

Chapter 6 - The Ancient Scottish Pedigree, English Ancestors

Introduction: This is a continuation of Chapter 5, but it is the narratives for our English ancestors.

King Edmund “Ironside” II of Wessex (988-1016)(our 28th great grandfather)

Edmund Ironside (988-1016), was King of England from April 23 to November 30, 1016. He was the son of King Æthelred the Unready and his first wife, Ælfgifu of York. Edmund's reign was marred by a war he had inherited from his father; his nickname of "Ironside" was given to him "because of his valor" in resisting the Danish invasion led by Cnut the Great.

Edmund was born in Wessex in about 988. The exact date of Edmund's birth is unclear, but it could have been no later than 993 when he was a signatory to charters along with his two elder brothers. He was the third of the six sons of King Æthelred the Unready and his first wife, Ælfgifu, who was probably the daughter of Earl Thored of Northumbria. His elder brothers were Æthelstan and Egbert, and younger ones, Eadred, Eadwig and Edgar. He had four sisters, Eadgyth (or Edith), Ælfgifu, Wulfhilda, and the Abbess of Wherwell Abbey. His mother died around 1000, after which his father remarried, this time to Emma of Normandy, who had two sons, Edward the Confessor and Alfred and a daughter Goda.

Edmund was not expected to be King of England; however, by June 1014 two elder brothers had died, making him heir apparent. England was conquered by Sveinn Forkbeard Haraldsson (our 28th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) at the end of the same year, but he died shortly thereafter, paving the way for Æthelred to return to the throne, which he did, but not without opposition. Sveinn's son, Cnut (we descend from his sister Astridur), was defeated and returned to Denmark, where he assembled an invasion force to re-conquer England. It would not arrive for another year.

After regaining the throne, the royal family set about strengthening its hold on the country with the assistance of Eadric Streona (Edmund's brother in law). People who had sided with the Danes in 1014 were punished, and some were killed. In one case, two brothers, Morcar and Sigferth, were killed and their possessions, along with Sigferth's wife, were taken by Æthelred. Sigferth's widow was imprisoned within a monastery. But she had already captured Edmund's attention.

Cnut returned to England in August 1015. Over the next few months, Cnut pillaged most of England. Edmund joined Æthelred to defend London, but in 1016 Edmund unofficially named himself the Earl of the East Midlands and raised a revolt against his father. Without the king's permission he took Ealdgyth from the monastery, and married her; it would have been a politically advantageous marriage, since she was a member of one of the strongest families in the

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Midlands.

When Edmund's father Æthelred died on April 23, 1016, the citizens and councillors in London chose Edmund as king and probably crowned him, while the rest of the Witan, meeting at Southampton, elected Cnut. Edmund then mounted a last-ditch effort to revive the defense of England. While the Danes laid siege to London, Edmund headed for Wessex, where the people submitted to him and he gathered an army. He fought inconclusive battles against the Danes and their English supporters at Penselwood in Somerset and Sherston in Wiltshire. He then raised the siege of London, which had been successfully resisted by the citizens, and defeated the Danes near Brentford. They renewed the siege while Edmund went to Wessex to raise further troops, returning to again relieve London, defeat the Danes at Otford, and pursue Cnut into Kent. Eadric Streona now went over to Edmund, but at the decisive Battle of Assandun on October 18, Eadric and his men fled and Cnut decisively defeated Edmund. There may have been one further battle in the Forest of Dean, after which the two kings, persuaded by the Witan, negotiated a peace dividing the country between them. Edmund received Wessex while Cnut took Mercia and probably Northumbria.

Edmund died shortly afterwards on November 30, 1016. It is thought Edmund's cause of death may possibly have been caused by wounds received in battle or by some disease, but it is certainly a possibility that he was murdered. The location of his death is uncertain though it is generally accepted that it occurred in London.

Edmund had two children by Ealdgyth, Edward the Exile and Edmund Ætheling. According to John of Worcester, Cnut sent them to Sweden where he probably hoped they would be murdered and forgotten, but Olafur Eiriksson, King of Sweden (our 29th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) instead forwarded them on to Kiev, where his daughter Ingigerdur (our 28th great grandmother in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) was the grand princess consort of the Kievan Rus' Prince Yaroslav the Wise. The two boys eventually ended up in Hungary where Edmund died but Edward prospered. Edward returned from exile to England in 1057. This is an example of how one of our Icelandic ancestors saved the life of one of our Scottish ancestors and ultimately saved Scotland!

Edmund was buried near his grandfather Edgar at Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset. However the abbey was destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century, and any remains of a monument or crypt would have been plundered and the location of his remains is unclear.

King Cynan ab Iago of Gwynedd (1014-1075)(our 27th great grandfather)

Cynan ab Iago (1014-1075) was a Welsh prince of the House of Aberffraw sometimes credited with briefly reigning as King of Gwynedd. His father, Iago ab Idwal ap Meurig, had been king before him and his son, Gruffydd, was king after him. Cynan ab Iago was born about 1014 at Aberflaw Castle in Caernarvonshire in Wales.

Cynan ab Iago was King of Gwynedd from 1023 to 1039 but was killed (possibly by his own men) while Cynan was still young. The throne was seized by Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, a member of a cadet branch of the royal dynasty. Cynan fled to Ireland and took refuge in the

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Viking settlement at Dublin. He married Rhanullt Ragnihildur, the daughter of its King Olaf Sigtryggsson and granddaughter of King Sigtrygg Silkbeard Olafsson. Rhanullt appeared on the list of the "Fair Women of Ireland" in the Book of Leinster and was also descended from Brian Boru.

Cynan may have died fairly soon after the birth of their son Gruffydd, as the 13th century History of Gruffydd ap Cynan details Cynan's ancestry but omits him from its account of Gruffydd's youth. Instead, Gruffydd's mother tells him about his father and the patrimony he should claim across the sea. Following two major Saxon invasions under Harold and Tostig Godwinson.

Edward “the Exile” Atheling of Wessex (1016-1057)(our 27th great grandfather)

Edward the Exile (1016 - 1057), also called Edward Ætheling, was the son of King Edmund Ironside and of Ealdgyth. He spent most of his life in exile in the Kingdom of Hungary following the defeat of his father by Cnut the Great.

After the Danish conquest of England in 1016, Cnut had Edward, said to be only a few months old, and his brother Edmund, sent to the Swedish court of King Olafur Eriksson (our 29th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree), supposedly with instructions to have the children murdered. Instead, the two boys were secretly sent to Kiev, where Olafur's daughter Ingigerdur (our 28th great grandmother in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) was the consort of Prince Yaroslav the Wise. Later Edward made his way to Hungary. This is an example of how one of our Icelandic ancestors saved the life of one of our Scottish ancestors and ultimately saved Scotland!

