WHI.9 The Middle Ages and Feudalism Part 2

**Feudalism: The Basics**

With the end of the Roman Empire, people in Western Europe had no defense against invasion

In order to stay safe, people entered into feudal agreements with landowning lords

The deal between the people and landowners was in exchange for work, the lord would provide protection

**Feudalism**

With no Roman Empire to provide defense of citizens people were constantly getting invaded by Germanic tribes

No government exists to stop them

People created system called Feudalism to protect themselves from invaders

**How Feudalism Works**

An incredibly rigid class structure: everyone has a place and a role and it doesn’t change or vary

Lords= powerful men who are rich and own a lot of land

Lords give out chunks of their land to lesser lords called Vassals

Vassal= Someone who manages a chunk of land (fief) for a lord

Fief= land given to a vassal from a lord

In exchange for the fief and protection, vassals pledge their loyalty and military service to their lord

Deal is called Feudal Contract

**The Manor**

Manor was the basic unit of the feudal system

Manor= the lord’s estate

Usually one or more villages and the land around it

Serfs are the backbone of The Manor

Serfs= peasants who are tied to the land but not slaves

Serfs are tied to the land, so if you get the land, you get the serfs

The Manor is a self-sufficient structure- everything you need is there

**Serfs**

Serfs work the land several days a week and do the manual labor around The Manor

Serfs had to ask for permission to leave the estate or marry

Serfs paid the lord several times a year

In exchange for this work, they received protection from the lord

**The Movement of People**

* There’s a lot of movement of people around Europe at this time- migration from one area to another.
* Angles and Saxons move from Northern Europe into the British Isles (England)
* Magyars moved from Central Asia into Hungry
* Vikings migrated from Scandinavia
* All of this movement and invasion meant that manors were important for safety, and the source of resources because trade wasn’t safe