WHI.12b The Crusades

**The Crusades**

What were they?

They were a series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims fought between the 11th to 13th centuries.

**Origins**

In the 11th century the holy city of Jerusalem was controlled by the Muslims.

Pope Urban called for a religious war or crusade to gain control of the Holy Lands.

Many Christian nobles and knights (Crusaders) heeded Urban’s call.

**The Fighting**

The European knights were ill prepared to fight in the scorching deserts of the Middle East.

One Crusading army decided to skip fighting the Muslims and sacked (raided) the Byzantine capital of Constantinople.

The two main leaders were Richard the Lionhearted of England (Crusader) and Saladin (Muslim).

The battles between the two forces were exceptionally bloody.

The Crusaders briefly captured Jerusalem and a few small kingdoms nearby which became known as the Crusader states.

Eventually Saladin recaptured Jerusalem.

Both Saladin and Richard agreed to a truce.

**The Results**

Jerusalem remained under Muslim control.

Eventually the Crusades sort of fizzled out as fewer and fewer knights took up the challenge.

The death of so many nobles led to the decline of local lords and the rise of powerful monarchs.

It also weakened the power of the Pope.

BUT- Returning knights brought back valuable spices and other goods from the Middle East.

This led to an increase in trade between Europe and Asia.

The Crusader’s attack on Constantinople weakened the Byzantine Empire which the Muslims finally captured in 1453.

The Crusades left a lasting legacy of bitterness between Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

Today Jerusalem is still the scene of religious violence.