The Artios Home Companion Series

# Unit 7: Coming of the Northman and Alfred the Great

## Teacher Overview



The Northman, or Vikings as many call them, were fierce barbaric tribes. They sailed the high seas pillaging towns and villages within reach of the coast. They were an uncivilized people without the Christian religion nor education that Charlemagne had. In this unit we will be studying these fierce people and their effects on Europe.

## Key People

- Alfred the Great
- Rollo the Ganger

## Vocabulary

**Lesson 1:**
pillage

**Lesson 2:**
siege beseige

## Reading and Assignments

In this unit, students will:

- Complete three lesson(s) in which they will learn about **the coming of the Northman and Vikings,** and **Alfred the Great**, journaling and gathering information for a project on Vikings and their culture.
- Define vocabulary words.
- Read selected chapters from *The Arabian Nights Entertainments,* journaling as they read.
- Read notes and complete exercises on **Punctuating Quotations**.
- Students will explore the following websites
  - www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings
  - www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensofEngland/TheAnglo-Saxonkings/AlfredtheGreat.aspx

## Leading Ideas

- An individual's character will be reflected in his leadership. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* Proverbs 23:7
- There is power in the spoken word to do evil or to do good. *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.* Matthew 12:34
- The rise and fall of nations and leaders is determined by God. Proverbs 21:1

# *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*

**Literature for Units 7-10**

***by* Howard Pyle *from* the Renaissance Literary Period**

"Will you come with me sweet Reader?
I thank you. Give me your hand."
Howard Pyle, *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*

In the Middle Ages, people shared stories by singing ballads. These ballads typically consisted of four-line stanzas with a set rhyme scheme. Through the singing of ballads, these stories were passed down orally, with the troubadours or minstrels adding their own beliefs, both religious and political, to the songs.

This novel was constructed by weaving various ballads that told the tale of Robin Hood and his merry band of thieves. This version by Howard Pyle is the basis for many of the versions of Robin Hood, both in print and in film.

## Unit 8 - Assignments

**Literature**

- Check out Bold Outlaw, which has links to different maps of Sherwood Forest, Nottingham, and Barnsdale, including an interactive Google map with notes for each pin. http://www.boldoutlaw.com/robbeg/robbeg3.html
- Begin reading the lesson information and the novel, Chapters I - VI. Your journal for this unit will focus on tracking the timeline of events and the political and social impact on the society in the novel.

**Grammar**

- Read the notes on **punctuating quotations**, beginning on page 5.
- Complete the corresponding grammar exercises on the Artios Home Companion website.

## Unit 7 – Assignment Background

### General Introduction to the Ballads of Robin Hood

from *A Book of Ballads, Old and New*

Some learned men have tried to show that Robin Hood was originally a mythological character: a wind-god (Wodan) or an elf (Robin Goodfellow, Puck). Others have tried to assign him a definite place in history: in the days of Richard the Lion-hearted (thus Scott in his Ivanhoe) or of Simon de Montfort or of Edward II. But all such speculations are beset with difficulty and doubt.

*And mony anc sings o' grass, o' grass.*
*And mony ane sings o' corn,*
*And mony ane sings o' Robin Hood*
*Kens little whare he was born.*

What cannot be doubted is that Robin Hood was the ideal hero of the English people in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and

sixteenth centuries. Ballads about him were current as early as 1377, and his fame extended, then or a little later, over all England and well into Scotland. In the fifteenth century if not earlier dramatic representations of his exploits were given, played in the open air by the people, much as they played the Bible stories, the mysteries. Toward the close of the fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century Robin Hood and his merry men were standing figures in the Morris dances and May day games, and the observance of "Robin Hood's day" emptied the churches. But his fame rose first, and lasted longest, in ballads. The first mention of him is as a ballad hero, it is from ballads that historians of the fifteenth century gleaned the first "historical" notices of him, while throughout the eighteenth century garlands of Robin Hood ballads were still among the most regular and most popular of such publications. Of Child's great collection one ninth consists of Robin Hood ballads, "and perhaps none in English please so many and please so long."

Robin Hood represents first of all popular justice, the smouldering protest of the common people against harsh forest laws and the oppression of the nobles and the higher clergy; but he represents also the awakening of the common people in the century in which the House of Commons was formed, the yeoman archery distinguished itself at Crecy and Poitiers, and Wat Tyler led the revolting peasants to the presence of the king himself. Robin Hood thus became a gathering point for a mass of tradition, concerning which the writers in the Britannica say: "What perhaps is its greatest interest as we first see it is its expression of the popular mind about the close of the middle ages. Robin Hood is at that time the people's ideal as Arthur is that of the upper classes. He is the ideal yeoman as Arthur is the ideal knight. He readjusts the distribution of property: he robs the rich and endows the poor. He is an earnest worshipper of the Virgin, but a bold and vigorous hater of monks and abbots. He is the great sportsman, the incomparable archer, the lover of the greenwood and of a free life, brave, adventurous, jocular, open-handed, a protector of women."

