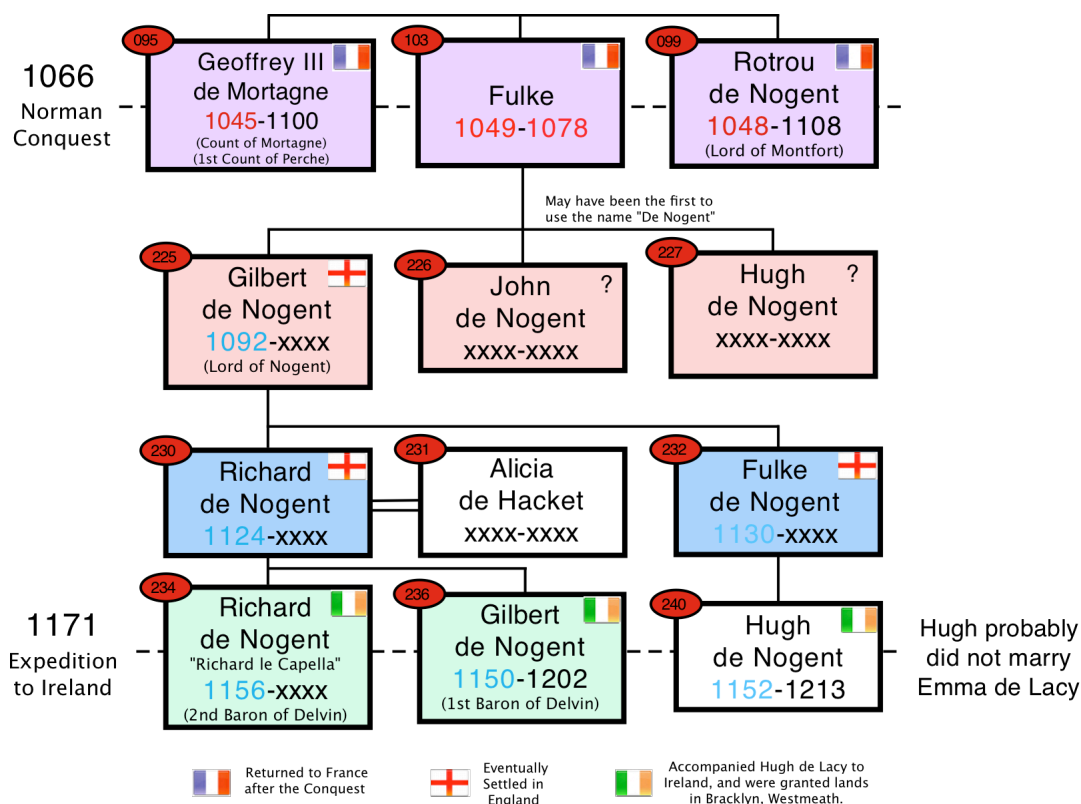


Descendants of De Nogents in England



This document is probably the one that took the most time to research, and gave the fewest results. After many years of "Googling", I have come up with the following information :

Nobody appears to know anything about the De Nogent family in England between 1066 and 1172. However, in the absence of corroborated information, we can narrow down the areas of doubt concerning this period. We know that one or more (Geoffrey III and at least one brother) of the House of Rotrou assisted William in his conquest of England in 1066. We know that several members of the De Nogent family left England with Hugh de Lacy, and went to Ireland in October 1171. This represents at least three generations over the hundred year period of absolute silence concerning the family. What happened during this period, and where did the members of the family settle during their stay in England? Why is there absolutely no information forthcoming ?

We may hazard a few guesses here ! After all, this is stony ground, and speculation is all we have left ! However, we insist, this is **totally uncertified speculation**. We can start by defining the information that we DO have. Fulke de Nogent is reputed to have had three sons, Gilbert, John and Hugh ¹. Hugh is quoted as having the title of

¹ The naming of the sons was not in the French tradition. Fulke must have been totally immersed in his life in England, although we note his presence in France at least once (1078).

Lord of Nogent, although we have no proof that he ever set foot in France. We do not know the dates of birth or death of any of the members of the family in England, and we do not know where they settled. Gilbert is reputed to have had three sons, Richard, Gilbert and Fulke, and Richard appears to have had four sons Gilbert (1st Baron of Delvin) and Richard (2nd Baron of Delvin), Hacket and Christopher, of whom we have concrete evidence of the first two ². We must note here that the three generations referred to, imply marriage at about 35, which seems a little high for this period in history. A generation is possibly missing. More important, we have no proof that any of this information is correct.

So, Let us Speculate !

There are several possible reasons for the lack of information concerning the family in England :

1 - The De Nogent descendants in England (because there **WERE** descendants !) were not of sufficient importance to warrant being "followed" ³.

Some of the sons of Rotrou I were possibly illegitimate, with the result that they were forced to fend for themselves. Fulke seems to have made several "visits" to France, for he is seen as witness to a charter of 1078. But other than that - complete silence ! His last appearance was 1078 !

2 - The Domesday Book, completed in 1086, did not cover certain parts of England ⁴, and the De Nogent descendants may have lived a relatively comfortable life on the spoils of the Conquest, while raising very little dust.

3 - The following speculation is important enough to be discussed in detail.

