

THE TORODE FAMILY LINEAGE

The Viking expansion throughout Europe, Iceland, Greenland, and as far as Labrador, Newfoundland, and North America are well documented. Many migrated from their Scandinavian homelands to the coastal regions of Normandy and Brittany between 500-700 AD. These incursions began as raids on the small towns and hamlets along the Channel coastline, but soon the Norsemen began to settle the lush productive lands. Gradually the original Gaul's were forced south. To prevent further expansion, the French King Charles the Simple ceded the northern lands to Rollo, the Viking leader in the year 911. He was granted sovereignty of the region on condition that he stop future ambition. From the town of Caen, Rollo ruled the whole of Normandy and Brittany. This invasion accounts for the striking physical difference between the average French, and the inhabitants of Brittany and Normandy. They are a tall, fair haired people, against the more sallow complexion, and slighter frames of the Gaul's. The Viking settlers were farmers, and quickly built a strong community that united to repel any intrusions. With the temperate climate and good agricultural land they prospered. They adopted the local language, but it was heavily influenced by their origins. Even today, Norman French is distinctly different from the Langue d'Oil, or Old French.

By the late 900's AD, they were ruled by a Duc (Duke), who ruled the whole region. This Dukedom included the Isles de Manche. In French this translates as the Islands of the Ditch, which is the Gallic name for the English Channel. In English, they were later to become known as The Channel Islands. When William the Conqueror, invaded England in 1066, he took with him his title of Duc De Normandy and the sovereignty he held over the Channel Islands to the English throne. This event is recorded on the Bayeaux Tapestry, a 230 feet long embroidery depicting the tale. It tells that King Harold of England was captured, after the ship that he was travelling in grounded, and he was held for ransom by the Count Guy de Ponthieu. Duc William sent messengers to obtain King Harold of England's release. The Tapestry tells us the name of one - Turolde. This is an old spelling for the name Torode. The following events were to lead to the invasion of England.

William's original emblem, consisting of three lions, remains part of the Royal Standard to this day. The Norman conquerors also took with them the Norman French language. This remained in daily use for one hundred and fifty years. With the loss of continental Normandy to the French in 1204, this Norman French gradually gave way to Middle English. In 1215, King John was finally forced to transfer Normandy back to the French, but retained the sovereignty of the Channel Islands. After signing Magna Carta, he granted the Islanders the right to rule themselves, subject to Royal assent. This right remains to the present day, and the Bailiwick of Guernsey is the last Feudal State left in Europe.

In its isolation, Norman French gradually gave way to Middle English, but the Norman language remained on Guernsey however, and

was spoken by the population until quite recent times. It was not the original Norman language, but a local patois that became known as d'Gernesiais. Nearly all the place names on the Island, prior to the turn of the Twentieth Century, retain this heritage. Its death knell came with the end of WWII, when all the children who had been evacuated prior to the German invasion, came back after speaking English for five long years. Today less than 10% of the Islanders speak d'Guernsiais with any degree of fluency, although many words are still in common usage.

The name TORODE goes back to those distant Norsemen. Originally, it was someone called after Thor, the Norse God of War and Thunder. The names translated as Thor's man, or Thor's son. There were various spellings, which included - Thoraude - Toraude - Thorold - Thorrold - Thourault - Tuold - Turrall among many. The TH slowly became just a T due to the Anglo-Norman inability to pronounce the TH sound. Semi-illiterate clergymen also spread confusion by spelling the name phonetically. Birth, wedding, and death entries could vary greatly in their spelling depending as to which Parish they were written. Nineteenth Century Census information also Anglicised the original Island names. For example Jean became John, Guillaume became William, and Pierre became Peter. This recent Anglicisation of the Channel Islands also reduced the original French spellings into what we see today.

The name was present in England before the Norman invasion. Countess Godiva, who was later to become famous for riding naked through the streets of Coventry, was the wife of Earl Leofic of Mercia. She was the sister of Thorold, who was the Sheriff of Lincolnshire.

