

# Summary of Duke Guillaume (Conqueror) Peuerel

Nov 2, 2008

Name: Duke Guillaume (Conqueror) Peuerel<sup>1,2</sup>  
Sex: Male

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## Individual Facts

Birth	Oct 14, 1024	Falaise, Calvados, Normandy, France <sup>2</sup>
Birth	1027/28	Falaise, Calvados, Normandy, France <sup>3</sup>
Death	Sep 10, 1087 (age 62)	Hermenbraville, Rouen, Seine-Infeuriere, France <sup>2</sup>
Death	8/9 Sep 1087	Rouen, France <sup>3,4</sup>
Burial		St. Stephen Abbey, Caen, Normandy, France <sup>2</sup>
Occupation		King <sup>4</sup>

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## Marriages/Children

### 1. Matilda VAN VLAANDEREN

Marriage	1053 (age 29)	Cathedral Notre Dame d'Eu <sup>1,3</sup>
Children	Countess of Blois Adela or Alice (abt 1062 - abt 1135)	
	King Henry I 'Beauclerk' (Sep 1068 - Dec 1, 1135)	

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## Notes (Individual)

**General:** William, now known to us as The Conqueror, was known to his contemporaries as William the Bastard. His mother Herleva, bore the only son of Robert, Duke of Normandy, in the year 1028. After William's birth his mother was married to one of Robert's followers and had two more sons, Robert and Odo. Although William was illegitimate, the Duke, soon to leave on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, persuaded the barons of Normandy to recognize William's birthright. On his way home, Robert was killed and at the age of seven William became Duke of Normandy.

Because of William's young age, his ascension meant unrule for approximately 10 years. Although plots to kill or capture were afoot, William survived and in the mid 1040's started to rule for himself. Normandy was constantly at war during these years, whether it be rebel bands of Normans or William's neighbors and William gained a reputation as a ruthless campaigner. It was at this time that William asked Count Baldwin of Flanders (one of William's few allies) for the hand of his daughter Matilda. The Count approved, but the Pope refused marriage on the grounds that William and Matilda were too closely related (consanguinity). But William went ahead with the marriage not only because of the important alliance with Flanders, but because he was in love. According to contemporary accounts William was never unfaithful to Matilda and she bore him nine children. They were also an odd-looking couple. The skeletal remains found in their graves show that William was about 5'10" and Matilda 4'2".

In 1050 Edward the Confessor, King of England and a distant relative to William, dangled the promise of the English throne before William if he would only support Edward in his dispute with Earl Godwin, Edward's father-in-law. However, although monarchs were not yet chosen by strict rules of heredity, there were other candidates of English blood who were more closely related to Edward, namely Harold, son of Earl Godwin and brother of Edward's wife Edith. As could have been predicted, by 1066 Edward reconciled with Godwin and on his deathbed named Harold as his successor. William was incensed. Not only did Edward promise him the throne, William asserted, but Harold had sworn allegiance to him when he visited Normandy two years earlier. It was this sworn allegiance that branded Harold' a usurper and a perjurer, and William was granted papal approval to invade England and claim his rights.

William's preparation for battle may have won him England before he ever set foot on the island fortress. Normandy, a small duchy, could not supply all the men needed for an expedition of this size, but the prospect of invading England, with its natural resources and wealth, was an appealing one. Soldiers and free lances from all over France and Flanders joined the campaign. William's ranks swelled, and throughout the spring and summer he built ships and gathered supplies. By August William was ready to sail, but the winds of the English Channel were against him. He waited throughout August and September, all the while cursing the weather, yet unaware that his biggest problems were being solved for him. If William had landed and managed to defeat the English army, he would have moved forward only to encounter Harold Herdrada of Norway, who arrived in September also to conquer England. Instead, as Harold waited for William to land in Pevensy, he heard of the Norse invasion and marched north to meet Harold Hardrada on 25 September. Two days later William set sail and made an unopposed landing at Pevensy. Harold Godwinsson rushed back to meet William, and the two armies met at Hastings on 14 October.

The Battle of Hastings left William victor and Harold dead. With no leader, further English resistance was futile. The English barons submitted to William, and on Christmas day 1066, William was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey. But the English submission did not last long. Soon, after one revolt after another broke out, but each rebellion was met with swift defeat and equally swift retribution. English estates were confiscated and given to Normans. By 1071 the native English ruling class was wiped out. England was now ruled by a French speaking aristocracy.

In 1071 William returned to Normandy. It had not gone unnoticed by either France or Flanders that William was now the most powerful monarch in Northern Europe, and they saw their opportunity to change the balance of power in William's first-born son, Robert. Long ignored by William, Robert felt entitled to his father's wealth and power and was easily manipulated by William's enemies into conspiracies against his father. After a few botched plots, including one where Robert actually wounded William, the Conqueror's attentions were again focused on England. King Swein of Denmark was planning to invade England. In an attempt to see where money for this war could be found, William commissioned a census of sorts. Representatives of the crown went from shire to shire cataloging the holding of every land-owner in England. The results became one of the most famous documents of Norman England, The Doomesday Book.

However, the Doomesday Book was of little use to William. Before monetary benefits could be reaped, Normandy called. In

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yet another dispute with the King of France over Norman territory, William attempted a surprise attack on the town of Mantes. While winning the town, William received serious injury and on 9 September 1087 he died. William was brought to the Church of St. Stephen at Caen for burial, but unfortunately in his later years William had grown very fat. (King Philip of France said he looked like a pregnant woman.) While trying to stuff his body into the stone sarcophagus the corpse burst open and according to witnesses filled the church with a foul odor. It was an unceremonious end to the man who changed the destiny of England forever. [<http://www.spacelab.net/~gail/norman/william.html>]

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## Sources

1. Sarah Waterman at vswaterman at earthlink dot net, *Descendants of William de Normandie*.
2. June Peavey at pvscribe at clarkston dot com, *Peverell of Royal Descent* (Owner Marj Gisi and June Peavey).
3. Buck, J. Orton & Timothy Field Beard, *Pedigree of Some of the Emperor Charlemagne's Descendants* (Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD).
4. Brent Schlottman at brentschlottman at home dot com, *Schlottman-Ledbetter Genealogy* (Rootsweb).