Certain stories about him the people never tired of telling or singing or enacting: How he outwitted the sheriff of Nottingham; How he rescued others or was himself rescued from the law (for if Robin wasan outlaw it was because the law was out and needed righting); How he humbled "these bishops and these archbishops;" How he helped the needy or distressed; How he played this or that practical joke; How he honored the Virgin and was often helped by her out of dire straits; How he often met his match in some potter or pinder or butcher or beggar, only in the end to induce him to join his band.

There were two groups or cycles of Robin Hood ballads. The scene of the one is Bamsdale in southwestern Yorkshire, of the other, Sherwood forest in the heart of Nottinghamshire. In both cycles we find associated with him Little John, William Scathlock or Scarlet, and Much the Miller's son. Gilbert of the White Hands and Reynold are less often heard of, and Friar Tuck and Maid Marian belong only to the later and less popular tradition. Robin's "ofificial enemy" is the sheriff of Nottingham, who in the ballads cuts much such a figure as the Vice did in the miracle plays.

An interesting development of the greenwood balladry is A Little Gest of Robin Hood, a miniature epic of 456 ballad stanzas, divided into eight fitts or cantos. It was printed about 1500 by Wynkyn de Worde and several times besides in the course of the sixteenth century.

It delineates lovingly and at length the character of Robin Hood and weaves into a sort of unified whole most of the characteristic stories about him. It is delightful to read, a ballad grown up, but still in the fresh glory of youth and awkwardness. For the advanced student it is the best work with which to begin a study of how an epic may grow out of ballads.

**Contemporary Review From the Westminster Review, Volume 121**

We hardly know what to say of Mr. Howard Pyle's "Merry adventures of Robin Hood" nor how to classify it. It is not apparently one of the boys' books, so many of which are produced nowadays, nor is it a critical historical study. However, without further attempt at classification, we will say that we have read it with considerable pleasure. We do not assert that Robin Hood and his band derive from Mr. Pyle's treatment the same romantic glamour with which they are invested in "Ivanhoe;" we even take leave to suggest to Mr. Pyle that is is possible to overdo such adjectives as "gentle," "fair," "merry," &c.; nevertheless, Mr. Howard Pyle's Robin Hood is an honest, manly, sympathetic personage; the adventures are generally entertaining, and there is a pleasant out-door atmosphere about the book. The songs and ballads with which it is interspersed deserve especial mention; they are skillful imitations of ancient ballads, and have, besides, considerable independent merit.

# Punctuating Quotations

First of all, there are four terms we will be using in this unit which you must understand: they are DIRECT QUOTE , INDIRECT QUOTE, DIALOGUE, and NARRATIVE. The following four lines should make these terms clear to you.

DIRECT QUOTE: Jackie said, "I am going to Palmer on Saturday."

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DIALOGUE | the words that Jackie is saying | *I am going to Palmer on Saturday.* |
| NARRATIVE | what the narrator is saying | *Jackie said* |

INDIRECT QUOTE: Jackie said that she is going to Palmer on Saturday.

I. You use quotation marks ("-open quotes, and " - close quotes) to enclose a person's exact words.

EXAMPLE: "We're learning about punctuation," said Joe.

II. A direct quote begins with a capital letter <u>if the quote is a sentence</u>.

EXAMPLE: Maria said, "<u>T</u>he frame is not strong enough."

III. THE BROKEN QUOTE: When a quoted <u>sentence</u> of dialogue is divided into two parts by narrative, the second part of the dialogue begins with a lower case letter.

EXAMPLE: "The time has come," said Joe, **"to** finish my term paper."
**Note the lower case "t" in the word to.**

IV. When you go from dialogue to narrative or from narrative to dialogue - unless other punctuation is present - you need a comma to "change gears" from one to the other.

EXAMPLES: "Science is more interesting than **history,"** said Bernie.
**Note the location of the comma after "history."**

I **asked, "Who** is your science teacher?"
**Note the location of the comma after "asked."**

"Does she let you do **experiments?"** asked Debbie.
**Note that no comma is necessary after "experiments" because there is other punctuation.**

V. A period or comma following a quotation is ALWAYS placed INSIDE the close quotes.

EXAMPLES: "It's time to **go,"** said the guide.
The man replied, "I'm **ready."**

**See how the period and the comma are inside the close quote?**

VI. Question marks and exclamation marks should be placed <u>inside</u> the close quotes IF THE DIALOGUE IS A QUESTION OR EXCLAMATION. Question marks and exclamation marks should be placed <u>outside</u> the close quotes IF THE NARRATIVE IS A QUESTION OR EXCLAMATION. Study the following quotations very carefully.