On hearing that Edward was alive, Edward the Confessor recalled him to England in 1056 and made him his heir. Edward the Ætheling offered the last chance of an undisputed succession within the Saxon royal house. News of Edward's existence came at a time when the old Anglo-Saxon monarchy, restored after a long period of Danish domination, was heading for catastrophe. The Confessor, personally devout but politically weak and childless, was unable to make an effective stand against the steady advance of the powerful and ambitious sons of Godwin, Earl of Wessex. From across the Channel, William, Duke of Normandy, also had an eye on the succession. Edward the Exile appeared at just the right time. Approved both by the king and by the Witan, the Council of the Realm, he offered a way out of the impasse, a counter both to the Godwinsons and to William, and one with a legitimacy that could not be readily challenged.

Edward “the Exile” Atheling finally arrived in England in 1057 with his wife Princess Agatha of Brunswick and their children: Edgar, Margaret, and Christina. Edward died within a few days, on April 19, 1057, without meeting the King. He was buried in Old St Paul's Cathedral. We descend from his daughter St. Margaret Atheling.

King William I “the Conqueror” (1028-1087)(our 26th great grandfather)

William I (1028 - 1087), usually known as William the Conqueror and sometimes

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William the Bastard, was the first Norman King of England, reigning from 1066 until his death in 1087. He was a descendant of Gungu-Hrolfur (Rollo) “Rolf the Ganger” Rognvaldsson (our 28th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) and was Duke of Normandy from 1035 onward. His hold was secure on Normandy by 1060, following a long struggle to establish his throne, and he launched the Norman conquest of England six years later. The rest of his life was marked by struggles to consolidate his hold over England and his continental lands and by difficulties with his eldest son, Robert Curthose.

William was the son of the unmarried Robert I, Duke of Normandy, by his mistress Herleva. William was born in 1027 or 1028 at Falaise, Duchy of Normandy, most likely towards the end of 1028. He was the only son of Robert I, son of Richard II. His mother Herleva was a daughter of Fulbert of Falaise. His illegitimate status and his youth caused some difficulties for him after he succeeded his father, as did the anarchy which plagued the first years of his rule. During his childhood and adolescence, members of the Norman aristocracy battled each other, both for control of the child duke and for their own ends. In 1047, William was able to quash a rebellion and begin to establish his authority over the duchy, a process that was not complete until about 1060.

One factor in William's favor was his marriage to Matilda of Flanders, the daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders. The union was arranged in 1049, but Pope Leo IX forbade the marriage at the Council of Rheims in October 1049. The marriage nevertheless went ahead some time in the early 1050s, possibly unsanctioned by the Pope. The marriage was important in bolstering William's status, as Flanders was one of the more powerful French territories, with ties to the French royal house and to the German emperors. William and Matilda were known to have had four sons and five or six daughters. We descend from their son Henry I Beauclerc of England and also their daughter Adela de Normandy.

By the time of his marriage, William was able to arrange the appointment of his supporters as bishops and abbots in the Norman church. His consolidation of power allowed him to expand his horizons, and he secured control of the neighboring county of Maine by 1062.

In 1051 the childless King Edward of England appears to have chosen William as his successor. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that William visited England in the later part of 1051, perhaps to secure confirmation of the succession, or perhaps William was attempting to secure aid for his troubles in Normandy. Whatever Edward's wishes, it was likely that any claim by William would be opposed.

In the 1050s and early 1060s, William became a contender for the throne of England held by the childless Edward the Confessor, his first cousin once removed. There were other potential claimants, including the powerful English earl Harold Godwinson whom Edward named as king on his deathbed in January 1066. Arguing that Edward had previously promised the throne to him and that Harold had sworn to support his claim, William built a large fleet and invaded England in September 1066. He decisively defeated and killed Harold at the Battle of Hastings on October 14, 1066. After further military efforts, William was crowned king on Christmas Day 1066 in London. He made arrangements for the governance of England in early 1067 before returning to Normandy. Several unsuccessful rebellions followed, but William's hold was mostly secure on England by 1075, allowing him to spend the majority of his reign on the continent.

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William's final years were marked by difficulties in his continental domains, troubles with his son Robert, and threatened invasions of England by the Danes. In 1086, he ordered the compilation of the Domesday Book, a survey listing all the land-holdings in England along with their pre-Conquest and current holders. He died on September 9, 1087 while leading a campaign in northern France, and was buried in Caen. His reign in England was marked by the construction of castles, settling a new Norman nobility on the land, and change in the composition of the English clergy. He did not try to integrate his various domains into one empire but continued to administer each part separately. His lands were divided after his death: Normandy went to Robert, and England went to his second surviving son William. The current Royal Family of England claim direct descent from William I. Therefore, many consider him the true first king of England.

Matilda of Flanders (1031-1083), (our 26th great grandmother)

Matilda of Flanders (1031 – November 2, 1083) was Queen of England and Duchess of Normandy by marriage to William the Conqueror, and regent of Normandy during his absences from the dukedom. She was the mother of ten children who survived to adulthood, including two kings, William II and Henry I.

In about 1031, Matilda was born in Ghent of Normandy into the House of Flanders. She was the second daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders and Adela of France. Flanders was of strategic importance to England and most of Europe as a "stepping stone between England and the Continent" necessary for strategic trade and for keeping the Scandinavian Intruders from England. In addition her mother was the daughter of the King of France. For these reasons Matilda was of grander birth than William, who was illegitimate, and, according to some suspiciously romantic tales, she initially refused his proposal on this account. Her descent from the Anglo-Saxon royal House of Wessex was also to become a useful card. Like many royal marriages of the period, it breached the rules of consanguinity. Matilda and William were third-cousins, once removed. She was about 20 when they married in about 1051, William was some four years older, and had been Duke of Normandy since he was about eight.

The marriage appears to have been successful, and William is not recorded to have had any bastards. Matilda was about 35, and had already borne most of her children, when William embarked on the Norman conquest of England, sailing in his flagship Mora, which Matilda had given him. She governed the Duchy of Normandy in his absence, joining him in England only after more than a year, and subsequently returning to Normandy, where she spent most of the remainder of her life, while William was mostly in his new kingdom. She was about 52 when she died in Caen, Normandy on November 2, 1083.

Apart from governing Normandy and supporting her brother's interests in Flanders, Matilda took a close interest in the education of her children, who were unusually well educated for contemporary royalty. The boys were tutored by the Italian Lanfranc, who was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070, while the girls learned Latin in Sainte-Trinité Abbey in Caen, founded by William and Matilda as part of the papal dispensation allowing their marriage.

