

**THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS**

**EPISODE 68:
REBELS WITH A CAUSE**

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast - a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 68: Rebels With a Cause. In this episode, we're going to look at the early reign of William the Conqueror as King of England. After the Battle of Hastings, everything seemed to be going William's way for a while. He even tried to maintain and work with the native Anglo-Saxon nobles and officials. But soon, the country exploded into rebellion. So this time, we'll look at those events, and we'll start to see how William's attitude toward his English subjects changed. In the wake of those rebellions, William decided to impose his will on the English people. And the English language which he initially embraced was soon abandoned. The Anglo-Saxons were soon replaced by William's French allies at just about every position of power. And a new divide was created. It was a political, social and linguistic divide. At the top were French-speakers, and the bottom were English-speakers. And that divide has influenced the English language ever since.

But before we begin, I wanted to let you know that I have posted the transcripts for the first 20 episodes of the podcast at the website. Just go to the 'Transcripts' tab at historyofenglishpodcast.com. I will continue to update that list, and I hope to have all of the transcripts up shortly.

Now this time, we're going to begin our look at the Norman settlement of England. As we already know, the conquest of England by French speakers fundamentally changed the English language. This overall process was complicated, and frankly, it was a little bit mysterious. It is fascinating that such a small number of Normans could so drastically change the language of over a million Anglo-Saxons, but that's what happened over the next few centuries.

In order to understand this process, we have to keep in mind the nature of what happened. The French influence on English was vertical, not horizontal. And let me explain what I mean by that.

Very often, when two different groups of people speaking different languages come into contact with each other, the language exchanges are horizontal. They trade with each other. They work with each other. They marry each other. The two groups of speakers share the same general class, so there is a lot of give and take. And there is some evidence that this was the case when the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians mixed together in the Danelaw.

But the situation was different with the Normans. They didn't really live side-by-side with the English. They 'ruled over' the English. They were the aristocrats, the nobles, the landholders, the lords, and the bishops. They were the upper class. Meanwhile, the English were at the bottom of the social ladder. They were the peasants, the serfs, the tradesmen, the manual laborers.

In that environment, the French influence on English was vertical. It came from the top down. French was prestigious, but English was looked down upon and stigmatized.

And that basic fact is still reflected in Modern English. When we look at synonyms in Modern English, we often find an Old English word and French word with similar meanings. The native Old English word is usually the more basic or common word, while the French word is usually more elevated and sophisticated.

So we might have an English *house* or a French *manor* or *mansion* or *domicile* or *residence*. You might have an English *car* or a French *automobile*. You might have English *underwear* or French *lingerie*. You might have an English *wife* or *husband* or a French *spouse*. You might *lust* for someone in English or *desire* someone in French. You might *start* or *begin* a project in English, or you might *commence* the project in French. And, in a classic example, I might tend to Old English *pigs*, *cows* and *sheep*, but when I go to a restaurant, I order French *pork*, *beef* and *mutton*.

So the words borrowed from French tend to be a bit more sophisticated or elevated compared to the native Old English words. And the reason why we have that general rule in English today is because of what happened immediately after the Norman Conquest. So to see what happened, let's return to our historical narrative.

As we saw last time, William was crowned as King of England on Christmas Day in 1066. The Anglo-Saxon army had just been defeated at Hastings. And a large number of English thanes and nobles had been killed in the process, especially southern nobles. The northern earls Edwin and Morcar were still around. They had remained in the north following the Battle of Stamford Bridge a few days earlier. And many of the Anglo-Saxon bureaucrats and local officials were still around as well.

So as William took the throne, he initially sought to use that existing bureaucracy. He wanted to rule as a later-day Cnut. He would be the king, but he would allow the native Anglo-Saxons to run the hundreds and shires and shire courts. So William maintained a lot of them in prominent positions within both the government and the church.

I noted that the northern earls Edwin and Morcar were still alive because they didn't fight at Hastings. So they were a potential threat to William. But William allowed Edwin to remain as the Earl of Mercia. However, he did replace Morcar as Earl of the Northumbria.