EXAMPLE: "How far have we come?" asked the man. (dialogue is a question)
Who said, "Go west, young man"? (narrative is a question)
"Jump!" screamed the woman. (dialogue is an exclamation)
I nearly died when he said, "Time's up"! (narrative is an exclamation.)

VII. When your dialogue consists of several sentences, open quotes at the beginning and don't close them until the end of the dialogue.

EXAMPLE: "I'll wait for you at the Mall. Get there as soon as you can. Try not to be late," he said and rushed off down the hill.

VIII. A QUOTE WITHIN A QUOTE: Use single quotes (' - open quote and ' - close quote) to enclose dialogue inside other dialogue.

EXAMPLE: "Let's all yell, 'You won!' when Jack comes in," said Dad.

"Did I really hear Mrs. Neuman say, ' You may use books on the test'?" asked Sally.

A good way to handle quotations is to think of them as sentences inside other sentences.

EXAMPLE: Jack said, "I love scuba diving."

The **inside** sentence is "I love scuba diving."

*I* is the subject, *love* is the verb, and *scuba diving* is the direct object.

Any punctuation for the inside sentence goes <u>inside the quotes</u>.

The **outside** sentence is "Jack said, 'I love scuba diving.'"

*Jack* is the subject, *said* is the verb and the quoted sentence is the direct object.

Any punctuation for this sentence goes <u>outside the double quotes</u>, unless it is a period or a comma which go inside the close quote no matter what.

Be sure, when you're dealing with quotations, that you punctuate each sentence - both the inside one and the outside one - correctly.

A couple of handy items: You never have two "end marks" of punctuation together, unless one of them is a question mark and one of them is an exclamation mark.

EXAMPLE: Did Jane scream, **"Help!"?** asked Mr. Bates.

Notice that Mr. Bates is asking a question, so his sentence needs a question mark. Jane is screaming, so her sentence needs an exclamation mark.

In any other situation, a question or exclamation mark would "cancel out" a period or comma.

Example: Did Jane say, "I'm going **out"?** asked Mr. Bates.

Notice that Jane's sentence loses its punctuation to the question mark.

# Lesson One

## History Overview and Assignments
## The Coming of the Northman

The Northman, or Vikings as many call them, were fierce barbaric tribes. They sailed the high seas pillaging towns and villages within reach of the coast. They were an uncivilized people without the Christian religion nor education that Charlemagne had. In this unit we will be studying these fierce people and their effects on Europe.

### Vocabulary

pillage

### Reading and Assignments

- Review the vocabulary, then read the article: *Coming of the Northman*, pages 8-12.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Explore more about the Vikings at: **www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings**
- Define the vocabulary word in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Begin gathering information for a display or presentation about the Vikings and their culture. Include information about their villages, their ships, and their language.
- In lieu of discussion questions, please spend your time on the research needed for your project. This activity will lead to great family and group discussion when presented.

*From the book:*

## *The Story of Europe*

H.E. Marshall

*The Coming of the Northmen*

Link to Book

In the last chapter we saw the dim beginnings of France, Italy, and Germany. But hundreds of years were to pass before these kingdoms really became settled. The period which followed the Treaty of Verdun was one of constant turmoil and bloodshed, for the kings were often feeble, sometimes bad, and their subjects were turbulent and rebellious. Even a strong king had endless difficulties to face.

First, there was the lack of roads. One of the first things the Romans did in a conquered country was to build roads. They knew that roads were great conquerors and great civilizers. But the barbarians who split up the Roman Empire did not know the value of roads, so the wonderful Roman highways were allowed to fall into disrepair. In Saxony, which the Romans had never conquered, there were no roads at all. The difficulties, therefore, of travelling from one part of the kingdom to another were immense, the transport of an army extremely difficult. Without roads, too, commerce languished.

Secondly, the king was almost always poor, for the system of taxation was very imperfect. Being unable quickly to travel all over the kingdom himself, the king was obliged to depute much of his authority to dukes and counts. Having little money, he paid them for their services in land, and their possessions often became so great that they were really more powerful than the king himself, and rebelled against his authority. So civil wars were constant.

Besides these and other internal disturbances, there were frequent attacks from without to be repelled, and these alone were enough to prevent Europe from settling into peace.

Soon after the death of Charlemagne the Saracens seized the island of Sicily, overran a great part of the south of the Italian Peninsula, and even threatened Rome itself. Avars and Hungarians from the wilds of Asia swept over Germany and northern Italy, and reached even to the borders of France, and at length settled in the land which is now called Hungary. And lastly, there came the Northmen. They were the last of the German tribes to attack the civilization of Europe, and they left more impression on it than almost any other, although they themselves became absorbed in the peoples they conquered.