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Saint and Queen Margaret Atheling of Wessex (1045-1093)(our 26th great grandmother)

Saint Margaret of Scotland (1045 - 1093), also known as Margaret of Wessex, was an English princess and a Scottish queen. Margaret was sometimes called "The Pearl of Scotland." She was born on September 8, 1045 in exile in Mecseknadasd, Hungary. Margaret was the daughter of the English prince Edward the Exile, and granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, King of England. Her mother was Princess Agatha of Brunswick. Her brother Edgar the Ætheling and sister Cristina were also born in Hungary around this time. Margaret grew up in a very religious environment in the Hungarian court. Margaret and her family returned to the Kingdom of England in 1057.

Still a child, she came to England with the rest of her family when her father, Edward the Exile, was recalled in 1057 as a possible successor to her great-uncle, the childless King Edward the Confessor. Whether from natural or sinister causes, her father died immediately after landing, and Margaret continued to reside at the English court where her brother, Edgar Ætheling, was considered a possible successor to the English throne. When Edward the Confessor died in January 1066, Harold Godwinson was selected as king, possibly because Edgar was considered too young. After Harold's defeat at the Battle of Hastings later that year, Edgar was proclaimed King of England, but when the Normans advanced on London, the Witenagemot (an Anglo-Saxon national council or parliament) presented Edgar to William the Conqueror, who took him to Normandy before returning him to England in 1068, when Edgar, Margaret, Cristina, and their mother Agatha fled north to Northumbria, England.

According to tradition, the widowed Agatha decided to leave Northumbria, England with her children and return to the continent. However, a storm drove their ship north to the Kingdom of Scotland in 1068, where they sought the protection of King Malcolm III. The locus where it is believed that they landed is known today as St. Margaret's Hope, near the village of North Queensferry, Fife, Scotland. Margaret's arrival in Scotland, after the failed revolt of the Northumbrian earls, has been heavily romanticized, though Symeon of Durham implied that her first meeting of Malcolm III may not have been until 1070, after William the Conqueror's Harrying of the North.

King Malcolm III was a widower with two sons, Donald and Duncan. He would have been attracted to marrying one of the few remaining members of the Anglo-Saxon royal family. The marriage of Malcolm and Margaret occurred in 1070. Subsequently, Malcolm executed several invasions of Northumberland to support the claim of his new brother-in-law Edgar and to increase his own power. These, however, had little effect save the devastation of the County.

Margaret's biographer Turgot of Durham, Bishop of St. Andrew's, credits her with having a civilizing influence on her husband Malcolm by reading him narratives from the Bible. She instigated religious reform, striving to conform the worship and practices of the Church in Scotland to those of Rome. This she did on the inspiration and with the guidance of Lanfranc, a future Archbishop of Canterbury. She also worked to conform the practices of the Scottish Church to those of the continental Church, which she experienced in her childhood. Due to these achievements, she was considered an exemplar of the "just ruler," and moreover influenced her husband and children, especially her youngest son, the future King David I of Scotland, to be just

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and holy rulers. Turgot of Durham wrote of her:

The chroniclers all agree in depicting Queen Margaret as a strong, pure, noble character, who had very great influence over her husband, and through him over Scottish history, especially in its ecclesiastical aspects. Her religion, which was genuine and intense, was of the newest Roman style; and to her are attributed a number of reforms by which the Church [in] Scotland was considerably modified from the insular and primitive type which down to her time it had exhibited. Among those expressly mentioned are a change in the manner of observing Lent, which thenceforward began as elsewhere on Ash Wednesday and not as previously on the following Monday, and the abolition of the old practice of observing Saturday (Sabbath), not Sunday, as the day of rest from labor.

Margaret attended to charitable works, serving orphans and the poor every day before she ate and washing the feet of the poor in imitation of Christ. She rose at midnight every night to attend the liturgy. She successfully invited the Benedictine Order to establish a monastery in Dunfermline, Fife in 1072, and established ferries at Queensferry and North Berwick to assist pilgrims journeying from south of the Firth of Forth to St. Andrew's in Fife. She used a cave on the banks of the Tower Burn in Dunfermline as a place of devotion and prayer. St. Margaret's Cave, now covered beneath a municipal car park, is open to the public. Among other deeds, Margaret also instigated the restoration of Iona Abbey in Scotland. She is also known to have interceded for the release of fellow English exiles who had been forced into serfdom by the Norman conquest of England.

Her husband Malcolm III, and their eldest son Edward, were killed in the Battle of Alnwick against the English on November 13, 1093. Her son Edgar was left with the task of informing his mother of their deaths. Not yet 50 years old, Margaret died on November 16, 1093, three days after the deaths of her husband and eldest son. The cause of death was reportedly grief. She was buried before the high altar in Dunfermline Abbey in Fife, Scotland.

Pope Innocent IV canonized St. Margaret in 1250 in recognition of her personal holiness, fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church, work for ecclesiastical reform, and charity. On June 19, 1250, after her canonization, her body and that of her husband were exhumed and placed in a new shrine in the eastern apse of Dunfermline Abbey in Fife, Scotland. In 1560, Mary Queen of Scots had Margaret's head removed to Edinburgh Castle as a relic to assist her in childbirth. In 1597, Margaret's head ended up with the Jesuits at the Scottish College, Douai, France, but was lost during the French Revolution. King Philip of Spain had the other remains of Margaret and Malcolm III transferred to the Escorial palace in Madrid, Spain, but their present location has not been discovered.

In 1693 Pope Innocent XII moved St. Margaret's feast day to June 10 in recognition of the birth date of the son of James VII of Scotland and II of England. In the revision of the General Roman Calendar in 1969, November 16 became free and the Church transferred her feast day to November 16, the date of her death, on which it always had been observed in Scotland. She is also venerated as a saint in the Anglican Church.

Gruffydd ap Cynan (1055-1137)(our 26th great grandfather)

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Gruffydd ap Cynan (1055 – 1137), was King of Gwynedd from 1081 until his death in 1137. In the course of a long and eventful life, he became a key figure in Welsh resistance to Norman rule, and was remembered as King of all Wales. As a descendant of Rhodri Mawr, Gruffydd ap Cynan was a senior member of the princely House of Aberffraw. Gruffydd was born about 1055 in Dublin, Ireland. In about 1082, Gruffydd married Angharad (daughter of Owain ab Edwin). They were known to have had at least two sons and five daughters.

