

Historiography of the storming of the bastilleanalyzing secondary sources on the ...

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Introduction

The Bastille was one of the most historically significant symbols of in France and England's history. A lot of historically relevant things, which are more often than not associated with injustice, abuse of power, and at some point, torture. The Bastille was a Middle Age military fortress that was built in order for France to protect the eastern part of the country to be invaded by other countries, most especially England in the 100 years of war, and some other nations who had conflicts with the French during the period from the middle to the late middle ages.

Several hundred years back, the Bastille, its unfortified version, was actually made as one of the most strategic locations in France's internal conflicts such as the conflict between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians which occurred somewhere around the 15th century. A few years after The Bastille's fortifications were finished; it was then used as a state prison or penitentiary.

During King Louis XIV's time, the structure was only used to imprison elite members of the French society who have been denounced for civil and criminal charges. According to some of the biographies of the prisoners who stayed at the Bastille for imprisonment, not all prisoners there have committed crimes against the French society or against its King. Some are innocent and there are also some who were simply members of some of the human rights and other types of movements that time who for some reason, annoyed the king, causing their incarceration.

There were a significant number of accounts of people who allegedly suffered from the hands of the Royal Guards stationed inside the Bastille.

<https://assignbuster.com/historiography-of-the-storming-of-the-bastilleanalyzing-secondary-sources-on-the-case-study-example/>

Some secondary sources state that they were oppressed, abused, and even tortured for something that sometimes, they did not even know or did. It was because of this that the France's people, Paris' to be more specific, became aware of the fact that something must be done to stop such oppressions. And so the storming of the Bastille was initiated, according to the collection of accounts I have read, on the night between the 14th and the 15th of July year 1789. Some 30, 000 people rushed through the heavily fortified structure, experiencing heavy casualties along the process, in an effort to stop the Bastille's governor's oppression once and for all.

The objective of this paper is to discuss the events that happened during the Storming of the Bastille in relation to some of the current similar events today such as what just happened to different United States Embassy, particularly those that are based in Muslim countries as a result of the viral spread of an allegedly anti-Muslim video which was believed to have originated from the U. S. mocking the Muslim prophet Mohammad. The author will try to state how the events that happened during the storming of the Bastille could be used to help people reflect on the things that are happening today. In this paper, several recounts were considered in terms of validity and the reliability of the details of the events during the Bastille's storming in relation to other recounts. This way, a bigger picture was painted and some of the not so accurate details could be easily identified, thus establishing a higher form of accuracy.

Accounts on the Storming of the Bastille

The Storming of the Bastille was more detailed and more vividly described in Guizot's recount of the events that occurred during the incident. From the origin of the people's desires to start a what we could technically call a revolution which was the injustices and inappropriateness of the actions and orders of the governor stationed at Bastille, Governor Delaunay, down to the most tiny details like approximately how many muskets and arms were acquisitioned just so everybody during that night could have something to use in their fight for justice and freedom.

Basically, Guizot wanted to point out to the readers that a valid and humane rationale was present that could justify the actions, even though they may be inevitably described as cruel and barbaric, towards those who for them were obstructing justice, especially Governor Delaunay and the guards that were defending the Bastille.

According to the book "Great Historians of the Modern Age" by Gerard, Georges, and Carbonell, Guizot had a very diverse background in terms of education and experience in the field of the 18-19th definition of history and politics. He wrote several historical books that could actually be considered masterpieces and he even became a Minister of the Interior, Public Instruction, and of Foreign Affairs at some point in his life, making him a very remarkable and credible icon that could only provide information about the Storming of the Bastille that are detailed and valid.

Lefebvre focused more on the buildup of events prior to the real storming of the Bastille. He started his recount by enumerating and explaining the

events that occurred from the 12th of July that year up to the supposedly silent night of the attack which was between the night of the 14th and the dawn of the 15th of July that same year. There were a lot of similarities between Guizot and Lefebvre's recounts although each of them emphasized different things. Guizot, for example, focused on the rationale why the French people acted that way that night while Lefebvre simply stated the events and the influence of the Court, the French Assembly, and the Monarch on the events.

Lefebvre continued telling his story by narrating what happened and how the monarch and the government as a whole, and the people behaved, or basically what happened to them after the storming of the Bastille.

Apparently, there was a conspiracy that was allegedly led by the government to prevent the further spread of the revolutionary spirit going on. Grain and other commodity supplies were being cut and destroyed, and other resources suddenly became unusually scarce.