And you might remember from the last episode that the only other person with a blood claim to the throne was Edward the Confessor's young grand-nephew, Edgar the Aetheling. In other times, young Edgar might have been killed or exiled. But William actually approached Edgar and gave him residence at the royal court.

And beyond those nobles, many of the Anglo-Saxon landholders were allowed to retain their lands, as long as they paid a tax to the crown. The best estimates suggest that there were somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 Anglo-Saxons landholders. So there was still an Anglo-Saxon aristocracy in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest.

Now, as we know, William had promised property and estates to his French supporters, and that land had to come from somewhere. And as it turned out, many of the nobles of southern England had been killed at Hastings, including most of the Godwin family. And since those nobles owned a lot of land, William was able to use that land to satisfy his obligations to his French supporters.

This established a policy that would continue for the rest of William's reign. Those who fought against him or challenged his authority would have their lands confiscated. And he would then turn around and grant that land to the men who had supported his Conquest. So some land was redistributed to Frenchmen early on. But most of the land remained in the hands of Anglo-Saxons at first, and many Anglo-Saxons retained their old titles and positions.

The total population of England at this point was somewhere between one to two million people, probably a little closer to one million. And it is estimated that William brought between five to fifteen thousand people with him from France. That included soldiers, retainers, translators and various other people. So only around one percent of the total population would have been French.

So early on, it was important for William to maintain as much of the existing infrastructure and bureaucracy as he could. And he also maintained the use of the English language for certain functions. When he arrived in England, he found that many official documents were being written in English, not the Latin he was accustomed to back in Normandy.

We're told by historical sources that William actually embraced English early on. He tried to learn English so he could better communicate with his subjects. That way, he could participate in court hearings and assemblies without an interpreter. But we are also told that he never actually learned the language. He had too much on his plate to learn a new language. Now this story comes to us from an English monk and chronicler named Orderic Vitalis. He was born in 1077, so just a decade after William became king. And he wrote a very important social history of England in Latin. But one of the interesting things about Orderic is that his father was French, and his mother was English. And one of his contemporaries was the great English historian William of Malmesbury. And guess what, his father was also French and his mother was also English. And I just wanted to mention that fact at this point to plant that seed for you. Because those French and English marriages became quite common during this first decade or so after the Conquest. And those marriages produced lots of children, most of whom were probably bilingual, speaking the French of their father and the English of their mother. And that will also become an important part of our story. But for now, let's return to William's court and see how he was dealing with this language issue.

As the new king, William had to issue edicts and orders to local officials. And those usually came in one of two forms – either charters or writs. We've looked at those documents before. Charters were long, detailed documents, and they were typically written in Latin even in England. But writs were shorter, less formal documents, and they were often written in English. They were usually addressed to specific local officials, and they were often read aloud at public assemblies, which is why they were often written in English so everyone could understand them.

So after William arrived, he decided to continue that practice. During his early reign, he issued writs in both English and Latin, but interestingly, not in French. That would come later.

William's decision to use English in some of his official documents was probably meant to emphasize that he was now the 'English' king, and not just a Norman conqueror. But as we'll see, the use of English in those legal documents died out about a decade into his reign. After the year 1080, all writs and other legal documents were being issued in Latin. And that's consistent with the general theme of this episode. English was allowed at first, but it soon disappeared.

So as we look at the situation on the ground in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest, it looked like William was going to rule as a later-day Cnut. He was going to let England be England, and he was just going to serve as the monarch.

But William was not a naive man. He knew that rebellions and revolts could occur at any time, so he needed to secure his position. And in order to do that, he imported something that had been used to great effect back in France – the castle. As soon as William arrived in England, he made it his policy to build fortified castles around the country. Castles had a long history back in France. They were used to defend a particular region. But those castles were a relatively new concept in England.

Rather than castles, England had tended to use burhs. Burhs were fortified towns or villages. They were very effective, but they were actual towns. A castle on the other hand was a small fort that could be built just about anywhere. And unlike burhs, the Normans could build as many castles as they wanted. And once they were in place, they provided a place to station troops, and they were very, very difficult for opponents to penetrate.