Through his mother, Gruffydd had close family connections with the Norse settlement around Dublin and he frequently used Ireland as a refuge and as a source of troops. He three times gained the throne of Gwynedd and then lost it again, before regaining it once more in 1099 and this time keeping power until his death. Gruffydd laid the foundations which were built upon by his son Owain Gwynedd and his great-grandson Llywelyn the Great.

Unusually for a Welsh king or prince, a near-contemporary biography of Gruffydd, "The History of Gruffydd ap Cynan," has survived. Much of our knowledge of Gruffydd comes from this source.

According to the Life of Gruffydd, he was reared near Swords, County Dublin in Ireland. He was the son of a Welsh Prince, Cynan ap Iago, who was a claimant to the Kingship of Gwynedd but was probably never its king, though his father, Gruffydd's grandfather, Iago ab Idwal ap Meurig had ruled Gwynedd from 1023 to 1039. When Gruffydd first appeared on the scene in Wales the Welsh annals several times refer to him as "grandson of Iago" rather than the more usual "son of Cynan", indicating that his father was little known in Wales.

Gruffydd's mother was Rhanullt Ragnihildur Olafsdottir, a granddaughter of King Sigtrygg Silkbeard Olafsson (our 29th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) and a member of the Hiberno-Norse Uí Ímair dynasty. During his many struggles to gain the kingship of Gwynedd, Gruffydd received considerable aid from Ireland, from the Hiberno-Norse at Dublin, the Isles and Wexford and from Muircheartach Ua Briain, because he was also descendant through his mother from Brian Boru, High King of Ireland.

Gruffydd first attempted to take over the rule of Gwynedd in 1075, following the death of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn. Trahaearn ap Caradog had seized control of Gwynedd but had not yet firmly established himself. Gruffydd landed on Abermenai Point, Anglesey with an Irish force, and with the assistance of troops provided by the Norman Robert of Rhuddlan first defeated and killed Cynwrig ap Rhiwallon, an ally of Trahaearn who held Llyn, then defeated Trahaearn himself in the battle of Gwaed Erw in Meirionnydd and gained control of Gwynedd.

Gruffydd fled to Ireland but, in 1081, returned from Waterford with a force composed of Danes and Irish and landed near St David's. He was joined here by a force of his supporters from Gwynedd, and he marched north. The armies of the two confederacies met at the Battle of Mynydd Carn, with Gruffydd victorious. Gruffydd was thus able to seize power in Gwynedd for the second time.

Gruffydd was soon faced with a new enemy, as the Normans were now encroaching on Gwynedd. Gruffydd had not been king very long when he was enticed to a meeting with Hugh, Earl of Chester and Hugh, Earl of Shrewsbury. At the meeting Gruffydd was seized and taken prisoner and placed in Earl Hugh's castle at Chester for about 16 years while Earl Hugh and Robert of Rhuddlan went on to take possession of Gwynedd, building castles at Bangor,

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Caernarfon and Aberlleiniog.

Gruffydd reappeared on the scene years later, having escaped from captivity. Gruffydd again took refuge in Ireland but returned to Gwynedd to lead the assaults on Norman castles such as Aber Lleiniog. The Welsh revolt had begun in 1094 and by late 1095 had spread to many parts of Wales. This induced William II of England (William Rufus) to intervene, invading northern Wales in 1095. In the summer of 1098, Earl Hugh of Chester joined with Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury in another attempt to recover his losses in Gwynedd. Gruffydd and his ally Cadwgan ap Bleddyn retreated to Anglesey, but were then forced to flee to Ireland in a skiff when a fleet he had hired from the Danish settlement in Ireland accepted a better offer from the Normans and changed sides.

The situation was changed by the arrival of a Norwegian fleet under the command of King Magnus Olafsson III of Norway (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree), also known as Magnus Barefoot, who attacked the Norman forces near the eastern end of the Menai Straits. Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury was killed by an arrow said to have been shot by Magnus himself. The Normans were obliged to evacuate Anglesey, and the following year, Gruffydd returned from Ireland to take possession again, having apparently come to an agreement with Earl Hugh of Chester.

With the death of Hugh of Chester in 1101, Gruffudd was able to consolidate his position in Gwynedd, as much by diplomacy as by force. He met King Henry I of England who granted him the rule of Llyn, Eifionydd, Ardudwy and Arllechwedd, considerably extending his kingdom. By 1114, he had gained enough power to induce King Henry to invade Gwynedd in a three-pronged attack. Faced by overwhelming force, Gruffydd was obliged to pay homage to Henry and to pay a heavy fine, but lost no territory. By about 1118, Gruffydd's advancing years meant that most of the fighting, which pushed Gwynedd's borders eastward and southwards, was done by his three sons. Another invasion by the king of England in 1121 was a military failure. The king had to come to terms with Gruffydd and made no further attempt to invade Gwynedd during Gruffydd's reign. The latter part of Gruffydd's reign was considered to be a "Golden Age"; according to the Life of Gruffydd ap Cynan Gwynedd was "bespangled with lime-washed churches like the stars in the firmament".

Gruffudd died in his bed, old and blind, in 1137. He was buried by the high altar in Bangor Cathedral which he had been involved in rebuilding. He also made bequests to many other churches, including one to Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin where he had worshiped as a boy. He was succeeded as king of Gwynedd by his son King Owain ap Gruffydd of Gwynedd, North Wales. We descend from him.

King Henry I Beauclerc of England (1068-1135)(our 25th great grandfather)

Henry I (1068- 1135), also known as Henry Beauclerc, was King of England from 1100 to his death in 1135. He was born on September 1, 1068 in Selby of Yorkshire, England. His parents were William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders. He was the fourth son of William the Conqueror and was educated in Latin and the liberal arts. On William's death in 1087, Henry's elder brothers Robert Curthose and William Rufus inherited Normandy and England,

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respectively, but Henry was left landless. He purchased the County of Cotentin in western Normandy from Robert, but his brothers deposed him in 1091. He gradually rebuilt his power base in the Cotentin and allied himself with William against Robert.

When his brother King William Rufus died in a hunting accident in 1100, Henry seized the English throne. Tempers flared, but Henry, supported by Henry de Beaumont and Robert of Meulan, held sway and persuaded the barons to follow him. He occupied Winchester Castle and seized the royal treasury. Henry was hastily crowned king in Westminster Abbey on August 5, 1100 by Maurice, the Bishop of London. Upon his coronation, he promised to correct many of William's less popular policies.

