

Judith of Lens

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Countess Judith (born in Normandy between 1054 and 1055, died after 1086), was a niece of William the Conqueror. She was a daughter of his sister Adelaide of Normandy, Countess of Aumale and Lambert II, Count of Lens.

Life

In 1070, Judith married Earl Waltheof of Huntingdon and Northumbria. They had three children. Their eldest daughter, Maud, brought the earldom of Huntingdon to her second husband, David I of Scotland. Their daughter, Adelize, married Raoul III de Conches whose sister, Godehilde, married Baldwin I of Jerusalem.

In 1075, Waltheof joined the Revolt of the Earls against William. It was the last serious act of resistance against the Norman conquest of England. Judith betrayed Waltheof to her uncle, who had Waltheof beheaded on 31 May 1076.

After Waltheof's execution Judith was betrothed by William to Simon I of St. Liz, 1st Earl of Northampton. Judith refused to marry Simon and she fled the country to avoid William's anger. William then temporarily confiscated all of Judith's English estates. Finally, Simon married Judith's daughter, Maud, in or before 1090.

Judith founded Elstow Abbey in Bedfordshire around 1078. She also founded churches at Kempston and Hitchin.

She had land-holdings in 10 counties in the Midlands and East Anglia. Her holdings included land at:

- Earls Barton, Northamptonshire
- Great Doddington, Northamptonshire
- Grendon, Northamptonshire
- Ashby Folville, Leicestershire
- Lowesby, Leicestershire
- Merton, Oxfordshire
- Piddington, Oxfordshire
- Potton, Bedfordshire
- Sawtry, Huntingdonshire

The parish of Sawtry Judith in Huntingdonshire is named after the Countess.

From the *Domesday Book*

In POTONE Hugh holds ½ virgate of land from the Countess. Land for 1 plough; it is there, with 1 smallholder. The value is and was 5s; before 1066, 2s. Earl Tosti held this land in Potton, his manor.

Countess Judith holds POTONE herself. It answers for 10 hides. Land for 12 ploughs. In lordship 3½ hides; 3 ploughs there. 18 villagers and 2 Freemen with 8 ploughs; a ninth possible. 13 smallholders and 3 slaves. 1 mill, 5s; meadow for 12 ploughs; pasture for the village livestock. In total, value £12; when acquired 100s; before 1066 £13. King Edward held this manor; it was Earl Tosti's. There were 4 Freemen who had 1 hide and 1 virgate; they could grant to whom they would.

Judith of Lens	
Spouse(s)	Waltheof, 1st Earl of Northampton
Noble family	House of Boulogne
Father	Lambert II, Count of Lens
Mother	Adelaide of Normandy
Born	1054 or 1055 Normandy
Died	after 1086

In (Cockayne) HATLEY Countess Judith holds 3 hides and 2½ virgates as one manor. Land for 6½ ploughs. In lordship 1 hide and ½ virgate; 2 ploughs there. 8 villagers with 4½ ploughs; woodland, 4 pigs. Value £6 5s; when acquired 100s; before 1066 £6. Earl Tosti held this manor. It lies in Potton, the Countess' own manor. A Freeman had 1 virgate; he could grant and sell, and withdraw to another lord.

Ranulf brother of Ilger holds EVERTON from the Countess. It answers for 5 hides. Land for 5 ploughs; 2 ploughs there; 3 possible. 4 villagers; 5 smallholders. Meadow for 1 plough. Value £3; when acquired 100s; as much before 1066. Earl Tosti held this manor. It lay in Potton, the Countess' own manor.

Sources

- *Ancestral Roots of Certain American Colonists Who Came to America Before 1700* by Frederick Lewis Weis, Lines 98A-23, 130-25.

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