

SUBJECT: History

UNIT: Y11 Norman England- Norman Life



Changes to Law and order:

Shire Courts - Large Anglo-Saxon earldoms were replaced with smaller Norman earldoms. Castles were built in shire towns and law and administration were based there.

Hundred Courts - Met more frequently than shire courts and were run by the sheriff's deputy.

Inheritance – The Normans introduced Primogeniture this was the process where the eldest son inherited the land and title from his father. This ensured land was not split up.

The oath system - Murdrum fines were introduced. It was extended to include any Norman that was attacked or injured by an Anglo-Saxon. It was introduced because of the vulnerability of the large number of new Norman earls.



Continuities to Law and order: Same as before

Shire Courts – land was divided into shires. Shire court met twice a year looking at land disputes, crime, taxes and rebellion. These were heard by a sheriff.

Hundred Courts - Shires were divided into 'hundreds'. 100 hides in size, about 120 acres. However, size could vary in shires. Hundred courts looked at local issues, such as land. Inheritance - Under the Anglo-Saxons, it was common to divide up the land amongst families.

The oath system - Anglo-Saxons placed a lot of value on people's word or promises. People made an oath of allegiance which meant they promised not to be involved in major crime. If they did the entire family would be punished.

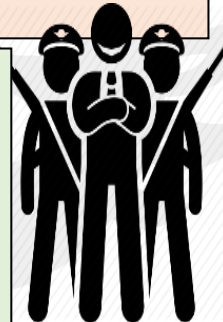
The Forest Laws – The King did not want the general public to hunt in the forest so he made it illegal to hunt in the forests and anyone caught could be fined, mutilated or executed.

The Language of Law – The law of England was now written in Latin so written English declined. Latin also became the language of government.

Norman Villages/Towns

90% of people lived in the countryside during this period. The villages were controlled by the Lord of the Manor.

The open filed system – farmland within and around the village was surrounded by hedges. Some fields were used to graze cattle, others for growing crops. The fields for crops were divided into individual strips but were not separated by fences/walls/hedges. About 25% to 35% of the land was kept for the use of the lord and the rest for the peasants. Each peasant was responsible for farming a number of strips and paid the lord rent in the form of money or a share of the crops.



At the centre of the village was a church made of stone. This was the most important building in the village. Peasants spent much of their time in church.

Most peasants were farmers and so their lives depended on the seasons. In spring they would sow seeds, in summer they would harvest crops, in autumn they would plough the fields and then in winter they would live off their stored food. Peasants had to bring in their lord's harvest and work on church land for free. Peasants also had to pay a tax to the church called a tithe. If they could not pay this in money, they paid it in seed or equipment.

The Norman nobles encouraged local towns to develop as this would develop trade; this was especially the case for towns in the south as they had more links to Normandy and the continent.

London became increasingly important, as did Norwich. Smaller towns grew due to their markets.

Between 1066 and 1100, 21 new towns were created around the country. • A good indicator of the size and development of a town was the number of burgesses who lived there. They owed services and taxes to a lord and could buy and sell property. They had legal and administrative responsibilities but the amount of power they wielded did vary from place to place.

The Normans brought stability in trade during this period leading to the development of many towns.