On November 11, 1100 Henry married Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm III of Scotland. The pair had probably first met earlier the previous decade, possibly being introduced through Bishop Osmund of Salisbury. Matilda had originally been named Edith, an Anglo-Saxon name, and was a member of the West Saxon royal family, being the niece of Edgar the Ætheling, the great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironside and a descendant of Alfred the Great. For Henry, marrying Matilda gave his reign increased legitimacy, and for Matilda, an ambitious woman, it was an opportunity for high status and power in England. Matilda had been educated in a sequence of convents, however, and may well have taken the vows to formally become a nun, which formed an obstacle to the marriage progressing. She did not wish to be a nun and appealed to Anselm for permission to marry Henry, and the Archbishop established a council at Lambeth Palace to judge the issue. Despite some dissenting voices, the council concluded that although Matilda had lived in a convent, she had not actually become a nun and was therefore free to marry, a judgement that Anselm then affirmed, allowing the marriage to proceed. Matilda proved an effective queen for Henry, acting as a regent in England on occasion, addressing and presiding over councils, and extensively supporting the arts. The couple soon had two children, Matilda and William Adelin. Following the birth of these children, Matilda preferred to remain based in Westminster while Henry traveled across England and Normandy, either for religious reasons or because she enjoyed being involved in the machinery of royal governance.

Henry had a considerable sexual appetite and enjoyed a substantial number of sexual partners, resulting in many illegitimate children, at least nine sons and 13 daughters, many of whom he appears to have recognized and supported. It was normal for unmarried Anglo-Norman noblemen to have sexual relations with prostitutes and local women, and kings were also expected to have mistresses. Some of these relationships occurred before Henry was married, but many others took place after his marriage to Matilda. Henry had a wide range of mistresses from a range of backgrounds, and the relationships appear to have been conducted relatively openly. He may have chosen some of his noble mistresses for political purposes, but the evidence to support this theory is limited. One illegitimate child was our ancestor Elizabeth FitzRoy who married Fergus of Galloway. She was either the daughter of Henry and Matilda or Henry and one of his mistresses.

Robert, who invaded in 1101, disputed Henry's control of England; this military campaign ended in a negotiated settlement that confirmed Henry as king. The peace was short-lived, and Henry invaded the Duchy of Normandy in 1105 and 1106, finally defeating Robert at the Battle of Tinchebray. Henry kept Robert imprisoned for the rest of his life. Henry's

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control of Normandy was challenged by Louis VI of France, Baldwin VII of Flanders and Fulk V of Anjou, who promoted the rival claims of Robert's son, William Clito, and supported a major rebellion in the Duchy between 1116 and 1119. Following Henry's victory at the Battle of Brémule, a favorable peace settlement was agreed with Louis in 1120.

Considered by contemporaries to be a harsh but effective ruler, Henry skillfully manipulated the barons in England and Normandy. In England, he drew on the existing Anglo-Saxon system of justice, local government and taxation, but also strengthened it with additional institutions, including the royal exchequer and itinerant justices. Normandy was also governed through a growing system of justices and an exchequer. Many of the officials who ran Henry's system were "new men" of obscure backgrounds, rather than from families of high status, who rose through the ranks as administrators. Henry encouraged ecclesiastical reform, but became embroiled in a serious dispute in 1101 with Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, which was resolved through a compromise solution in 1105. He supported the Cluniac order and played a major role in the selection of the senior clergy in England and Normandy.

Henry's son William drowned in the White Ship disaster of 1120, throwing the royal succession into doubt. Henry took a second wife, Adeliza of Louvain, in the hope of having another son, but their marriage was childless. In response to this, he declared his daughter Matilda his heir and married her to Geoffrey of Anjou. The relationship between Henry and the couple became strained, and fighting broke out along the border with Anjou. Henry died on December 1, 1135 after a week of illness. Despite his plans for Matilda, the King was succeeded by his nephew, Stephen of Blois (our 28th great grandfather), resulting in a period of civil war known as the Anarchy.

Baron Alan FitzFlaad of Oswestry (1078-1114) (our 25th great grandfather)

Alan FitzFlaad (1078 - 1114) was a Breton knight, probably recruited as a mercenary by Henry I in his conflicts with his brothers. After Henry became King of England, Alan became an assiduous courtier and obtained large estates in Norfolk, Sussex, Shropshire, and elsewhere in the Midlands, including the feudal barony and castle of Oswestry in Shropshire. His duties included supervision of the Welsh border. He is now noted as the progenitor of the FitzAlan family, the Earls of Arundel (1267–1580), and the House of Stuart, although his family connections were long a matter of conjecture and controversy.

Alan was born about 1078 in St. Mal, Ile-et-Vilaine, Bretagne, France. He was the son of Fledaldus FitzAlan Senescal and Guenta verch Senescal. Fledaldus (Flaad) and his son Alan had come to the favorable notice of King Henry I of England who, soon after his accession, brought Flaad and Alan to England.

Alan FitzFlaad married Avelina de Hesdin, daughter of Ernulf de Hesdin, a tenant-in-chief in ten counties at the time of Domesday, who was killed in 1098 on crusade at Antioch, Turkey. Alan and Avelina had two sons: William FitzAlan and Walter FitzAlan. We descend from both of them. Walter FitzAlan would become first hereditary High Steward of Scotland, progenitor of the Stewart dynasty and ancestor of the Stewart Kings of Scotland.

Alan appeared in Henry I's company at least as early as September 1101, probably at a

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court held in Windsor Castle, when he witnessed important grants to Norwich Cathedral, confirming its foundation and various endowments. Next, he appeared with the king at Canterbury in 1103, where he witnessed the grant of a market to the nuns of Malling Abbey and land acquisitions by Rochester Cathedral, then in the process of rebuilding. Later that year or early in the next, Alan was with the king in the New Forest, where the business concerned Andover Priory, a daughter house of the great Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Florent de Saumur. He was probably selected deliberately for this meeting because of his family's close connections with Saumur Abbey: one of his uncles was a monk there.

Alan's rapid ascent to wealth and power was a symptom of the troubled times. The abortive revolt of Robert de Belleme in 1102 had torn apart the Anglo-Norman system of governing the Welsh Marches. With other Breton friends, Alan had been given forfeited lands in Norfolk and Shropshire, including some which had previously belonged to Robert de Belleme himself. Robert had proved a threat to Henry in both the Welsh Marches and in Normandy, so the king was determined to insert reliable supporters to counterbalance or replace his network of supporters. Alan received more land as he proved his worth. A large portfolio of lands in Shropshire and around Peppering, near Arundel in Sussex.

Alan was actively involved in a number of grants to religious institutions. One of his most important grants in Norfolk was to Sporle Priory, another Benedictine house subject to St Florent de Saumur, which he founded. He gave to the monks of St Florent the church at Sporle, its tithes, a man's landholding, a ploughland in Sporle and another in Mileham, firewood and building timber, and pasture for sheep.