Now as we have seen before, the word *castle* is a Norman French word. And in fact, it appears to be one of the earliest Norman French words borrowed into English. It appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle less than ten years after the Conquest. So the English became very familiar with both castles, and the word *castle*, in the decade after 1066.

Castle was derived from the Latin word *castellum* which meant a fort or fortified village. So the original meaning of *castellum* was very similar to the Old English *burgh*. And in fact, the Anglo-Saxons had borrowed that Latin word very early on in the period of Old English. They used the word in a variety of place names. The word evolved into *caster* and *chester*, and it contributed to place names like *Lancaster* and *Manchester* and many others. But again, that was an earlier borrowing when the word still meant 'a fortified village.'

But now, after the Conquest, the word came in again as *castel* – this time from Norman French. And this time, when it came in, it came in with this later Norman meaning.

Now I should note that these early Norman castles were probably not what you envision when you think of a castle. We're not exactly talking about Cinderella's castle here. These early fortifications were the type referred to as 'motte and bailey' castles. The Normans would basically construct a large man-made hill. On top of that hill, they would build a simple wooden

structure to house the troops garrisoned there. At the bottom, a ditch was dug all the way around the hill or mound.

The mound itself was called the *motte* or /moat/ in French. And at the bottom of the mound was an open court surrounded by a wall or fence. The wall or fence was called a *bailey*. And sometimes the open court in between the mound and the fence was also called a *bailey*. So today, these very basic fortifications are known as ‘motte and bailey’ castles.

Now over time, the meaning of that word *motte* – or /moat/ in French– changed. Instead of referring to the mound, it came to refer to the ditch that surrounded the mound. That ditch was often filled with water. And the result was the word *moat* which we still use today to refer to the water that surrounds a castle.

The word *bailey* meaning a ‘fence or wall’ was actually based on the French word *bail* which meant a ‘stake’ or a ‘fence made of stakes.’ And that word *bail* not only gave us the word *bailey* for this type of castle wall, it also gave us the word *bailiff*. A *bailiff* was originally the person in charge of one of these castles. And over time, the word acquired a much more general sense as a local administrator. It specifically acquired the meaning of a person who assisted the shire reeve or *sheriff* for short. And even today, the term *bailiff* is still used to mean a court official or a deputy. But again, *bailiff* was a very early French word which entered English because of its association with these ‘motte and bailey’ castles.

So the word *bail* meant a stake or fence. And thing about a fence is that it works two different ways. It can keep intruders out like a castle’s walls, but it can also keep prisoners in. And it is that sense, that we got the word *bail* as in to ‘bail’ someone out of jail. The word *bail* acquired a meaning of ‘captivity or custody.’ And in later use, it came to refer to the process by which a prisoner was released from jail into the custody of another person who posted a bond. And of course, today a person or company might seek a *bailout* if they get in financial trouble. But all of those words are rooted in the French word for fence – the same type of fence found in the early Norman castles.

As we’ll see, these rudimentary castles were built throughout the countryside, and they enabled the Normans to control the countryside. And over time, many of these forts were enlarged and expanded. And that ultimately produced the massive stone structures that we think of today when we think of castles.

Now I noted that castle walls worked both ways. They kept invaders out, but they could also be used to keep prisoners locked inside. And the best example of this is the castle that William built in London as soon as he became king. One of the first castles he built was located on the north bank of the Thames. It was a very basic fortification at first. But later in William’s reign, stone was brought over from Normandy to enhance the structure. That structure became known as the White Tower. And the complex that developed around it became known as the Tower of London. So the Tower of London has its origins as a small castle built by William the Conqueror shortly after the Conquest.

So as we look at the situation on the ground in early 1067, we see a relatively stable England. William was maintaining much of the existing English bureaucracy, and he was building fortifications to ensure that he could maintain law and order in case any problems arose. But for now, there were no significant problems. So in March of 1067, just three months after his coronation, he decided to return to Normandy. And that suggests that he felt comfortable with the situation on the ground in England.

But soon after he left, the strains of the conquest started to show. Signs of unrest started to appear throughout England. The first open revolt against Norman rule broke out in Exeter in the southwest of England in late 1067. William returned to England that December, and he led a combined Norman and English army into the southwest to put down the rebellion.

