

William the Conqueror- William, Duke of Normandy should strictly be known as William I. He was a skilled and experienced military leader with professional army. His troops, with both infantry and cavalry, were feared and respected. He had fought and defeated the king of France in 1054 and 1057. William did not believe in being merciful to those who fought against him. He was the victor at the Battle of Hastings and after this battle he had himself crowned King William I on Christmas Day in Westminster Abbey. He introduced modern castle building techniques into Medieval England.

William had to constantly fight off invaders to his territory. His army's main power was based on his cavalry - horse soldiers. These men were highly trained. They wore chain mail into battle, used a lance and sword to fight with.

After defeating Harold at the Battle of Hastings, William gained control over England by the use of the Feudal System. His control over the people was greatly extended by the Domesday Book. He died in September 1087 after suffering from major internal injuries.

The Battle of Hastings, October 14, 1066- This battle was the decisive Norman victory in the Norman conquest of England. It was battle between Saxons under Harold, King of England vs. Norman French under Duke William of Normandy

When Edward the Confessor died he left no direct heir, and the throne of England passed to Harold. However, William of Normandy claimed that Edward had promised the crown to him, and indeed that Harold himself had sworn a sacred oath to relinquish his claim in William's favour.

The Results- Although there were sporadic outbreaks of Saxon resistance to Norman rule after the Battle of Hastings, from this point England was effectively ruled by the Normans.

Language- The language of the court, schools, the law, and the aristocracy was Norman French. It was not until the loss of Normandy in 1204 that the Normans began to learn English and a melding of the two languages began.

The Priest and religion- in 1066 almost everyone went to church every week and on holy days. There was only one kind of Christianity, the Catholic Church, led by the Pope in Rome. Ordinary people had to pay taxes to their local priests and richer people gave gifts to the church.

The king and the government- in 1066 the King of England made all decisions about how to run the country. He didn't have to take advice from anyone but he depended on the lords to bring men for his army. He also didn't control Scotland, Wales or Ireland. Sometimes English kings even had difficulty controlling the distant parts of England.

Everyday life- in 1066 nearly everyone earned their living by farming in the countryside. Some people were so poor that they would starve to death if there were bad harvests but many were better off. However, even the richer peasants were not free. They had to work on their lord's land and couldn't leave their village without his permission. Work was hard because people and animals were only sources of power. On the land worked also women and children, usually from dawn to dusk.