Alan died on November 22, 1114 in Oswestry Castle in Shropshire, England.

King Stephen de Blois of England (1097-1154)(our 28th great grandfather)

Stephen (1097 – 1154), often referred to as Stephen of Blois, was King of England from December 22, 1135 to his death. He was Count of Boulogne from 1125 until 1147 and Duke of Normandy from 1135 until 1144. His reign was marked by the Anarchy, a civil war with his cousin and rival, the Empress Matilda, whose son, Henry II, succeeded Stephen as the first of the Angevin kings of England.

Stephen was born in the County of Blois in central France; his father, Count Stephen-Henry, died while Stephen was still young, and he was brought up by his mother, Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror. Placed into the court of his uncle, Henry I of England, Stephen rose in prominence and was granted extensive lands. He married Matilda of Boulogne, inheriting additional estates in Kent and Boulogne that made the couple one of the wealthiest in England. Stephen narrowly escaped drowning with Henry I's son, William Adelin, in the sinking of the White Ship in 1120; William's death left the succession of the English throne open to challenge. When Henry died in 1135, Stephen quickly crossed the English Channel and with the help of his brother Henry, Bishop of Winchester and Abbot of Glastonbury, took the throne, arguing that the preservation of order across the kingdom took priority over his earlier oaths to support the claim of Henry I's daughter, the Empress Matilda.

The early years of Stephen's reign were largely successful, despite a series of attacks on

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his possessions in England and Normandy by David I of Scotland, Welsh rebels, and the Empress Matilda's husband Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. In 1138, the Empress's half-brother Robert of Gloucester rebelled against Stephen, threatening civil war. Together with his close advisor, Waleran de Beaumont, Stephen took firm steps to defend his rule, including arresting a powerful family of bishops. When the Empress and Robert invaded in 1139, Stephen was unable to crush the revolt rapidly, and it took hold in the south-west of England. Captured at the battle of Lincoln in 1141, he was abandoned by many of his followers and lost control of Normandy. He was freed only after his wife and William of Ypres, one of his military commanders, captured Robert at the Rout of Winchester, but the war dragged on for many years with neither side able to win an advantage.

Stephen became increasingly concerned with ensuring that his son Eustace would inherit his throne. The King tried to convince the Church to agree to crown Eustace to reinforce his claim; Pope Eugene III refused, and Stephen found himself in a sequence of increasingly bitter arguments with his senior clergy. In 1153 the Empress's son, Henry FitzEmpress, invaded England and built an alliance of powerful regional barons to support his claim for the throne. The two armies met at Wallingford, but neither side's barons were keen to fight another pitched battle. Stephen began to examine a negotiated peace, a process hastened by the sudden death of Eustace. Later in the year Stephen and Henry agreed to the Treaty of Winchester, in which Stephen recognized Henry as his heir in exchange for peace, passing over William, Stephen's second son. Stephen died the following year. Modern historians have extensively debated the extent to which his personality, external events, or the weaknesses in the Norman state contributed to this prolonged period of civil war.

Stephen fell ill with a stomach disease and died on October 25 at the St. Martin priory in Dover, England. He was buried at Faversham Abbey with his wife Matilda and son Eustace. We descend from their son Eustace and their daughter Marie de Blois.

Richard de Camville (1116-1191)(our 29th great grandfather)

Richard de Camville (1116 – 1191) was an English crusader knight, and one of Richard the Lionheart's senior commanders during the Third Crusade. Richard was born about 1116 in Lilbourne, Northamptonshire, England. He was the son of another Gerard de Camville, an Anglo-Norman landowner, and Millicent de Lorraine.

He married Melisende de Rethel, daughter of Gervais, Count of Rethel. They had at least one son, Gerard de Camville, and one daughter, Matilda, wife of William de Ros. We descend from Matilda.

In England, Richards holdings included land at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, Blackland, Wiltshire, and Speen and Avington, both in Berkshire.

In June 1190, at Chinon, Richard was, with three others, put in charge of King Richard's fleet sailing for the Holy Land. In 1191 he was appointed governor of Cyprus, jointly with Robert of Thornham. He died in June 1191 at the Siege of Acre in Jerusalem.

King Henry II Plantagenet (1133-1189)(our 24th great grandfather)

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Henry II (1133 – 1189), also known as Henry Curtmantle, Henry FitzEmpress or Henry Plantagenet, was King of England from 1154 to his death. He was the first king of the House of Plantagenet. Henry was born on March 5, 1133 in Le Mans, Sarthe, Pays de la Loire, France. He was the son of Count Geoffrey Plantagenet V of Anjou and Empress Matilda (Maud) of England.

King Louis VII of France made Henry Duke of Normandy in 1150. Henry became Count of Anjou and Maine upon the death of his father, in 1151. His marriage on May 11, 1152 to Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, whose marriage to Louis VII had recently been annulled, made him Duke of Aquitaine. He became Count of Nantes by treaty in 1185. At various times, Henry also partially controlled Scotland, Wales and the Duchy of Brittany. Before he was 40 he controlled England, large parts of Wales, the eastern half of Ireland and the western half of France—an area that would later come to be called the Angevin Empire.

Henry became actively involved by the age of 14 in the efforts of his mother Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England, to claim the throne of England, then occupied by Stephen of Blois. Stephen agreed to a peace treaty after Henry's military expedition to England in 1153, and Henry inherited the kingdom on Stephen's death a year later. Henry was an energetic and sometimes ruthless ruler, driven by a desire to restore the lands and privileges of his grandfather Henry I. During the early years of his reign the younger Henry restored the royal administration in England, re-established hegemony over Wales and gained full control over his lands in Anjou, Maine and Touraine. Henry's desire to reform the relationship with the Church led to conflict with his former friend Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. This controversy lasted for much of the 1160s and resulted in Becket's murder in 1170. Henry soon came into conflict with Louis VII and the two rulers fought what has been termed a "cold war" over several decades. Henry expanded his empire at Louis's expense, taking Brittany and pushing east into central France and south into Toulouse; despite numerous peace conferences and treaties no lasting agreement was reached.