### The Home of the Northmen

Of their early history we know little or nothing. For while in southern and central Europe new kingdoms were being hammered out of the old Roman Empire, Europe beyond the Baltic was a region unknown. Until the end of the eighth century we know almost nothing of Scandinavia. Nearly all the Teutonic tribes, it is true, who took possession of the Empire came, or had traditions of having come, from the far north. They came from beyond the sluggish sea where dwelt a mighty people well skilled in the building of boats; they came “from the edge of the

world." But little was known of this far-distant country.

Those of you who have read the "Germania" of Tacitus may remember how he speaks of these northern peoples and their land. "They live on islands in the sea," he says. "Their strength lies not in military forces only, but also in their ships. . . . Beyond the islands there is another sea which is sluggish, and nearly always still. It is believed to encircle the earth, for here the light of the setting sun lasts until the sun rises again, and the light is bright enough to make pale the stars. Moreover, it is said that you can hear the sea hiss as the sun rises out of it and see the god's face, and the halo about his head. This is the end of the world, it is said, and it may well be so."

### The Northmen as Raiders

Hundreds of years passed, and people knew little more about this strange northern country than they did in the time of Tacitus. At length, however, towards the end of the eighth century, driven by poverty and the necessity of finding new homes, or merely by the love of adventure, the heathen Northmen began to sail forth from their bays and fiords, and attack the Christian kingdoms of Europe. They came from what are now Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, but in those days men called them all indiscriminately, Danes, Northmen, Vikings, or men of the bays and fiords. The English chronicles generally call them Danes, the French chronicles generally call them Northmen. But, by whatever name they were known, they made themselves for a hundred years the terror of seaboard Europe.

For the attacks of the Northmen differed from those of any other barbarian people in that they came from the sea, and not from the land. They sailed in long, narrow vessels, capable of holding fifty or sixty men. Bow and stern were alike, so that the ship could be steered either way, and they were decorated with the head of a swan or dragon, or some other animal. But the dragon was the favourite. Rowers sat along the sides of the vessels, and there was also one large sail.

Used as we are now to great sea-going monsters, the Viking ships seem the merest cockle-shells, and we marvel how men could venture forth upon the stormy North Sea in such frail craft. But venture forth they did, even upon the pathless ocean, and there seems now little doubt that five hundred years before Columbus the hardy Norsemen had landed upon the shores of North America.

These dragon-ships became the pest of the seas and a terror to all seaboard dwellers. It was a new terror, too. For hitherto there had been peace upon the seas. Huns, Avars, Bulgars, Goths, Vandals, Franks, Lombards, and all the other lesser tribes which had swept over Europe in turn, had made their attacks by land. Except for Saracen or Vandal pirates, the seas had still remained the peaceful routes of trade. Now that was changed. War and bloodshed came from the sea, just when it seemed as if the beginnings of peace might dawn on land.

The sea was the Northman's element. Yet, born sailor although he was, he seemed equally at home on land, where he proved himself a skilful, cunning, and absolutely cold-blooded fighter. They were blue-eyed, fair-haired, tall, and sinewy men. They wore their hair in long plaits,

and dressed in gay colours, scarlet being much loved by them. They wore coats of mail and great horned helmets, and were armed with bow and arrows, hatchet, spear, and sword.

They loved war and the ways of war and the weapons of war. Their songs were all of war and the mighty blows of heroes, and in these songs they gave poetic names to their ships and weapons. But more than any other weapon they loved their swords, and to them they gave the most poetic names, such as "the lightning of war," "the thorn of shields," "the helmet biter." The hilts and scabbards of these swords were often beautifully inlaid with gold and studded with jewels, and were handed on from hero to hero, and prized as no other gift was prized.

Armed, then, at all points, these joyous, blood-thirsty pirates set forth in their dragon-ships. Along the sides they hung their gaily painted shields, ringed and bossed with metal, and leaning upon their spears, they stood in the prow, while the short oars flashed, and the wind sang through the sail. When storm winds blew and others sought the shelter of the shore, the dragon-ship sped forth, spurning as if in joy the foaming waves. Then, as day dawned, some sleeping village would hear the Viking battle-cry. Then bright swords gleamed, and sparing neither man nor woman, these Northmen plundered at will. At length, their fury and their greed sated, they mounted into their ship once more and sped away as swiftly as they had come, leaving behind them only smoking, blood-stained ruins where, but a few hours before, peaceful homes had stood.

The first of these attacks of which we have any record was upon England, towards the end of the eighth century. But soon England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy all knew and dreaded the terrible Northmen. Their coasts were dotted with ruins, the bones of the dead lay bleaching on a thousand battlefields, and a new petition was added to men's prayers, "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord deliver us."

## THE NORTHMEN IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

### The Northmen as Settlers

AT the beginning of their raids the Northmen only came to plunder, and made no attempt to settle in the lands they attacked. But as time went on they came not only to plunder but to settle. And wherever they settled a change came over them. They were so adaptable that they lost their individuality and became merged in the native population. They settled in England and became Englishmen, they settled in France and became Frenchmen. Later, these Norman-French conquered England and again, in time, became Englishmen.

