08/24/20 The Byzantine Empire (330 C.E. - 1453 C.E.)

- Due to administrative and territorial issues, the Eastern Empire split from Rome (the west) after 330 CE, and continued under Greek rule (although they continue to refer to themselves as Romans) from the capital of Constantinople.
  - This new nation was kind of a continuation of the Roman Empire which had fallen in the West, except this was in the East.
  - Constantinople (originally Byzantium) was named after Constantine.
    - It connected the East and West through trade roots. There was lots of culture, religions, and trade here.
  - Constantine made Christianity legal, favored Christians and became a Christian himself but it became the official religion in 379 C.E. by Theodosius.

- While the West fell in 485 C.E., the East continued and was a dominant force in economics, politics, trade and culture until 1453 C.E.
- Throughout the Post Classical Era, the Byzantine Empire would connect the Mediterranean to the East via trade through the Silk Road in Antioch.
- At the height of the Byzantine Empire, Justinian (527 C.E. - 565 C.E.) and Theodora (his wife) re-conquered the West.
  - Justinian made a unified legal code, the 'Justinian Code' that became the basis for Western law (Europe, Americas) and was separated from religious rule.
  - Theodora influenced a string of reforms for women; made women's rights more prominent (property ownership rights, removed harsh punishments for rape victims, etc). She also promoted religious and social policies that were important to her. She was one of the most influential and powerful Byzantine Empresses.
  - Before Justinian, the Byzantine empire was constantly being attacked by surrounding nations and even during and after they were still being attacked. They were constantly gaining and losing land. They fought Persians, Slavs, Turks, Arabs, etc.

- However, plagues, like the Black Death (14th century), rebellions (Basil the CopperHand), and invasions by Arabs and Turks from the 8th to 15th centuries would lead to the decline/downfall of the Empire in 1453 C.E.
  - Because much trade happened in the Byzantine empire, the Black Death was also traded between merchants.

- Eastern Orthodox Church (1054 C.E. to Present)
  - Religious differences between Roman and Byzantine Empires causes the Great Schism (East-West Schism) in 1054 C.E.