

Sir Nigel the Norman

Those hoping for a Norman connection for Nigel may take hope that it is probable that sir Nigel and Gilbert were Norman, living on Huderstone long before the conquest. Pre-conquest landholders, [French/Norman immigrants and their descendants] were normally treated far better than their native Saxon [English] counterparts, with most benefitting from the conquest. Nigel was apparently well connected with Odo of Normandy , bishop of Bayeux and half-brother of William the conquerer.

In 1070 the Archbishop was Thomas of Bayeux, royal chaplain and treasurer of Bayeux cathedral. Other estates around Sherburn, including Huchilhouse [Hud-er-stun] [Hoddlestone] were in possession of Ilbert de Lacy, a Norman [d.1093-95] and were part of the Honour of Pontefract. The de Lacy connection continued into the 14th century when Henry de Lacy was Lord of Clitheroe and granted lands to Adam de Huddleston , of Millom] at Billington

Nigel and his son, Gilbert probably took their name from one of the manors in their possession. The family that took the name "de Hoddleston" appears to have close connections with the Norman Barons and Bishops of Bayeux, probably coming from the the same region of Normandy. The names "Nigel" and "Gilbert" are Norman

Nigel held his lands granted from the Archbishop of York [Aldred, at the time of the Conquest-succeeding to Thomas York in 1070-1100], to whom William the Conqueror had granted 10 or 12 Knights' fees. All who held land of the King were bound to perform military service, when called. Such service was not required from an ecclesiastic. The Archbishop portioned out these fees to those who had distinguished themselves. Presumably, Nigel or his progenitors, holding the first 2 fees, was prominent. This would explain the sudden burst of nobility in Huderstone right after the conquest in 1066. The taking of an Anglo-Saxon surname became customary at the time even if the ancestry were Norman.

William I, in order to consolidate Norman power, eliminated as much as possible the old English aristocracy and elites, since old ethnic identity and networks of existing ties would determine loyalty and by reducing the English to insignificance, they could put the old ties to rest. survival of natives in the north probably was due to Norman pragmatism. Aristocratic

Norman manpower would have been in short supply considering the large numbers needed in the conquest.

King William, expanding on an Anglo-Saxon idea, established a taxing method based on property "owned" or "tenanted" and initiated the concept of 'Name from Place' [Nigel of [de] Hoddlestone]. The feudal system demanded that the king should know exactly what service [tax] each person owed. Payments to and by the exchequer required that debtors and creditors should be particularly identifies. Thus, Tracing the line of ancestry before the Conquest seems unlikely if not impossible owing to the fact that the custom of the time was to adopt the name of the place of residence as a surname, and we have no way of determining what he was called before De Hoddlestone.

The Manor of old time Huddlestone still exists, albeit much altered, about 2.4Mi West of Sherburn in Elmet, West riding, Yorkshire and is apparently quaint and picturesque.[Elmet was an old Celtic kingdom]

At the time of the Domesday Survey one Hunchel or Huder, a Saxon, dwelt from which the place derived it's name. Apparently being settled there generations before the conquest. Huder [Hodel] [Huddel] in Old English ment hill or heap, and 'tun' a place or enclosure, combining into Huder's-tun, is the likely origin. This may have been the nearby stone quarry which later became highly prized owing to its fine quality and figures prominatly in this early history.

The Hunchels [English-Saxons] fled during the Norman onslaught, abandoning their homestead. The Nigel Progenitors Apparently remained. One report has the descendants returning sometime later, long after the Huddleston's had established their position and dignity.

About the year 1110, Sir Nigel de Hoddleston, an old man and now Provost [or Reeve] of the Archbishop of York, presented 2 ½ carucates of land in Hillam [par, Monk Fryston] to the Monastery of Selby, which he held of the fee of St. Peter and a portion of his tithe of Hoddleston [par. Sherburn in Elmet] and entered into the Monastery as a monk, being weary of the sinful and wicked world. The Archbishop, Thomas of Bayeux, gave to Nigel's son Gilbert 2 carucates in Wetwang, E.R., in exchange.

In 1296 Sir Richard de Huddleston had leave to attach a chapel to his manor house " to hear divine sevice this year in my chapel kept in my court of Huddleston, yet so on chief feast days I may repair to the mother church Sherburn."

"Lines of English Huddlestons-", Annette Hudleston Harwood