt to make a point or sway opinions. As a site that gives short biographies of a person's life it has relevant information to the essay as well as containing varied sources to cross reference against

19. BrainyQuote. (n.d.). *Marquis de Lafayette Quotes*. [online] Available at:

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- While it is published on an electronic source, which is in itself a pretty credible site for referencing quotes, the actual content utilised from this source was a quote made by Lafayette which was promptly cross referenced with several other sources to ascertain and confirm its credibility

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- History.com is run by a team that specializes in historical events. The staff cross reference all of their information, provide in depth information into the topic on the page as well as referring to events and people that allow for the information to be double checked with a variety of source. The website itself is highly trusted by many people and is one of the first sites on a google search which speaks to its popularity and reliability.

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- See above
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would have been continually checked and validated before being posted to the source

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- Totallyhistory is not the most credible source however the small amount of information that was taken from this source was then cross referenced with a variety of other sources that validated the information and made certain that it was pertinent to the topic