With the southwest under control, William made arrangements for the coronation of his wife Matilda as the new Queen of England. She was brought across the channel and crowned as Queen of England in May of 1068. Now I should mention a couple of things about Matilda and William before I move on. They had nine children together. And among those nine children were three sons who inherited parts of William's realm when he died. One of those sons ended up as Duke of Normandy, and the other two sons ended up as future Kings of England. In fact, all subsequent Kings and Queens of England traced their lineage back to William the Conqueror, and that includes the current monarch Elizabeth II.

Now this fact may raise an interesting question for some of you. In earlier episodes, I noted that Queen Elizabeth is a distant descendant of earlier Anglo-Saxon kings like Alfred the Great. So how is that? If the Anglo-Saxon royal line was wiped out by William the Conqueror, and all later monarchs are descended from William, how is Elizabeth also a descendant of Alfred the Great? Well the answer is that the European royal families were so incestuous that almost all of the monarchs are related to each other if you look far enough. Marriage alliances were such a standard arrangement that they were all cousins.

And in fact, we can trace Elizabeth's lineage back to Alfred the Great a couple of different ways. But one of the easiest ways is through this marriage of William and Matilda. William's wife Matilda was actually a direct descendant of Alfred the Great. She was the great, great, great, great, great grand-daughter of Alfred the Great. (That's a lot of greats.) And that line of descent was based on a daughter of Alfred the Great who married the Count of Flanders. So Matilda came from the Flanders royal family, but she was ultimately a direct descendant of Alfred.

So all of that means that all of William and Matilda's children were descendants of both William the Conqueror and Alfred the Great. So in that sense, the Anglo-Saxon bloodline did live on in a very indirect way.

So with Matilda now officially crowned as the Queen of England, William turned his attention to the growing unrest on the ground. The relationships he had formed with the native Anglo-Saxons were beginning to break down. And the rebellion in Exeter was an early sign that William's reign was not going to be as easy as he originally thought. He was going to have to deal with uprisings

and rebellions, and he was going to have to suppress those rebellions if he wanted to keep his crown.

As we've seen in earlier episodes, there was already a resentment of the Normans going back to the reign of Edward the Confessor. And now the land of the nobles killed at Hastings was being redistributed to Normans and other French allies. In fact, Godwin's earldom of Wessex ceased to exist as a political entity. It was now just part of William's realm. So many of the remaining Anglo-Saxon nobles, especially those in the north, feared and resented William's rule.

Furthermore, there had always been a north-south divide in English politics. The northerners had never been crazy about southern rule from Wessex. And there was still a heavy Scandinavian influence in the north. So the northerners had reluctantly accepted a Wessex king and even Danish king like Cnut, but they were not the least bit interested in a French king. So William faced his greatest challenges in the north.

As the native Anglo-Saxons began to look around for an alternative to William, there were a few options on the table. Edward the Confessor's grand-nephew, Edward the Aetheling, was still out there. I mentioned him earlier. He had been born in Hungary as the descendant of an exiled child of Edmund Ironsides. So you really have to do some genealogical research to follow that family line. But he was ultimately the great-grandson Aethelred the Unready. But he had been far too young and far too removed from English politics to garner any support from the Anglo-Saxon nobles. But he was technically a member of the Wessex royal dynasty. And he was still alive, and he was willing to serve as king if William could be overthrown. There were also a few leaders in the north who still capable of organizing some resistance. That included Edwin of Mercia and his brother Morcar, formerly the Earl of Northumbria.

Meanwhile, some of the Anglo-Saxons reached out to the King of Denmark for assistance. So William had a lot to deal with over the next few years.

In the year 1068, the north fully erupted into rebellion spurred along by Edwin and Morcar. Initially, those rebellions were put down. But in the following year, 1069, an even more serious rebellion broke out in the north. Once again, Edwin and Morcar were actively involved.

The rebels killed William's governor in Durham. Then the people of York rose up and destroyed the Norman garrison there. Now this was a massive rebellion and a serious threat to William's reign. This is where everything could have fallen apart for William. The rebellion soon began to spread down into Mercia and the southwest. The unrest also received support from the king of Scotland who was married to Edgar the Aetheling's sister. And a large Danish fleet even appeared off the English coast with aims of removing William from power.