A poet named Tuold is attributed as being the author of Le Chanson de Roland in the latter half of the Tenth Century. It was a 297 verse saga detailing the exploits of King Charlemagne, and his most loyal knight - Roland.

There is mention on Jersey of the name in 1043 in the Parish of St Ouen. There was a district called Trodez, or Torode Country. There was also a short lane called Fosse Tauraude.

Of the Torode's who went with Duc William to invade England, very few stayed on the English mainland, as the name is quite rare. There is a reference in the Domesday Book to a Tuold living in Lincolnshire. In fact there are 106 entries to either Thorold, Fitzthorold, Tuold, or Fitztuold. Tuold may well have been the messenger depicted on the Tapestry prior to William's invasion. Other references can be found to an Edmund Thorold in 1279. A Gilbert Fitzthorold had lands in Worcestershire, Somerset, Hereford, and Gloucestershire. Sir Richard Thorold is mentioned in the Siege of Calais in 1345-8. It is from him that the present Thorold family of Marston Hall in Lincolnshire can trace their ancestry. The Cartulaire des Isles of 1060 states that Neel, Viconte du Cotenain confirmed, with the consent of his wife, sons and daughters the same gifts which Duc William had made to the Abbey de Marmoutier, and received from the monks there, 30 Livres (Pounds). Additionally

Neel used his influence to persuade several people, among others the Canons of St Saviour on Guernsey, to abandon their rights relating to the Churches. One of these persons, Roger, son of Touraud gave the Abbey 15 acres of his own land in Guernsey, and received from the monks the sum of 7 Livres.

The Guernsey Assize Rolls of 1299 states that in the Parish of St Martin, a Guillaume Toroude, Jourdain de la Rue, Jourdain le Cucuel, Pierre Dorey, and Jean Beaumont were indicted that they found a boat in the sea, in which were clothes, hoods, 2 horses, salt, and many other goods which they have detained until now, nor have they shown the Kings Bailiff. So let them be arrested and by their bodies to make answer. Afterwards they come and acknowledge the finding of the said boat, with the said horses, and some part of salt. The which boat, with the things aforesaid, they caused to be delivered to the men of Herm, from whom the boat, and the goods had been taken by violence by Norman enemies of the King who landed there. And the horses they handed over in the Island to the men from whom they had been taken, so that nothing thereof has remained with them. And on this they put themselves on record of the Bailiff, that is Pierre le Marchant, then Bailiff who being present testifies to this. Yet because they have handed over the boat with the goods aforesaid, before they had shown them to the Kings Bailiff, in due form, therefore they are in mercy (guilty).

The other strange fact is how the Torode family became synonymous with the Island of Guernsey. There are no Torode families who originated on Jersey, other than by marriage. The Island is the ancestral home of the name, and has been for a thousand years. There were Torode's, who went with Duc William to invade England, but few stayed on the English mainland, as the name is rare.

On the Island of Guernsey it was more common. The Assize Rolls of 1331, shows there was a TORAUDE living in St. Peter Port. The Name THORAUDE was fairly common on the Island in the Sixteenth Century. There were four families with the name, living in the parish of St. Saviour. When you look at the Family Charts you will notice that there was a Jean Thoraude born around 1530 and his son Colas Thoraude living in St. Saviour in 1553. This spelling of the name continued until the marriage of one of his descendents, a Thomas Thoraude and Marie Le Raie in 1658. Their children, who were born in the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, are registered in the parish with the spelling Torode. All subsequent births used this spelling.

The name is very rare, but survives in Normandy with the original spelling in Normandy French.

In the British 1881 Census, there were 383 people listed throughout the whole of the United Kingdom with the name Torode. Of these 373 lived on Guernsey. This shows the centralisation of the name. Of the other 10 people, we found two who were inmates of Lunatic Asylum's in England. There was a family in Surrey, and another living in London.

Some Torode's became embroiled in the pioneering fever that gripped Europe during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, and emigrated to the New World and the Antipodes. Today, with the global expansion of people, there are now enclaves in Sussex, Kent, Essex, Hampshire, and London, as well as world wide.

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