But before they finally settled there the attacks of the Northmen on France were both many and cruel. It was not the coasts only that they left desolate, for in their narrow vessels they sailed up the rivers, and towns and villages far inland were laid in ruins. Even Paris itself was threatened by them more than once.

The Carolingian line was by this time dying out in feebleness, and weak kings, unable to punish the impudent invaders, paid them gold to depart. The Northmen accepted the gold, but they always returned again, each time in greater and greater numbers, ever more greedy, more bold,

and more cruel than before. With sword and firebrand they laid waste the land until there were whole districts in the most fertile parts of France where it was said a man might wander for long days without seeing the smoke of a chimney or hearing the bark of a dog.

"The heathen, like wolves in the night, seize upon the flocks of Christ," wails a writer of the time. "Churches are burned, women are led away captive, the people are slain. Everywhere there is mourning. From all sides cries and lamentations assail the ears of the king who, by his indolence, leaves his Christian folk to perish."

**Rollo settles in the North of France**

After a time, some of the Northmen, under their leader, Rollo, took possession of a part of France and settled there. And from this new base they launched even fiercer attacks on the rest of the country. At length, in the time of Charles the Simple, the French saw that to buy the Northmen off was worse than useless, and to expel them now that they were firmly rooted impossible. The only thing to do was to change lawless freebooters into law-abiding citizens.

Charles, therefore, sent messengers to the rough, old sea king, offering him the undisputed possession of all that north-west portion of France in which he and his warriors had already settled. In return for this, he was to become a Christian, be baptized, and own himself vassal of the king. Rollo was not unwilling to listen to the king's proposal, but he was not content with the land offered to him.

"The land is desolate and barren," he said, "there is not there the wherewithal to live." So he demanded more land. Thereupon the king offered him Flanders. For he had a grudge against the count of Flanders. But Rollo would have none of it.

"It is nothing but a waste of bog and marsh," he said, and he demanded Brittany.

Now the part of France called Brittany had never really been in the possession of the kings of France. So all Charles could give Rollo was the right to conquer it, if he could. And this he readily gave.

Matters being thus settled, Rollo had next to perform his part of the compact, and do homage as a vassal. Upon the appointed day the king seated himself upon his throne with his priests and courtiers about him, and to him came the rough old Northman and his warriors. The ceremony began, but when Rollo was told that he must kneel before the king and kiss his feet he started back in wrath.

"No, by Heaven!" he cried. "I will kiss no man's feet!

"It must be," replied the priests, "in no other way can you hold your fief."

"Then let one of my followers do it for me," replied the proud sea-king.

And as nothing would move Rollo, Charles had to be content with that. So one of Rollo's followers was bidden to perform the act of homage for his master. But he had as little liking as Rollo for what seemed to him a piece of degrading foolery. He had never bent his knee to any man, and he did not mean to do it now. Striding, therefore, up to the throne, without even bending, he seized the king's foot and raised it to his mouth. So rough and sudden was his action that Charles fell backwards to the ground. And thus, amid the loud laughter not only of the rude Northmen but of the Frankish courtiers also, the strange

ceremony of homage ended.

After this Rollo was duly baptized, and received the Christian name of Robert, and many of his warriors followed his example and were baptized also. Their conversion was sudden. But this was nothing to the Northmen. For it was said many of them made an annual practice of it, merely for the sake of the white linen robe which they received on the occasion.

The land which was thus given to Rollo was already known as Northmannie. It soon became Normandy, and its people Normans. Very quickly they forgot their heathen religion and their northern speech and northern home. Normandy, strange to say, became the best governed part of France, and the exploits of Rollo the Ganger, the devastator of France, the pillager of monasteries, the slayer of women and children, were almost forgotten in the fame of Robert, Duke of Normandy, the builder of churches, and framer of righteous laws.

Outwardly, wherever the Northmen settled they seemed to disappear and be merged in the native population. In reality they imbued these populations with something of their own spirit. They were filled with a great curiosity, they had a genius for order and government, they were fearless, energetic, and eager, always ready to adventure and to do. Civilized, they retained much of the old vigour which as barbarian heathen had made them such deadly and pitiless foes. Christianized, they became the passionate champions of the Catholic Church. And the descendants of those Vikings who had refused to bend the knee to any man, and laughed aloud at the discomfiture of their over-lord, became the great upholders of the feudal system, the impassioned exponents of the orders of knighthood and chivalry.

### The Northmen in England

England suffered from the Northmen even as did France. Here, however, they were met and checked by a skilful soldier and statesman, Alfred the Great. Yet even he, with all his courage and perseverance, could not altogether loosen the grip of the Northmen upon the island. At length he, too, like the king of France, was obliged to buy peace by yielding part of his kingdom to the freebooters. And, by the Peace of Wedmore, Alfred assigned to the Danes all the northern half of England. The conditions of this treaty were similar to those upon which Rollo acquired Normandy. Guthrun the Dane was baptized, receiving the name of Athelstane and owning Alfred as overlord.

