

NOTES FOR THE MIDDLE AGES PACKET : MIDDLE AGES BRING CHANGES TO EUROPE

Section 2: Life on a Farm and Manor

- There was constant danger by the Vikings, bandits, and warriors from other kingdoms
- A system grew where the stronger people protected the weaker ones
- The weaker people gave loyalty to the royalty
- The system was called **feudalism**

What were Loyalty and Protection?

- The farmers and the peasants are loyal to the nobles or lords
- That means that they will take an oath to follow and respect their leaders
- Peasants were given land to work on that was owned by the noble
- The peasants were protected while the nobles became rich from crops
- They each addressed the others' needs

What is feudalism?

- A system of loyalties and protections during the Middle Ages
- Based on a pyramid with a king at the top (hierarchical scale)
- This developed the social classes for the time period
- King, Noble, Vassal (lesser noble), Peasants, and Serfs
- Everyone was loyal to the King
- King controlled everything
- Noble controlled most of the land
- Vassals needed protection from the Nobles and King for their little land
- Peasants needed protection
- Serfs belonged to the land

Life in a Village

- ❖ Villages were very small and were located on a **manor**
- ❖ A manor was a large estate or farm belonging to a noble family
 - Two big buildings were for the nobles and the church
 - Peasants lived in small mud cottages
 - There were blacksmiths and carpenters
 - People never had to leave the village because they had everything they needed
- ❖ Technology made them more efficient farmers (plows)
- ❖ They learned to divide their land into vertical strips to farm throughout the year.
- ❖ The planting of the fields were rotated in order to maintain rich soil year after year
- ❖ The peasants only sign of relief was during holidays when there were feasts

What were Manors and Castles like?

- The **manors** of the Middle Ages were drafty and had dirt floors
- The windows did not have glass
- The people who lived in areas that were raided often built **castles** for protection
- The **castles** had thick walls and towers
 - They could store food live there for months
 - The warriors and horses stayed there
 - If the village was attacked, the villagers would run their for protection
- There were high walls and moats with a drawbridge
- Nobles were very wealthy and dressed in silks, furs, and clothes embroidered with gold thread

Knights

- The knights trained very hard from the age of seven
- They were responsible for the protection of the manor
- They started out as a **page** who did menial tasks
- Later at the age of 15 they became **squires**, who were responsible for serving the knight and helping him with his armor, horses, and weapons. In return the knight trained the **squire** in advanced fighting skills
- At the age of 21 the **squire** became a knight and swore allegiance to his lord and to defend the Christian church. He was also responsible to protect anyone who needed his help
- The knights' armor was very heavy, and soon technology was developed that made their use obsolete.
- Crossbows, pikes, and powerful longbows made people more agile and more deadly
- Eventually the knights made their way towards entertainment
- They fought in tournaments like our class trip to Medieval Times.
- **Chivalry** was an important part of being a knight. It meant that knights were required to protect and honor women.