Henry and Eleanor had eight children—three daughters and five sons. We descend from three of these children: Matilda, Eleanor and King John I. Three of his sons would be king, though Henry the Young King was named his father's co-ruler rather than a stand-alone king. As the sons grew up, tensions over the future inheritance of the empire began to emerge, encouraged by Louis and his son King Philip II. In 1173 Henry's heir apparent, "Young Henry", rebelled in protest; he was joined by his brothers Richard (later a king) and Geoffrey and by their mother, Eleanor. France, Scotland, Brittany, Flanders, and Boulogne allied themselves with the rebels. The Great Revolt was only defeated by Henry's vigorous military action and talented local commanders, many of them "new men" appointed for their loyalty and administrative skills. Young Henry and Geoffrey revolted again in 1183, resulting in Young Henry's death. The Norman invasion of Ireland provided lands for his youngest son John (later a king), but Henry struggled to find ways to satisfy all his sons' desires for land and immediate power. By 1189, Young Henry and Geoffrey were dead, and Philip successfully played on Richard's fears that Henry II would make John king, leading to a final rebellion. Decisively defeated by Philip and Richard and suffering from a bleeding ulcer, Henry retreated to Chinon castle in Anjou. He died there on July 6, 1189.

Henry also had an illegitimate child with his mistress Ida de Toeny. This was William

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Longespee born about 1160. We descend from this William.

King John I Plantagenet (1166-1216)(our 23rd great grandfather)

John Plantagenet (1166 – 1216) was King of England from 1199 until his death in 1216. He lost the Duchy of Normandy and most of his other French lands to King Philip II of France, resulting in the collapse of the Angevin Empire and contributing to the subsequent growth in power of the French Capetian dynasty during the 13th century. The baronial revolt at the end of John's reign led to the sealing of the Magna Carta, a document sometimes considered an early step in the evolution of the constitution of the United Kingdom.

John was born on December 24, 1166 at Beaumont Palace, Oxfordshire, England. He was the youngest of the four surviving sons of King Henry II of England and Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine. He was nicknamed John Lackland because he was not expected to inherit significant lands. He became Henry's favorite child following the failed revolt of 1173–74 by his brothers Henry the Young King, Richard, and Geoffrey against the King. John was appointed the Lord of Ireland in 1177 and given lands in England and on the continent. The war between Henry II and his eldest sons ended with the deaths of Henry the Young King and Geoffrey. John unsuccessfully attempted a rebellion against the royal administrators of his brother, King Richard, whilst Richard was participating in the Third Crusade, but he was proclaimed king after Richard died in 1199. He came to an agreement with Philip II of France to recognize John's possession of the continental Angevin lands at the peace treaty of Le Goulet in 1200.

In 1185 John made his first visit to Ireland, accompanied by 300 knights and a team of administrators. Henry had tried to have John officially proclaimed King of Ireland, but Pope Lucius III would not agree. John's first period of rule in Ireland was not a success. Ireland had only recently been conquered by Anglo-Norman forces, and tensions were still rife between Henry II, the new settlers and the existing inhabitants.

Around this time, John married his first wife Isabella, the Countess of Gloucester. John had at least five children with mistresses during his first marriage, and two of those mistresses are known to have been noblewomen. John decided in August 1200 that he wished to marry Isabella of Angoulême. In order to remarry, John first needed to abandon his first wife Isabella. He accomplished this by arguing that he had failed to get the necessary papal dispensation to marry the Countess in the first place. John's behavior after his second marriage is less clear, however. None of his known illegitimate children were born after he remarried, and there is no actual documentary proof of adultery after that point. By various mistresses John had eight, possibly nine, and two or three daughters. One such daughter was by John and his mistress named Clementina, would be Lady Joan of Wales. Joan became the most famous, marrying Prince Llywelyn the Great of Wales. We descend from Joan. Another mistress was Adela de Warrenne and she and John had a son named Richard FitzRoy. We also descend from him. Then with his marriage to Isabella Angouleme they had Henry, who would become King Henry III. We also descend from him.

After his brother Richard's death on April 6, 1199, John's claim to the throne rested on being the sole surviving son of Henry II. John was supported by the bulk of the English and

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Norman nobility and was crowned at Westminster Abbey, backed by his mother, Eleanor.

When war with France broke out again in 1202, John achieved early victories, but shortages of military resources and his treatment of Norman, Breton, and Anjou nobles resulted in the collapse of his empire in northern France in 1204. He spent much of the next decade attempting to regain these lands, raising huge revenues, reforming his armed forces and rebuilding continental alliances. His judicial reforms had a lasting effect on the English common law system, as well as providing an additional source of revenue. An argument with Pope Innocent III led to John's excommunication in 1209, a dispute he finally settled in 1213. John's attempt to defeat Philip in 1214 failed due to the French victory over John's allies at the battle of Bouvines. When he returned to England, John faced a rebellion by many of his barons, who were unhappy with his fiscal policies and his treatment of many of England's most powerful nobles. Although both John and the barons agreed to the Magna Carta peace treaty in 1215, neither side complied with its conditions. Civil war broke out shortly afterwards, with the barons aided by Louis VIII of France. It soon descended into a stalemate.

In September 1216, John began a fresh, vigorous attack. He marched from the Cotswolds, feigned an offensive to relieve the besieged Windsor Castle, and attacked eastwards around London to Cambridge to separate the rebel-held areas of Lincolnshire and East Anglia. From there he traveled north to relieve the rebel siege at Lincoln and back east to Lynn, probably to order further supplies from the continent. In Lynn, John contracted dysentery. John's illness grew worse and by the time he reached Newark Castle, Nottinghamshire, he was unable to travel any farther; he died on the night of October 19, 1216. His body was escorted south by a company of mercenaries and he was buried in Worcester Cathedral in front of the altar of St Wulfstan.

King Henry III Plantagenet (1207-1272)(our 22nd great grandfather)

Henry III (1207 – 1272), also known as Henry of Winchester, was King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine from 1216 until his death. Henry was born on October 1, 1207 at Winchester Castle in Hampshire, England. He was the son of King John I Plantagenet and Isabella of Angoulême. Henry assumed the throne when he was only nine in the middle of the First Barons' War. Cardinal Guala declared the war against the rebel barons to be a religious crusade and Henry's forces, led by William Marshal, defeated the rebels at the battles of Lincoln and Sandwich in 1217. Henry promised to abide by the Great Charter of 1225, which limited royal power and protected the rights of the major barons. His early rule was dominated first by Hubert de Burgh and then Peter des Roches, who re-established royal authority after the war. In 1230, the King attempted to reconquer the provinces of France that had once belonged to his father, but the invasion was a debacle. A revolt led by William Marshal's son, Richard Marshal, broke out in 1232, ending in a peace settlement negotiated by the Church.

On January 14, 1236 Henry married Eleanor of Provence, the daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, and Beatrice of Savoy in Canterbury, England. Henry and Eleanor had five children together. We descend from both their son King Edward I and their son Edmund Crouchback.