So with all of this rebellious activity occurring with a few years of the Norman Conquest, it probably isn't surprising that the word *rebel* is French word – and it is one of the early words which passed into English after the Conquest. The word *rebel* is based on the Latin word *bellum* meaning 'war.' We actually saw that word in one of the early episodes of the podcast. It gave us the word *ante-bellum* meaning 'before the war,' and specifically meaning 'before the America

Civil War.’ It is also cognate with words like *belligerent* and *bellicose*. And in this case, the root gave us the French words *rebel* and *rebellion*.

But despite the size and scope of the rebellions against William the Conqueror, the rebels were never able to overthrow him. There were several reasons for the failure. First, all of those castles that William had built finally came into play. The rebels were never able to capture them and dislodge the Norman troops.

Another factor was the division among the rebels. Though they all agreed on removing William, that was about all they agreed on. Edgar the Aetheling’s supporters wanted a return of the Wessex monarchy with him as king. The northern earls were more interested in independence. The Danish king was interested in claiming the throne for himself. So the rebels were never able to unite under a single leader.

But the biggest factor may have been a change in William’s overall attitude towards the Anglo-Saxons. Up to this point, William had tried to rule with the consent of the Anglo-Saxon nobles and bureaucrats. But that wasn’t working anymore. All over northern England, the nobles and thanes were supporting various rebels. So at that point, William abandoned his support of the native nobles, and he decided to rule as a conqueror. And in order to do that, he had to break the will of the rebels.

In late 1069, William’s forces fought their way up to York – the largest and most important city in the north, and therefore the key to controlling the north. The Danes that had arrived to support the rebellion retreated to their ships. William didn’t have a navy at his disposal, so he ultimately bought peace with the Danes and paid them to leave. He then secured the city of York.

From a staging point at York, William ordered the destruction of everything within a 100 mile radius. Every day, William’s soldiers were sent out to kill everything in sight – men, women, children and livestock. Houses and crops were burned. Many people were killed by Norman soldiers, but many, many more fled their homes and eventually died in the countryside due to exposure and starvation.

It was an incredibly devastating event which became known as the ‘Harrying of the North.’ And it created a wasteland in the region. The later survey of England known as the Domesday Book describes most of this region with the Latin term *vasta* meaning ‘wasted or destroyed.’

The northern earls Edwin and Morcar were driven out of the north, and they headed south to East Anglia. There they joined a local thane named Hereward the Wake who was leading some local resistance. The resistance basically turned into a guerilla war for a while.

Hereward’s guerilla war was eventually suppressed by the Normans, but Hereward himself became a folk hero and legendary figure in the process. About fifty years after his rebellion, a semi-fictional account of his deeds was recorded in a book called in Latin “Gesta Herewardii Saxonis.” It translates as the ‘Deeds of Hereward the Saxon.’ It’s a fascinating story, and many

scholars think that it influenced the later tales of Robin Hood which began to appear in the 1300s.

For example, the history says that Hereward fought against the Norman oppressors, just like Robin Hood did. And it says that his father was a noble, and Hereward stole from his father's estate and distributed the money and property to his followers. So this may have contributed to the legend of Robin Hood stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. But the strongest connection between Hereward's story and Robin Hood occurs in one of the earliest recorded ballads about Robin Hood.

That ballad is called 'Robin Hood and the Potter,' and it tells the story of Robin Hood and a potter who was passing through the forest one day. Robin Hood approaches the potter and tries to make him pay a toll to pass through the forest. The potter refuses and the two fight each other, and the potter actually wins. Robin Hood then befriends the potter, and he persuades the potter to switch clothes with him so Robin can go into Nottingham in disguise. Robin Hood then goes into town disguised as the potter where he encounters the Sheriff of Nottingham and the Sheriff's wife. Now that's just part of the ballad, but compare that to the earlier story of Hereward the Wake. In Hereward's story, the Norman soldiers have surrounded the area where he is encamped. So Hereward decides to go out in disguise. So he dresses up as – you guessed it – a potter. He makes his way to the king's court. There, the Normans discuss their plans openly because they think the disguised Hereward is a peasant, and therefore they presume that he doesn't understand their language. But Hereward is able to discover their plans through this ruse.