But with the Peace of Wedmore the struggle in England did not cease. It was only abated. During the rest of Alfred's life and for more than a century after his death it continued, until in 1016 Knut the Dane became king of all England. This Northman domination lasted until 1042, ending only fourteen years before the conquest of England by William the Norman.

## Lesson Two

# History Overview and Assignments
# Rollo the Viking

The Northman, or Vikings as many call them, were fierce barbaric tribes. They sailed the high seas pillaging towns and villages within reach of the coast. They were an uncivilized people without the Christian religion nor education that Charlemagne had. In this unit we will be studying these fierce people and their effects on Europe.

## Key People and Events

Rollo the Ganger

## Vocabulary

siege
beseige

## Reading and Assignments

- Review the vocabulary, then read the article: *Rollo The Viking*, pages 13-16.
- Narrate on this article using a biography page for Rollo the Viking.
- Continue working on a display or presentation about the Vikings.
- In lieu of discussion questions, please spend your time on the research needed for your project. This activity will lead to great family and group discussion when presented.

*From the book:*

***Famous Men of the Middle Ages***

John H. Haaren

***ROLLO THE VIKING***

***DIED 931 A.D.***

For more than two hundred years during the Middle Ages the Christian countries of Europe were attacked on the southwest by the Saracens of Spain, and on the northwest by the Norsemen, or Northmen. The Northmen were so called because they came into Middle Europe from the north. Sometimes they were called Vikings, or pirates, because they were adventurous sea-robbers who plundered all countries which they could reach by sea.

Their ships were long and swift. In the center was placed a single mast, which carried one large sail. For the most part, however, the Norsemen depended on rowing, not on the wind, and sometimes there were twenty rowers in one vessel.

The Vikings were a terror to all their neighbors; but the two regions that suffered most from their attacks were the Island of Britain and that part of Charlemagne's empire in which the Franks were settled.

Early fifty times in two hundred years the lands of the Franks were invaded. The Vikings sailed up the large rivers into the heart of the region which we now call France and captured and pillaged cities and towns. Some years after Charlemagne's death they went as far as his capital, Aix, took the place, and stabled their horses in the cathedral which the great emperor had built.

In the year 860 they discovered Iceland and made a settlement upon its shores. A few years later they sailed as far as Greenland, and there established settlements which existed for about a century.

These Vikings were the first discoverers of the continent on which we live. Ancient books found in Iceland tell the story of the discovery. It is related that a Viking ship was driven during a storm to a strange coast, which is thought to have been that part of America now known as Labrador.

When the captain of the ship returned home he told what he had seen. His tale so excited the curiosity of a young Viking prince, called Leif the Lucky, that he sailed to the newly discovered coast.

Going ashore, he found that the country abounded in wild grapes; and so he called it Vinland, or the land of Vines. Vinland is thought to have been a part of what is now the Rhode Island coast.

The Vikings were not aware that they had found a great unknown continent. No one in the more civilized parts of Europe knew anything about their discovery; and after a while the story of the Vinland voyages seems to have been forgotten, even among the Vikings themselves.

So it is not to them that we owe the discovery of America, but to Columbus; because his discovery, though nearly five hundred years later than that of the Norsemen, actually made known to all Europe, for all time, the existence of the New World.

## II

THE Vikings had many able chieftains. One of the most famous was Rollo the Walker, so called because he was such a giant that no horse strong enough to carry him could be found, and therefore he always had to walk. However, he did on foot what few could do on horseback.

In 885 seven hundred ships, commanded by Rollo and other Viking chiefs, left the harbors of Norway, sailed to the mouth of the Seine, and started up the river to capture the city of Paris.

Rollo and his men stopped on the way at Rouen, which also was on the Seine, but nearer its mouth. The citizens had heard of the giant, and when they saw the river covered by his fleet they were dismayed. However, the bishop of Rouen told them that Rollo could be as noble and generous as he was fierce; and he advised them to open their gates and trust to the mercy of the Viking chief. This was done, and Rollo marched into Rouen and took possession of it. The bishop had given good advice, for Rollo treated the people very kindly.

Soon after capturing Rouen he left the place, sailed up the river to Paris, and joined the other Viking chiefs. And now for six long miles the beautiful Seine was covered with Viking vessels, which carried an army of thirty thousand men.

A noted warrior named Eudes was Count of Paris, and he had advised the Parisians to fortify the city. So not long before the arrival of Rollo and his

companions, two walls with strong gates had been built round Paris.

