

By *Domsday* Survey we learn that ninety landowners of this County of Essex were deprived of their lands by the Conqueror, during whose reign each county underwent considerable changes. That of Essex was especially tyrannized over by Norman barons, who constructed castles on their estates, for personal security, and to awe their dependent vassals.

Formerly there were eight Baronial and four Royal castles in Essex, built for national security. These were Colchester, Hadleigh, Languard Fort, and Tilbury Fort. The other eight were: Canfield and Headingham, belonging to the De Veres, Earls of Oxford; Clavering and Raleigh, belonging to Suene of Essex, who possessed, besides these, fifty-three other lordships in this county; Ongar, belonging to Richard de Lucy; Pleshy, held first by the Duke of Gloucester, High Constable of England; Stansted Mountfichet, belonging to De Montfichet; and Walden, built by Geoffrey de Mandeville. These formidable fortresses, once the pride of the Norman nobility, and the terror of the peasantry, are mostly razed to the ground, the parts now remaining being chiefly their high keeps and wide fosses. At Colchester, Hadleigh, Hedingham, and Saffron Walden, some portions of the walls are still existing. The following are among the principal Normans to whom the Conqueror gave the largest estates in Essex. To his brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, he gave 216 lordships, 39 of which were in Essex. Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, received nearly as many lordships; and William, Earl of Warren, had more than 200, in this and other counties. Suene of Essex is supposed to have been a Dane, who settled here before the Conquest, but joining the Conqueror on his arrival, had his large estates restored to him. Eudo Dapifer, son of the King's steward, had 25 lordships in Essex and 39 in other counties. Geoffrey de Magnaville, or Mandeville, a Norman chief, received 118 lordships, of which 40 were in Essex. Robert Gernon, or Grenon, a great warrior, had the large barony of Stansted; but his successor took the name of Montfichet. Ralph Baynard, one of the King's attendants, had 25 lordships in Essex, and many in other counties, and his capital mansion was Baynard Castle in London. Ralph Peverell, a noble Norman, who married the Conqueror's Saxon concubine, had many lordships here, but the seat of his chief barony was at Nottingham.