Now I mention this story for two reasons. First, to draw a connection between Hereward and the Tales of Robin Hood, which I will explore in more detail in a future episode. But I also mentioned this story because it shows the linguistic divide that existed during this period. At this early stage, there were French speakers and there were English speakers. The two languages were distinct. And it doesn't appear that many people were bilingual. People tended to speak one language or the other, but not both. So even though it is fictional, Hereward's story tends to confirm that England wasn't really bilingual yet. The Normans could discuss their plans openly in French in front of an English peasant because peasants had no knowledge of French at that point.

Now as I said, Hereward's rebellion was eventually put down in the year 1071. At that point, Hereward disappeared from recorded history. No one really knows what happened to him. The former northern earl Morcar was captured and spent the rest of his life in a Norman prison. Edwin of Mercia headed north to Scotland, but he was murdered by his own men before he arrived there. Edgar the Aetheling also fled to Scotland. I mentioned that his sister was married to the Scottish king. So he found safe haven there. Many years later, he made amends with William, and he recognized William as the legitimate king of England.

With Edwin and Morcar out of the picture, the northern earldoms of Mercia and Northumbria also came to an end, just as Wessex has ended with the death of Harold Godwinson.

By this point, there was only one remaining Anglo-Saxon earl. His name was Waltheof, and he was the earl of a small region in the Midlands. But in 1075, he participated in another rebellion that was quickly put down. He was then captured and beheaded. And his death is significant because he was the last surviving Anglo-Saxon earl. So that brought an end to the traditional Anglo-Saxon earldoms. Some smaller earldoms were later created by the Normans, but many of those lapsed and disappeared over time. And of course, the title of *earl* would live on, but the power of those original earldoms was gone forever.

So those traditional mini-kingdoms of Mercia, Wessex, and Northumbria came to an end. Those earldoms were comprised of shires and hundreds. And going forward, those shires and hundreds would become the main local units in England. So where we once spoke of the local *earls*, we will now start to refer more and more to the ‘shire reeves’ or *sheriffs*. And we’ll look at these developments in a future episode.

So by the early 1070s, William had crushed the massive northern rebellion. A few more rebellions broke in the mid-1070s, like Waltheof’s rebellion, but those were also quickly suppressed.

Now one often-repeated story is that William introduced the *curfew* to England to keep the population under control and suppress any further revolts. But this story is a little misleading. To understand this story, we have to consider that word *curfew*. It is a French word, and it did come into English shortly after the Norman Conquest, but the original meaning of the word was quite different from today.

Curfew is a combination of two different root words – *couvre* meaning ‘cover’ and *feu* meaning ‘fire.’ *Couvre* is in fact the original version of our word *cover* – a word borrowed from French very early on. And *feu* is the French word for ‘fire.’ It has the same root as the word *fuel*, which originally meant the material used for a fire. By the way, *fire* is a native Old English word which is unrelated to the French word *feu*.

So *couvre-feu* meant ‘cover the fire.’ And *couvre-feu* was eventually shortened to just *curfew*. So *curfew* literally means ‘cover the fires.’ And that term stems from a time in the Middle Ages when a town or village would ring a curfew bell in the early evening to let everyone know that it was time to put out all of the fires.

That included fires in the common area as well fires in the homes. If fires were left unattended at night, it could spread and burn down the village. So the point of the curfew bell was simply public safety. It wasn’t really intended to keep people from rioting.

And in fact, there are written reports that a type of curfew bell was rung in Oxford during the time of Alfred the Great. So England definitely had the ‘curfew’ bell long before William the Conqueror arrived. But again, it was designed to prevent fires.

In the 1500s, an Italian scholar living in England named Polydore Vergil wrote a history of England. And he claimed that William the Conqueror introduced the curfew to England as a

means of oppression. Presumably, the idea was that people retired to bed when the fires were extinguished because there was no light in town after that point. So William used the traditional curfew bell, not so much to prevent fires, but to ensure that people were in their homes in bed and not outside rioting or plotting rebellion.