The Rotrou family has crossed the path of a highly important Norman family. In 1066, the interests of the brothers Walter de Lacy and Ilbert de Lacy cannot have escaped the Rotrou descendants, as they all had important participations in the Norman Conquest. The De Lacy family were staunch followers and allies of the Dukes of Normandy, and so followed William, to a man. The De Lacy descendants were royally accepted in England, with numerous domains, and a very high profile of respectability. It is said that Walters daughter Emma married Hugh de Nogent, who then took the name "de Lacy". Although we believe this to be erroneous, we cannot so eliminate the probable bonds which linked the de

² In evidence of this, Burke indicates that there were three successive generations of Gilberts.

³ This is surprising, for during this period, the Rotrou saga continued in France, with increasing dimensions. The Rotrou descendants in the Perche have become very powerful, thanks to the alliance with William (the Conqueror), a marriage with the daughter of a King of England, and the increasing importance of the "Perche" power block in a strategic part of North-West France. Why, then, was the "English" branch of the family so ignored, or more correctly, why do we know so little about it ?

⁴ Winchester and London, and certain parts of Northern England (and Wales ?) are conspicuously absent from the Domesday book (1086). Anybody living off the fat of the land with domains ceded by William in these areas, could have spent a hundred years in comparative luxury, while being totally inconspicuous.

Lacy and the de Nogent families over this period in England. Both families were present in England, they probably were in contact, perhaps in the unsubdued parts of England (for example Wales), and they may have had common interests, and so when Henry II nominated Hugh de Lacy to build and head an expeditionary force to Ireland in 1171, to bring the rogue "Strongbow" to heel, the De Nogent descendants, Gilbert and Richard were an integral part of the expeditionary force. Why and how did the De Nogent family form part of this expedition ? The links between the two families, either geographically or socially must have aided the choice of Hugh de Lacy to "invite" the de Nogents to accompany them to Ireland. In true "de Nogent" fashion, always eager for a fight, certainly interested in gleaning riches from such an expedition, and possibly having difficulty holding on to what little existence they had in England, Brothers Gilbert and Richard were among the group of Anglo-Norman mercenaries drawn together by Hugh de Lacy. The results of their collaboration will be shown in the creation of the Baronry of Delvin in Ireland, one of the thirteen Baronries that Hugh de Lacy will create, under the seal of Henry II. Hugh's sister Rosea, will marry Gilbert de Nogent, first Baron of Delvin, proof of the long and close relationship shared between these two families.

During this period, the relations between Henry II of England and the De Nogent descendants in France were on an all-time high ! ⁵ This could help explain why the English descendants of the family were so highly represented in the expedition to Ireland. However, we must concede that many Anglo-Norman families had received vast domains in England, and were quite happy to leave the Irish expedition to the more adventurous souls !

From such vague information concerning the family de Nogent during this period, arise much speculation, most of which is subject to criticism, and refusal. However, we are forced to ask ourselves the vital question :

WHO can shed light upon the De Nogent descendants in England during this period, and even more important, upon which data are based their arguments.

At this moment in time, we have a very limited number of sources of information :

1 - Sir William Betham, who evaluated the Nugent descendancy for his client Giovanna Riario-Sforza (1798 - 1855) ⁶, may have built his data on unsure ground. As it was compiled for the marriage of Laval Nugent to the Countess, it was probably available in about 1815. There is absolutely no visible corroboration of his evaluations, and the document he created is difficult to obtain. Was this document the basis of the document

⁵ Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France - New Opportunities - P.104 - Kathleen Thompson - "... from the mid 1170's, relations with King Henry were most readily promoted by Rotrous brother Geoffrey, who was frequently in the Kings presence, attested his acts and received signs of favour".

⁶ Offered as a marriage gift to her future husband Laval Nugent, but certainly a vetting process to ensure that he was worthy, this document is not visible on the Internet, but an extract may have been made available in the same year, 1853, in the form of the unnamed document "A Historical Sketch of the Nugent Family".

"A Historical Sketch of the Nugent Family", published in the same year (1853) ? It seems that this Betham document covered 85 family branches.

2 - The Mormon Microfilm Database. They may have a copy of the Betham document, but it is unlikely that they have other data. In this case, no valid data will be forthcoming.

3 - The IGRS (Irish Genealogical Research Society) Data Base in London which may have a copy of the microfilm in their Nugent archives. Do they have data for the Nugent Family which can shed light upon this important period in the Nugent history ?

4 - The Nugent family itself must hold valuable information concerning this period.

And we may say that we have absolutely no proof of the data presented in the first paragraphs of the document "A Historical Sketch of the Nugent Family" edited in 1853, by an unknown author, from no apparent source, and with no corroboration. Inasmuch as we can trash the first affirmation ".. the de Nogents descend from the illustrious family of Ivas de Belleme, a powerful Norman Baron", we are certainly suspicious of any other information in this document ! In the same way, and with regret, we must council readers to totally ignore the Internet document "Nugent Surname History" by Marian Keaney, which contains far too many falsehoods to be considered as a serious document. Here again, we find skimpy and uncorroborated data concerning the family which is bandied about on the Internet, without the slightest research. We have personally counted more than 50 references in Internet sites, concerning the totally false suggestion that the family originated from "Yvas de Bellesme, a powerful Norman Baron", which then goes on to cite the many towns of Nogent from whence the family could have originated. With so little research made by these webmasters, and the tendency to abuse of the commands "Copy/Paste", we must certainly be wary of the veracity of information on the Internet !

And so we close this uncertain chapter concerning the De Nogent Family in England. The quotes "*The origin of this Peerage is obscure*" and "*The descent of the Baronry is obscure*", certainly refer to the early period in Ireland, from 1172, for the historical and cartulary evidence concerning the emergence of the Rotrou family in France, around 960, is certainly no longer questioned.