It was no easy task for even Vikings to capture a strongly walled city. We are told that Rollo and his men built a high tower and rolled it on wheels up to the walls. At its top was a floor well manned with soldiers. But the people within the city shot hundreds of arrows at the besiegers, and threw down rocks, or poured boiling oil and pitch upon them.

The Vikings thought to starve the Parisians, and for thirteen months they encamped round the city. At length food became very scarce, and Count Eudes determined to go for help. He went out through one of the gates on a dark, stormy night, and rode post-haste to the king. He told him that something must be done to save the people of Paris.

So the king gathered an army and marched to the city. No battle was fought—the Vikings seemed to have been afraid to risk one. They gave up the siege, and Paris was relieved.

Rollo and his men went to the Duchy of Burgundy, where, as now, the finest crops were raised and the best of wines were made.

### III

PERHAPS after a time Rollo and his Vikings went home; but we do not know what he did for about twenty-five years. We do know that he abandoned his old home in Norway in 911. Then he and his people sailed from the icy shore of Norway and again went up the Seine in hundreds of Viking vessels.

Of course, on arriving in the land of the Franks, Rollo at once began to plunder towns and farms.

Charles, then king of the Franks, although his people called him the Simple, or Senseless, had sense enough to see that this must be stopped.

So he sent a message to Rollo and proposed that they should have a talk about peace. Rollo agreed and accordingly they met. The king and his troops stood on one side of a little river, and Rollo with his Vikings stood on the other. Messages passed between them. The king asked Rollo what he wanted.

"Let me and my people live in the land of the Franks; let us make ourselves homes here, and I and my Vikings will become your vassals," answered Rollo. He asked for Rouen and the neighboring land. So the king gave him that part of Francia; and ever since it has been called Normandy, the land of the Northmen.

When it was decided that the Vikings should settle in Francia and be subjects of the Frankish king, Rollo was told that he must kiss the foot of Charles in token that he would be the king's vassal. The haughty Viking refused. "Never," said he, "will I bend my knee before any man, and no man's foot will I kiss." After some persuasion, however, he ordered one of his men to perform the act of homage for him. The king was on horseback and the Norseman, standing by the side of the horse, suddenly seized the king's foot and drew it up to his lips. This almost made the king fall from his horse, to the great amusement of the Norsemen.

Becoming a vassal to the king meant that if the king went to war Rollo would be obliged to join his army and bring a certain number of armed men—one thousand or more.

Rollo now granted parts of Normandy

to his leading men on condition that they would bring soldiers to his army and fight under him. They became his vassals, as he was the king's vassal.

The lands granted to vassals in this way were called feuds, and this plan of holding lands was called the Feudal System.

It was established in every country of Europe during the Middle Ages.

The poorest people were called serfs. They were almost slaves and were never permitted to leave the estate to which they belonged. They did all the work. They worked chiefly for the landlords, but partly for themselves.

Having been a robber himself, Rollo knew what a shocking thing it was to ravage and plunder, and he determined to change his people's habits. He made strict laws and hanged robbers. His duchy thus became one of the safest parts of Europe.

The Northmen learned the language of the Franks and adopted their religion.

The story of Rollo is especially interesting to us, because Rollo was the forefather of that famous Duke of Normandy who, less than a hundred and fifty years later, conquered England and brought into that country the Norman nobles with their French language and customs.

# Lesson Three

## History Overview and Assignments
## Alfred the Great

The Northman, or Vikings as many call them, were fierce barbaric tribes. They sailed the high seas pillaging towns and villages within reach of the coast. They were an uncivilized people without the Christian religion nor education that Charlemagne had. In this unit we will be studying these fierce people and their effects on Europe.

### Key People and Events

Alfred the Great

### Reading and Assignments

- Read the article Alfred the Great, pages 17-19.
- Narrate using a biography notebook page for Alfred the Great.
- Explore more about Alfred the Great by visiting this website: www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensofEngland/TheAnglo-Saxonkings/AlfredtheGreat.aspx
- Continue working on a display or presentation about the Vikings.
- In lieu of discussion questions, please spend your time on the research needed for your project. This activity will lead to great family and group discussion when presented.

*From the book:*

***Famous Men of the Middle Ages***

John H. Haaren

*ALFRED THE GREAT*

*KING FROM 871-901 A.D.*

Link to Book

**I**

THE Danes were neighbors of the Norwegian Vikings, and like them were fond of the sea and piracy. They plundered the English coasts for more than a century; and most of northern and eastern England became for a time a Danish country with Danish kings.

What saved the rest of the country to the Saxons was the courage of the great Saxon king, Alfred.

Alfred was the son of Ethelwulf, king of the West Saxons. He had a loving mother who brought him up with great care. Up to the age of twelve, it is said, he was not able to read well, in spite of the efforts of his mother and others to teach him.