Now Polydore Vergil's history in the 1500s is the first known account of William instituting the curfew. So it is impossible to verify. But William of Malmesbury, writing a few years after William's reign, claimed that there was a curfew in place during the reign of William's children, William Rufus and Henry. And he implies that it began during the reign of William's son, William Rufus. He also writes that it was so unpopular that his brother Henry ended it around the year 1100. So that may have been where Polydore Vergil picked up the idea that William the Conqueror instituted the curfew. Either way, it does appear that some type of curfew was implemented around this time either by William or his son. But again, it may have simply been a standard curfew bell designed to minimize fires. One thing we can say for certain is that the word *curfew* entered English shortly after the Norman Conquest.

Now, regardless of whether William himself actually implemented a curfew, it is consistent with his overall approach to the native Anglo-Saxons during this period in the 1070s. The various rebellions had changed William's view of the natives. He concluded that he could no longer trust them to administer their own regions. They were too busy plotting against him. So from the outbreak of the northern rebellions in 1069 through the 1070s, Anglo-Saxons were gradually removed from virtually all positions of authority in England. William wanted people he could trust. He wanted his Norman supporters. They would maintain order and control and prevent any further rebellions.

So as the remaining Englishmen were removed from power, they were gradually replaced by William's French-speaking supporters. And this was done across the board. It included Church officials, government officials and landholders. So let's begin our look at this process with the Church officials.

At the time of the Conquest, the English Church was dominated by Anglo-Saxon clerics. But now, that gradually came to an end. Just as today, England had two Archbishops – one at Canterbury in the south and one at York in the north. The Archbishop of Canterbury was Stigand – a loyal Anglo-Saxon. He was the cleric who had been brought in to replace the exiled Norman Archbishop Robert of Jumieges during the time of Edward the Confessor. The Godwins were largely responsible for his appointment, so he was an obvious target for William's purges.

In 1070, in the midst of those northern rebellions, Stigand was removed as Archbishop and his property was confiscated. William replaced him with his Norman friend Lanfranc. I mentioned Lanfranc last time. He was the Norman bishop who had helped to arrange papal support for the Norman Conquest. So he was close to both William and the Pope. And now he was brought across the Channel to be the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of York was Ealdred – another Anglo-Saxon. He was the Archbishop who had performed the coronation ceremonies for both William and his wife

Matilda. He had remained a supporter of William, and he was allowed to remain in his position in York until he died in the year 1069. At that point, he was also replaced by a Norman. So by 1071, both Archbishops were Norman.

As I noted, the new Archbishop of Canterbury was Lanfranc – an old ally of William, and his authority came to dominate the English Church. It was during this period that the power of the Archbishop of Canterbury started to eclipse that of the Archbishop of York. In 1072, several sees in the Midlands were transferred from York to Canterbury. And this increased the overall influence of Canterbury.

Lanfranc also made many changes to the organization of the Church. Celibacy among the clergy was enforced. Priests were no longer permitted to have a wife or children. Many churches and abbeys were built or re-built along Norman lines. And most importantly for our purposes, he replaced many of the English clergy with better-trained Normans. Over the next few years, most of the bishops around the country were replaced with Normans. In 1075, as the rebellions were coming to an end, thirteen of the twenty-one bishops were still English. But twelve years later, at the end of William's reign, only three bishops were English. So the archbishops and most of the bishops were French-speaking by that point. And beyond that, many monks flocked to England from Normandy. They soon filled the English abbeys and monasteries. Some even founded new abbeys and monasteries. As a result, most of the abbots and most parish priests were also French-speakers now.

The impact of these changes on the English language cannot be overstated [Editor's Note: The line should read. "The impact of these changes. . . cannot be understated."] Most of the education in England, and most of the literacy in England, was directly tied to the church and monastery schools. Going back to the time of Alfred the Great, it had been acceptable to use both English and Latin for church business in England. That had allowed a great flourishing of Old English literature. But now, that largely came to an end. Most of the new clerics didn't speak English. And even if they did, Latin was the traditional language of the Church where they came from back on the continent. So they directed that Latin be used for Church business going forward. And that meant that most of the education in those Church schools was conducted in Latin. And Old English, as a written language, gradually disappeared.