Following the revolt, Henry ruled England personally, rather than governing through

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senior ministers. He traveled less than previous monarchs, investing heavily in a handful of his favorite palaces and castles. Henry was known for his piety, holding lavish religious ceremonies and giving generously to charities; the King was particularly devoted to the figure of Edward the Confessor, whom he adopted as his patron saint. He extracted huge sums of money from the Jews in England, ultimately crippling their ability to do business, and as attitudes towards the Jews hardened, he introduced the Statute of Jewry, attempting to segregate the community. In a fresh attempt to reclaim his family's lands in France, he invaded Poitou in 1242, leading to the disastrous Battle of Taillebourg. After this, Henry relied on diplomacy, cultivating an alliance with Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. Henry supported his brother Richard of Cornwall in his bid to become King of the Romans in 1256, but was unable to place his own son Edmund Crouchback on the throne of Sicily, despite investing large amounts of money. He planned to go on crusade to the Levant, but was prevented from doing so by rebellions in Gascony.

By 1258, Henry's rule was increasingly unpopular, the result of the failure of his expensive foreign policies and the notoriety of his Poitevin half-brothers, the Lusignans, as well as the role of his local officials in collecting taxes and debts. A coalition of his barons, initially probably backed by Eleanor, seized power in a coup d'état and expelled the Poitevins from England, reforming the royal government through a process called the Provisions of Oxford. Henry and the baronial government enacted a peace with France in 1259, under which Henry gave up his rights to his other lands in France in return for King Louis IX recognizing him as the rightful ruler of Gascony. The baronial regime collapsed but Henry was unable to reform a stable government and instability across England continued.

In 1263, one of the more radical barons, Simon de Montfort, seized power, resulting in the Second Barons' War. Henry persuaded Louis to support his cause and mobilized an army. The Battle of Lewes occurred in 1264, where Henry was defeated and taken prisoner. Henry's eldest son, Edward, escaped from captivity to defeat de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham the following year and freed his father. Henry initially enacted a harsh revenge on the remaining rebels, but was persuaded by the Church to mollify his policies through the Dictum of Kenilworth. Reconstruction was slow and Henry had to acquiesce to various measures, including further suppression of the Jews, to maintain baronial and popular support. Henry died on November 16, 1272, leaving Edward as his successor. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, which he had rebuilt in the second half of his reign, and was moved to his current tomb in 1290. Some miracles were declared after his death; however, he was not canonized.

Lord Hugh Wake II (1210-1241)(our 24th great grandfather)

Hugh Wake (1210 – 1241) was an English nobleman. He was born about 1210 in Blisworth, Northamptonshire, England. He was the son of Baldwin Wake and his wife Isabel Briwere. After the death of his father in 1213, he inherited his possessions, including the barony of Bourne in Lincolnshire.

Hugh married Joan de Stuteville, a daughter of Nicholas de Stuteville II and Devorguilla of Galloway, before May 29, 1229. They were known to have had three children. We descend from their son Baldwin.

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In 1239 Hugh was constable of the royal Scarborough Castle. In 1240 he took part in the Barons' Crusade to Palestine. The Barons' Crusade broadly spanned from 1234-1241 and embodied the highest point of papal endeavor "to make crusading a universal Christian undertaking." Hugh is believed to have died on this crusade in Palestine in 1241.

Earl Henry Plantagenet of Lancaster (1281-1345) (our 21st great grandfather)

Henry, 3rd Earl of Leicester and Lancaster (1281 – 1345) was a grandson of King Henry III of England and was one of the principals behind the deposition of King Edward II, his first cousin.

Henry was born about 1281 at Grosmont Castle, Monmouthshire, Wales. He was the younger son of Edmund Crouchback, 1st Earl of Lancaster, Earl of Leicester, a son of King Henry III by his wife Eleanor of Provence. Henry's mother was Blanche of Artois, Queen Dowager of Navarre.

Henry married Maud of Chaworth on March 2, 1296 at Kidwelly, Carmarthanshire, Wales. They were known to have seven children. We descend from their daughter Eleanor de Beaumont Plantagenet.

Henry's elder brother Thomas, 2nd Earl of Lancaster, succeeded their father in 1296, but Henry was summoned to Parliament on February 6, 1298/99 by writ directed to Henrico de Lancastre nepoti Regis ("Henry of Lancaster, nephew of the king," Edward I), by which he is held to have become Baron Lancaster. He took part in the Siege of Caerlaverock in July 1300.

After a period of longstanding opposition to King Edward II and his advisors, including joining two open rebellions, Henry's brother Thomas was convicted of treason, executed and had his lands and titles forfeited in 1322. Henry did not participate in his brother's rebellions; he later petitioned for his brother's lands and titles, and on March 29, 1324 he was invested as Earl of Leicester. A few years later, shortly after his accession in 1327, the young Edward III of England returned the earldom of Lancaster to him, along with other lordships such as that of Bowland.

On the Queen's return to England in September 1326 with Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, Henry joined her party against King Edward II, which led to a general desertion of the king's cause and overturned the power of Hugh le Despenser, 1st Earl of Winchester, and his namesake son Hugh the younger Despenser.

Henry was sent in pursuit and captured the king at Neath in South Wales. He was appointed to take charge of the king and was responsible for his custody at Kenilworth Castle.

Henry was appointed head of the regency council for the new king Edward III of England, and was also appointed captain-general of all the king's forces in the Scottish Marches. He was appointed Constable of Lancaster Castle and High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1327. He also helped the young king to put an end to Mortimer's regency and tyranny, also had him declared a traitor and executed in 1330.

In about the year 1330, Henry became blind. He spent the last fifteen years of his life at Leicester Castle. There he founded a hospital for the poor and infirm in an extension of the castle bailey. It became known as the Newarke, and Henry was buried in the hospital chapel when he died on September 22, 1345. The king and queen attended his funeral. His son Henry of

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Grosmont, first Duke of Lancaster, had his father's remains moved to the collegiate Church of the Annunciation of Our Lady of the Newarke, which he had built when he enhanced his father's foundation.

Sources:

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- Various Wikipedia articles. Most of the narratives are extractions from Wikipedia articles which I have abridged and edited.
- Family Tree on Familysearch.org. By searching on some of the above named individuals on the Family Tree database, you will encounter what I refer to as the “Ancient Scottish Pedigree.” I have had to make some corrections in my own personal database for information in Family Tree that seemed erroneous. I did this by using what I believed was more reliable information found in Wikipedia.
- Information on the above named persons can also be found in The Public Members Trees on Ancestry.com; the Geni.com database; and Wikitree.com database.

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