

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE FRANKS

Beyond the northwest border of the Roman province of Gaul in present-day France, the long haired kings of the Franks began uniting under the rule of Marovich. Most people in western Europe spoke Celtic languages at that time, but the Franks spoke a Germanic language because as they migrated from the east. The Merovingian rulers were known as the long haired kings because they believed their authority came from their uncut hair.

In 481, a fifteen-year-old Frankish warrior named Clovis killed off his rivals to create a fearsome Frankish kingdom. Five years later, the young king defeated the Roman army and moved his capital to Paris. By his death in 511, Clovis controlled all but a small portion of the former Roman province of Gaul.

Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire in 380; the faith grew even in remote Roman provinces of such as Gaul. The Franks, however, were pagans who continued to believe in many gods. They worshipped Clovis as the descendent of Wotan, the Frankish god of the sky though Clovis did marry a Burgundian woman who was raised as a Christian. When their first child died at birth, Clovis blamed his wife's faith in Christianity. But facing a defeat by a rival army in 496, the Frankish king was inspired by his wife's faith, so he made a promise to his wife's Christian God.

Clovis vowed to devote his life to Christianity if the Franks won a decisive battle against the Alemanni. The next day, the Alemanni king was killed and his soldiers surrendered. As a result of their unlikely victory, a Christian bishop baptized Clovis. Soon after, 3000 Frankish soldiers joined Clovis in the faith. Charles de Gaulle, a twentieth



century French ruler wrote, "The history of France begins with Clovis...the first king to have been baptized a Christian."

When Clovis died, his kingdom was divided among his four sons. The power of the Frankish kings grew weaker over time as they granted land and power to noble families who fought for the Franks.

While the king remained at home, the Mayor of the Palace, Charles Martel led the Frankish army in 732 in the Battle of Tours. The Mayor of the Palace originally managed the king's household, but as kings turned into figureheads, the Mayors became more powerful. Charles Martel was known as "the hammer," (marteau in French) because he mercilessly crushed his enemies.

Charles Martel's army faced Jabal Tariq, whose Muslim army had conquered Spain twenty years earlier and had crossed the Pyrenees Mountains into Frankish territory. Martel's victory repelled the Muslim army and ensured that Christianity would be the religion of Europe.

In 751, Charles Martel's son, Pepin the Short, made an alliance with Pope Zacharias, who granted Pepin the title "King of the Franks" and ousting King Childeric.

Defeated and ashamed, Childeric exiled himself to a monastery. As was the custom of the time, he was tonsured—hair was removed from the top of his scalp—upon entering the monastery.

Childeric's tonsure meant that the rule of the long haired Merovingian kings had ended. The new kings were now be of the Carolingian dynasty, the descendants of Charles Martel.



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### Fill in the Blanks

The Franks were a G\_\_r\_\_a\_\_ic tribe that lived in n\_\_r\_\_h\_\_e\_\_t Europe. Late in the \*f\_\_f\_\_h century, C\_\_o\_\_is united the F\_\_an\_\_s and conquered most of the R\_\_m\_\_n province of G\_\_\_\_\_. After winning a difficult battle against the A\_\_e\_\_a\_\_ni, Clovis kept a promise by c\_\_n\_\_e\_\_t\_\_i\_\_g to C\_\_r\_\_s\_\_i\_\_n\_\_i\_\_y.

As Frankish kings grew weaker, role of the M\_\_y\_\_r of the P\_\_l\_\_ce changed. Originally, the Mayor managed the King's household, but he became the most p\_\_w\_\_r\_\_f\_\_l person in the k\_\_n\_\_d\_\_m. In 732, M\_\_y\_\_r Charles M\_\_rt\_\_l led a Frankish army to victory over Jabal Tariq's M\_\_\_\_\_ forces in the B\_\_t\_\_le of T\_\_\_\_\_.

The C\_\_r\_\_l\_\_n\_\_i\_\_n Dynasty began in 751 after C\_\_a\_\_l\_\_s M\_\_rt\_\_l's son, P\_\_p\_\_n the S\_\_o\_\_t, made an a\_\_l\_\_a\_\_ce with Pope Z\_\_c\_\_a\_\_i\_\_s, who granted Pepin the title, K\_\_\_\_\_ of the F\_\_\_\_\_.

### Answer in Complete Sentences

1. Why did Charles DeGaulle write that "The history of France begins with Clovis?"

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2. The text states, "as kings turned into figureheads, the Mayors became more powerful." Define figurehead.

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3. What was the significance of Charles Martel's name?

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\*4. The text states, "Childeric's tonsure meant that the end rule of the long haired Merovingian kings had ended." Explain why the tonsure was significant.

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