Now I say it 'gradually disappeared,' but to be fair, some new English documents were produced, and quite a few older English texts were copied and compiled during this period. In all, about fifty manuscripts survive in Old English from the period after 1066. But that is a tiny number compared to the documents that were being written in Latin and French. And the production of English documents gradually decreased over the following century to the point where they stopped altogether.

The best examples of this decline are the chronicles which were typically maintained in monasteries. As I noted last time, the monks who maintained the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle at Abingdon stopped recording entries in the year 1066.

The version maintained at Winchester – the so-called Parker Chronicle – contains an entry in Old English for the year 1070. But after that, all subsequent entries were written in Latin. A copy was also maintained at Peterborough, but that monastery was largely destroyed by a fire about fifty years after the Norman Conquest. The monks then got a copy of the Chronicle from somewhere else – probably Canterbury – and they copied it around the year 1121. And from that point until 1154, they maintained it in English. So it was maintained for almost a century after the Conquest. And that was very unusual for an English document. So modern scholars actually use that version of the Chronicle to trace the evolution of the language in that first century after the Conquest. And we'll look at that version of the Chronicle in an upcoming episode.

Another local chronicle was maintained at Canterbury called the 'Annales Anglo-Saxonici Breves' in Latin. Some scholars consider this to be another version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but it only focuses on local events around Canterbury. So it's really a completely different document. It was apparently started in the year 1073 shortly after the Conquest, and it was initially maintained in English. But after the year 1109, a little more than forty years after the Conquest, the language shifted to Latin, and all subsequent entries were in Latin.

So the major point here is that English essentially disappeared as a written language in the century after the Norman Conquest. And that was actually a very important development in the overall history of English. With the loss of written English, monks stopped learning how to write it. And the West Saxon dialect which had been used for writing gradually lost its prestige and importance. Without a common prestige dialect to hold the language together, each regional dialect started to go its own way. As a result, the English language became very fractured. As we'll see, accounts from the next century indicate that English-speakers in one part of the country were no longer able to understand English speakers in other parts of the country. Again, we'll look at these developments in an upcoming episode, but that entire process really began with the loss of Old English writing and education. And that process stemmed from the replacement of English-speaking Church leaders with French-speaking Church leaders from the continent.

So as we return to the later years of William's reign, the English Church was now firmly under Norman control. But of course, it wasn't just the Church. We've already seen how the various earls were replaced. One-by-one, they were killed, imprisoned or exiled. When Waltheof was killed in the year 1075, the last of the Anglo-Saxon earls died.

Though the traditional earldoms disappeared, I noted that the underlying shires and hundreds were maintained. And those really became the main local political entities going forward. And out in the countryside, a social revolution was taking place. In every corner of England, Anglo-Saxon nobles and landholders were being replaced by French barons and landholders. And this process shows the extent to which William had abandoned his original plan to work with local English nobility. Of course, this process also created the new French-speaking aristocracy that so heavily influenced the English language going forward.

So next time, I want to look at what happened in countryside. I want to explore how the new French aristocracy came into being and how Norman feudalism was transplanted to England. I

also want to look at the creation of the so-called Domesday Book. And along the way, I want to see how the English language was being impacted these changes.

Before I conclude this episode, I want to make a quick note. Many of you long-time listeners will have noted that the time between each episode of the podcast has grown longer over the past few months. That is partly because many of the Old English episodes were based around certain themes, and in order to develop those themes, those episodes grew longer and longer, and the time required to put them together grew longer and longer. But it has always been my plan to return to the original format of the podcast when we got to Middle English. That is why this episode is a little shorter. So going forward, I am going to try to return to the slightly shorter episodes with a new episode every two weeks.

This will require a certain time commitment on my part which I will try to maintain. And to that end, I always welcome your support for the podcast both monetary and otherwise. So if you would like to support the podcast, you can always do so at historyofenglishpodcast.com.

And until next time, which will hopefully be in two weeks, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.