# Anglo-Saxons

A. British Legacy

1. Government

a. Monarchy

b. Magna Carta 1215

1. By the people, for the people

2. Personal rights and freedom

2. Literature

3. Language

4. Invaders

a. Iberians

b. Celts

c. Romans

d. Angles, Saxons, Jutes

e. Vikings

f. Normans

g. Tudors

B. The Spirit of the Celts

1. Brythons—Britons—Britain

2. Religion—animism—“Spirit”

a. Rivers, trees, stones, ponds…everything had a spirit

b. Spirits controlled ALL aspects of life

c. Priests—Druids

1. Druids conduit for communication between gods and people

C. Celtic Heroes and Heroines

1. Mythology

a. Sir Thomas Mallory—Arthurian legends

b, Yeats—poetry

2. Strong women—Heroines\*\*\*

D. The Romans

1. Julius Caesar 55 BCE—Romans conquer Celts

a. Improved infrastructure—roads, viaducts, etc.

b. Organized system of government

c. Latin

2. 409 CE evacuated back to Rome

Weakened government led to conquest of the British Isles

E. Anglo-Saxons

1. Middle of the 5th century, Celts were conquered by Angles, Saxons and Jutes

a. Celts fought back, but lost

Welch Chieftain, Arthur, celebrated as the “Once and Future King”

F. Unifying forces

1. A-S Britain more unified (hierarchal society/government)

a. A-S under Alfred the Great fought the Danes; Danes eventually conquered part of NE Britain

2. Christianity prevailed creating a common faith

a. faith

b. morality

c. conduct

1. linked Britain with Europe

3. 1066 A-S defeated by Normans (French)

G. A-S Life—Warm Hall, Cold World

1. 1939 a grave discovered (buried for 1300 years) Sutton Hoo Ship Discovery

a. A\_S not “barbarians” as often portrayed, but life was hard

b. Hierarchal Society

1. A-S King

Thanes (Earls)

Witans (Wisemen) and Freemen

Churls (Bound servants—slaves)

c. Strong loyalty (obedience) to leaders

2. Women were important and even equal to men in A-S society

a. Inherited and held property—even when married

b. Prospective HUSBAND had to provide a proposal gift to the woman (dowry) which she maintained control of, “morning gift”

c. Opportunities in religious life

3. Villages

a. Enclosed (protected) within a woode stockade

b. Single family homes

c. Communal hall or Chieftain hall

d. Ruled by consensus

H. A-S Religion—Germanic Paganism

1. Warrior gods—similar to Norse and Scandinavian mythology

a. Woden (Odin) god of death, poetry and magic

Wednesday, Woden’s Day

b. Thunor (Thor) god of thunder and lightning (hammer and swastika)

Thursday, Thor’s (Thunor’s) Day

c. Dragon—protector of a treasure

2. Religion more concerned with ethics than mysticism

I. The Bards: Singing of God’s Heroes

1. Community hall

a. Shelter

b. Council meeting place

c. Entertainment

1. Bards, scops—entertainers

2. Villagers—audience

J. Hope in immortal Verse

1. A-S literature dark and “mournful”

a. A-S religion did not include and afterlife—you were born, life was hard, you died

b. The best one could hope for was to be immortalized in memory, song or literature (poetry)

K. Light from Ireland

1. Ireland was an isolated island surrounded by wild seas—NOT overrun by Germanic invaders

a. 432 CE St. Patrick led the conversion of all Irish

b. 432-750 CE while the rest of Europe fought constantly, Ireland flourished

1. Monks, monasteries, sanctuaries of learning

2. preserved ancient Christian documents

L. The Christian Monastaries—The Ink Froze

1. Monasteries were centers of learning

a. Latin and Greek Classics

b. Great works of A-S literature—*Beowulf*

1. Monks copied the ancient manuscripts by hand

2. Opened windows for light—COLD

M. Rise of the English Language (vernacular)

1. Latin was the language of learning in Europe. To read the classics, you had to know Latin

a. King Alfred—Anglo-Saxon Chronicles—earliest history of Britain to 1154 CE

1. English grew to be respected as an academic language

Combination of Old English (A-S Germanic language) and Latin (Romance language)