When Alfred was a boy there were no printed books. The wonderful art of printing was not invented until about the year 1440—nearly six hundred years later than Alfred's time. Moreover, the art of making paper had not yet been invented. Consequently the few books in use in Alfred's time were written by skillful penmen, who wrote generally on leaves of parchment, which was sheepskin carefully prepared so that it might retain ink.

One day Alfred's mother showed him and his elder brothers a beautiful volume which contained a number of the best Saxon ballads. Some of the words in this book were written in brightly colored letters, and upon many of the leaves were painted pictures of gaily-dressed knights and ladies.

"Oh, what a lovely book!" exclaimed the boys.

"Yes, it is lovely," replied the mother. "I will give it to whichever of you children can read it the best in a week."

Alfred began at once to take lessons in reading, and studied hard day after day. His brothers passed their time in amusements and made fun of Alfred's efforts. They thought he could not learn to read as well as they could, no matter how hard he should try.

At the end of the week the boys read the book to their mother, one after the other. Much to the surprise of his brothers, Alfred proved to be the best reader and his mother gave him the book.

While still very young Alfred was sent by his father to Rome to be anointed by His Holiness, the Pope. It was a long and tiresome journey, made mostly on horseback.

With imposing, solemn ceremony he was anointed by the Holy Father. Afterwards he spent a year in Rome receiving religious instruction.

## II

IN the year 871, when Alfred was twenty-two years old, the Danes invaded various parts of England. Some great battles were fought, and Alfred's elder brother Ethelred, king of the West Saxons, was killed. Thus Alfred became king.

The Danes still continued to fight the Saxons, and defeated Alfred in a long and severe struggle. They took for themselves the northern and eastern parts of England.

Moreover, Danes from Denmark continued to cross the sea and ravage the coast of Saxon England. They kept the people in constant alarm. Alfred therefore determined to meet the pirates on their own element, the sea. So he built and equipped the first English navy, and in 875 gained the first naval victory ever won by the English.

A few years after this, however, great numbers of Danes from the northern part of England came pouring into the Saxon lands. Alfred himself was obliged to flee for his life.

For many months he wandered through forests and over hills to avoid being taken by the Danes. He sometimes made his home in caves and in the huts of shepherds and cowherds. Often he tended the cattle and sheep and was glad to get a part of the farmer's dinner in pay for his services.

Once, when very hungry, he went into the house of a cowherd and asked for something to eat. The cowherd's wife was baking cakes and she said she would give him some when they were done.

"Watch the cakes and do not let them burn, while I go across the field to look after the cows," said the woman, as she hurried away. Alfred took his seat in the chimney-corner to do as he was told. But soon his thoughts turned to his troubles and he forgot about the cakes.

When the woman came back she cried out with vexation, for the cakes were burned and spoiled. "You lazy, good-for-nothing man!" she said, "I warrant you can eat cakes fast enough; but you are too lazy

to help me bake them."

With that she drove the poor hungry Alfred out of her house. In his ragged dress he certainly did not look like a king, and she had no idea that he was anything but a poor beggar.

**III**

SOME of Alfred's friends discovered where he was hiding and joined him. In a little time a body of soldiers came to him and a strong fort was built by them. From this fort Alfred and his men went out now and then and gave battle to small parties of the Danes. Alfred was successful and his army grew larger and larger.

One day he disguised himself as a wandering minstrel and went into the camp of the Danes. He strolled here and there, playing on a harp and singing Saxon ballads. At last, Guthrum, the commander of the Danes, ordered the minstrel to be brought to his tent. Alfred went. "Sing to me some of your charming songs," said Guthrum. "I never heard more beautiful music." So the kingly harper played and sang for the Dane, and went away with handsome presents. But better than that, he had gained information that was of the greatest value.

In a week he attacked the Danish forces and defeated them with great slaughter in a battle which lasted all day and far into the night. Guthrum was taken prisoner and brought before Alfred.

Taking his harp in his hands, Alfred played and sang one of the ballads with which he had entertained Guthrum in the camp. The Dane started in amazement and exclaimed:

"You, then, King Alfred, were the wandering minstrel?"

"Yes," replied Alfred, "I was the musician whom you received so kindly. Your life is now in my hands; but I will give you your liberty if you will become a Christian and never again make war on my people."

"King Alfred," said Guthrum, "I will become a Christian, and so will all my men if you will grant liberty to them as to me; and henceforth, we will be your friends."

Alfred then released the Danes, and they were baptized as Christians.

An old road running across England from London to Chester was then agreed upon as the boundary between the Danish and Saxon kingdoms; and the Danes settled in East Anglia, as the eastern part of England was called.

Years of peace and prosperity followed for Alfred's kingdom. During these years the king rebuilt the towns that had been destroyed by the Danes, erected new forts, and greatly strengthened his army and navy.

He also encouraged trade; and he founded a school like that established by Charlemagne. He himself translated a number of Latin books into Saxon, and probably did more for the cause of education than any other king that ever wore the English crown.