**DAILY LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

**Life in the Country**

Most people lived in the country and worked as farmers. A local lord lived in a large house called a manor or a castle. Local peasants would work the land for the lord. The peasants worked hard all year long. They grew crops such as barley, wheat, and oats. They also had gardens where they grew vegetables and fruits. They also sometimes had a few animals such as chickens for eggs and cows for milk.

**Life in the City**

City life was very different from country life, but it wasn't much easier. The cities were crowded and dirty. A lot of people worked as craftsmen. Young boys would serve as apprentices for seven years learning a craft. Other jobs in the city included servants, merchants, bakers, doctors, and lawyers.

**What were their homes like?**

Although we often think of pictures of castles when we think of the Middle Ages, most people lived in small one or two room homes. These homes were very crowded and usually everyone slept in the same room. In the country, the family animals, such as a cow, may also live inside the home. The home was usually dark, smoky from the fire, and uncomfortable.

**What did they eat?**

Peasants did not have a lot of variety in their food. They mostly ate bread and stew. The stew would have beans, dried peas, cabbage, and other vegetables sometimes flavored with a bit of meat or bones. Other foods like meat, cheese, and eggs were usually saved for special occasions. Since they didn't have a way to keep their meat cold, they would eat it fresh. Leftover meat was smoked or salted to preserve it. The nobles ate a wider variety of food including meats and sweet puddings.

**Did they go to school?**

Few people attended school. Most peasants learned their job from their parents. Some children learned a craft through apprenticeship. Wealthy children often learned through tutors. They would go to live in the castle of another lord where they would work for the lord, learning about how a large manor was run.

There were some schools run by the church. Here students would learn to read and write Latin. The first universities also began during the Middle Ages. University students would study a wide range of subjects including reading, writing, logic, math, music, astronomy, and public speaking.

**Interesting Facts about Daily Life in the Middle Ages**

•The bread eaten by people of the Middle Ages was gritty from the millstones used to grind the grain. This caused the people's teeth wear down quickly.

•Peasants were not allowed to hunt on the lord's land. Punishment for killing a deer was death.

•Medicine was not safe. Sometimes doctors would "bleed" people by putting leeches on their skin.

•Marriages were often arranged, especially for nobles. Noble girls often married at 12 years old and boys at 14.