

Serfs and Peasants Text 2: “Peasants”

The peasants had few rights and were almost completely at the mercy of their lords. A peasant family worked together to farm both the lord’s fields and their own. Peasants also performed whatever other tasks the lord demanded, such as cutting wood, storing grain, or repairing roads and bridges.

Peasants had to pay many kinds of rents and taxes. They had to bring grain to the lord’s mill to be ground, bake bread in the lord’s oven, and take grapes to the lord’s wine press. Each of these services meant another payment to the lord. Money was scarce, so the peasants usually paid in wheat, oats, eggs, or poultry from their own land.

Peasants lived in crude huts and slept on bags filled with straw. They ate black bread, eggs, poultry, and such vegetables as cabbage and turnips. Rarely could they afford meat. They could not hunt or fish because game on the manor belonged to the lord.

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Word	Meaning
scarce	lacking; not enough
crude	basic