

Samuel Bradshaw

Mr. Mills, Period 2

Writing Exercise

March 10, 2005

Why Feudalism Declined (originally hand-written)

There were many reasons why feudalism declined. One reason was the Hundred Years' War. Another was the Plague. The Hundred Years' War started in 1337 and lasted 116 years. It was fought almost entirely on French soil. Knights were defeated by the long bow; castles were toppled by cannons. Feudal warfare was being nullified. The war, and Joan of Arc's courage, inspired nationalism among fighters and other people.

Nationalism is a feeling of loyalty to one's own land and people. This feeling cut through all class lines. The king was no longer seen as simply a feudal lord. He was seen as a national leader fighting for the glory of the nation-state.

The second reason was the Black Death, or plague. Millions of people died. In fact, about one third of the population was lost. As such, there were fewer workers everywhere. Serfs could demand that they be given wages for the work they were doing. Thus landlords couldn't collect their traditional rents and services. The manor's economy, one of fixed labor and supplies of workers who couldn't leave the manor, was dying. Nobles resisted, and peasants had many uprisings. Medieval society was torn apart as villages and families disappeared. Eventually all this led to the downfall of the Feudal system. Indeed, it was turning from the "Feudal" system into a "futile" system!