According to Gerard, Georges, and Carbonell, Lefebvre, although not that highly educated compared to Guizot, was a socialist by heart. He also had a strong background in modern history and is actually one of the modest French historians. He served as a professor at the University of Strasbourg from 1928-1932. After spending many years studying the history of France from the different available documents that he could procure, he became able to see the different changes and more accurate interpretations of understanding the real events that happened in the past.

Prudhomme's greatest contribution to the available information regarding the storming of the Bastille was his diversion of attention and emphasis on the actions of the monarch slightly before, during and after the event at the Bastille. In a way, his account of the events is similar with the other two authors' we just mentioned but then again, their attacks, approaches and emphasis are all different. Prudhomme probably wanted the audience to notice the cruelty of Delaunay and his men that even before they were about to be conquered, they still decided and managed to kill some 98 people in a deceiving manner.

Basically, they (the defenders) made it look like the governor would already surrender in order to make the people enter the boundaries of the fortress and to become reachable by the cannon balls. The guards almost unhesitatingly fired cannon shots resulting to some 100 casualties. Naturally, the people's cry for justice reached a higher level and by that time, they had become more eager to capture and even murder the governor for such an unfair and inhumane act.

Louis Marie Prudhomme, according to Scott and Barry, was a book trade, seller, and clerk. His life actually revolved around books although he did not completely ignore his patriotic thoughts. He was deeply involved and was actually associated with the boldest thinkers and writers before and during the storming of the Bastille. He founded a newspaper organization that aims to enlighten the people so that France's people's minds would be more open to embrace the path towards democracy. He became more popular as the publication he started gained a popularity that was ten-fold than it was in the

beginning. He became more involved in politics, but nevertheless, he still did not forget to come back where it all started—books.

If the readers will Guizot, Lefebvre, and Prudhomme's accounts of the Storming of the Bastille, they would most likely notice that there are a lot of similarities between the three. This could only mean that the data we are trying to review, even though they are considered as secondary sources, are reliable. Basically, the accounts were organized and framed in such a way that will make it easier for people, even those that do not have a strong background of the French revolution, to understand what they know and believe happened during the Storming of the Bastille. Some of the questions these three recounts are trying to answer are " what happened during the Storming of Bastille? Why did people during that time have to resort to using violence and force just to bring down a fortified fortress? What are some of the reasons why people during that time felt oppressed and abused despite the presence of a King and an Assembly?" If we are going to look at it, these accounts are actually so detailed that some of the causes, effects, and consequences of the July 14 incident are included. In a way, the readers may notice that although they share this particular feature, the specific causes and consequences stated in their respective accounts are not exactly or generally similar.

Another common thing about these three accounts is the way how they described the difference in the forces attacking the Bastille and the forces defending it in terms of strength and character. Firstly, the forces attacking the Bastille which are also the Parisian people are generally described as the

ones that are oppressed and abused, and right at that moment, they have the upper hand when it comes to force. They were the ones controlling the tides of battle simply because of their size which was approximately 30, 000. The forces defending the Bastille on the other hand was described as somewhat poor in character and very confident that the outsiders will not be able to infiltrate the fortress.

King Louis XVI was described as someone who has a poor character, or someone who only relies on his advisors and basically every people around him in making decisions. This is why most, if not all, members of the Assembly never entrusted the France's future to this king. Because of the lousiness of the King with regards to addressing the concerns of his people, which in this case were the Parisians, the citizens have decided to act on their own rather than to wait for forever and be disappointed by their king's laziness to do the necessary things to make France a better nation.

The biographies of the authors of the accounts we studied are basically there to serve as a guide that will help the readers judge the credibility of the account they are reviewing and to basically know the author more. Knowing the author will certainly help the readers understand the different passages in a particular author's account in a multitude of ways.

Works Cited

Gerard, A., L. Georges and C. Carbonell. " Guizot Francois." Gerard, A., L. Georges and C. Carbonell. Great Historians of the Modern Age. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. 242-243.

Gerard, A., L. Georges and C. Carbonell. " Lefebvre, Georges." Gerard, A., L. Georges and C. Carbonell. *Great Historians of the Modern Age* edited by Lucient Boia. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. 247-248.

Guizot, F. P. G. " The History of France From the Earliest Time to 1848 translated by Robert Black." New York: American Publishers Corporation (1869): 16-21.

Lefebvre, George. *The Coming of the French Revolution*, translated by R. R. Palmer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.

Prudhomme, L. " Les Revolutions de Paris, 12-18 July 1789." Gilchrist, T. and W. Murray. *The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents Taken from the Press of the Revolution from the Years 1789-1794*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971. 53-56.

Scott, Samuel and Rothaus Barry. " Prudhomme, Louis Marrie." Censer, Jack. *Historical Disctionary of the French Revolution, 1789-1799*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985.