

The Dark Ages/Medieval Europe – Introduction

- when Rome fell in 476 ACE, Europe was plunged into an era called 'The Dark Ages'

- not because it was literally dark
- because all learning, culture, and society (the BRIGHT things in life) regressed to pre-Roman times
 - very little reading and writing
 - very little art and culture
 - very little history was recorded
 - difficult to study today
- lasted for approximately 1000 years...

- as Rome collapsed, Germanic barbarians began to rule all over Europe

- our map assignment later will show this
 - one of the most powerful groups were 'The Franks' (means "the bold") who lived in France

- in 481, a man named Clovis became the King of the Franks and set up one of the first great kingdoms

- took over most of Germany and France
- led the Franks into Christianity

- Roman culture still remained in some parts of Europe

- some learning and history still existed
 - the Church wrote limited history
 - very time consuming and expensive
- legal systems still remained in Britain, France, and Italy

- cities became less important during the medieval ages

- many were destroyed during the fall of Rome
 - because the Empire was gone, there was less trade and cities were no longer busy and important centers of life
- many people became farmers/serfs
- large farms, called villas, were worked by farmers
 - gave a portion of their crop to the landowner
 - landowners hired soldiers/knights to protect their land and their tenant serfs
- in essence, life had taken a turn backwards
 - less learning, less law and order, less medical knowledge, less transportation, etc.
 - life gets shorter and more dangerous
 - people see to regress towards savagery...

