

Before America

Prior to **Lord John Garrett** immigrating to America, his ancestors had lived in England for six centuries. But, the name was not always Garrett. Before they called themselves Garrett, they used the names Garrad, Garrard, and Gerard. Before that it was Gerald, and before that it was Geraldini (sometimes spelled Gherardini). In between the Geraldinis and the Gerald's, sons were named after their father first name rather than the last name.. So, if a Walter had a son that he called John, John was known a John FitzWalter, Fitz meaning “the son of”. Using this naming convention, my ancestors were the progenitors of the FitzGerald.

The Geraldini Ancestors

The first ancestor to immigrate to England was **Otho Geraldini**. **Otho** was from Tuscany (now Italy) and he was a Duke. His move was made in two steps -- first to Normandy in the first quarter of the 11th Century and then to England in 1041 AD. So from **Otho (Geraldini)** we have a progression of names such as: Walter FitzOtho, Gerald FitzWalter, William FitzGerald, and William FitzWilliam. Two prominent branches were the FitzGerald and the Gerald. The FitzGerald branch of the family went to Ireland. The Gerald became Garrard, Garrett, etc.

Otho was from Italy, born around 1006 AD. He was a Florentine and a member of the Geraldini family. Sometime between 1016 and 1035 Otho went from Tuscany to Normandy (France) in the caravan of the Anglo-Saxon **King Canut (Cnut or Canute)** who had passed through Florence on his way home from a pilgrimage to Rome. Later, Otho came to England with **Edward the Confessor** when Edward was called back from exile to be King of England in 1041.



England with some going to Ireland and some to America.

Otho Geraldini, Duke of Tuscany, came from a family whose beginnings, so say the legends, go back to the days of Troy. Definite records take us back well over a thousand years, and say that the family was indigenous to Italy, being either Etruscan or Roman. Its members had estates in various parts of the Florentine territory. In Florence, their principal residence was near the Ponte Vecchio Bridge. Their tower still exists, being part of the Palazzo Bartolomei. The Italian historian Gammurini, says "the Gherardinis were among the most ancient and wealthy families of Tuscany in 900 A.D. The map shows the route that my ancestors took through

Mona Lisa is said to be a descendant of the Gherardini family.

The family flourished in Tuscany until the year 1125. Then, during a political upheaval, the patrician families were driven into exile. In order to remain in Florence, the Gherardini renounced their patrician rank and became mere citizens. Later they were restored to their ancient honors, became very wealthy, and served the Republic of Florence both in the senate and on the battlefield. Three were Consuls of the Republic; others died as leaders of the Republican armies in the many civil wars. Confiscations and losses during the civil wars impoverished the Gherardini, and they also suffered much by the destruction of their property in the great fire of Florence in 1303. From the 14th century onwards they seem to have played a smaller part in the history of Florence. At different times, between 1000 and 1400, individuals of the family emigrated, passing into France, England, Wales, Ireland, Cracow and the Canary Islands. Those who stayed in Florence became extinct, as did those in France and Cracow. It is recorded that the Gherardini of Florence and the Irish "Geraldines" did not lose touch with each other. There are records of visits back and forth until the late 1500's.

The Duke of Tuscany's father was **Baron Ottorus Gherardo GHERADINI**. His father was **Lord Otterus (Othoer) Gherardini**. His father was **Mathias Gherardini**. His father was **Cosimo (Cosmus) Gherardini** who was born around 870 and was the **1st Great Duke of Tuscany**.

Otho Geraldini Moves to Normandy

In 1027, when **Otho Geraldini** was 21 years old, **King Canut of England** passed through Florence on a return trip from an audience with the Pope in Rome. In those days, merchants and pilgrims traveled in groups (for protection) stopping along the way to visit with the local powers. They were required to pay fees and tolls to those whose domain they crossed. Thus, it was natural for King Canut's group to stay in Florence for a while with the Geraldini family. We don't know why for certain, but Otho decided to join King Cnut's caravan. His leaving, however, was not the end of the Geraldini family in Tuscany. We know that the family flourished in Tuscany for several centuries after Otho left. So perhaps, although he was a Duke, he was not the eldest in the family and knew that he would not inherit.

As **King Cnut's** caravan continued its journey back to England, they undoubtedly stayed for a while with **Robert, Duke of Normandy** who lived in area around Rouen and Caen. In 1027, **Richard, Duke of Normandy** had just died to be succeeded by Robert. There, **Otho Geraldini** met the 17 year-old **Duke Robert** and the 24 year-old **Edward** who eventually was to become **King Edward the Confessor** of England. **Otho Geraldini** decided to stay with **Robert, Duke of Normandy**.

Anyway, **Otho Geraldini** was in Normandy in the 1030's living with the future **King Edward** of England, who since the age of 10 had been in exile, first under the protection of his grand father, **Duke Richard of Normandy** and later with his uncle, **Duke Robert of Normandy**. Edward is 3 years older than Otho and Otho is 4 years older than Robert. In 1035,

Within a year of Otho's arrival in Normandy, Duke Robert's mistress, **Herleve of Falaise**, gives birth to a son named William who would become **William the Conqueror**. A few years later, **Otho Geraldini** has a son that he names, **Walter FitzOtho**. Walter's mother's name is not recorded.

William was 8 or 9 years older than **Walter FitzOtho** but apparently they “grew-up” together. Some genealogist maintain that Otho’s son, **Walter FitzOtho** was the half brother of William (the Conqueror) but I do not believe it. To make this so, Otho Geraldini would have to had married Duke Robert’s mistress, **Herleve of Falaise**. While there is no name available for Otho’s wife, I can not find any data that supports **Herleve** having a son by **Otho Geraldini**.

To better understand the possible relationships between the various parties in Normandy, I have developed the following timeline.

- 1003 The future King Edward the Confessor is born in England
- 1006 Otho Geraldini is born in Tuscany
- 1016 Edward goes into exile at his grandfather’s place in Normandy
- 1026 King Edward’s grandfather, Richard Duke of Normandy dies and his son, Robert, Duke of Normandy inherits.
- 1027 Otho Geraldini goes from Tuscany to Normandy
- 1028 William, the bastard son of Robert, Duke of Normandy is born.
- 1037 Otho Geraldini’s son, Walter FitzOtho is born.
- 1042 King Edward returns to England to be king. Takes Otho Geraldini with him. Otho may, or may not have taken his 5 year old son with him.
- 1051 William visits King Edward in England where (it is claimed) that Edward promised William his throne upon his death.
- 1066 King Edward the Confessor dies at the age of 53.
- 1066 Thirty-eight year-old, William the Conqueror invades England. Thirty year-old, Walter FitzOtho goes with him or meets him in England.

King Edward and the Geraldinis

King Edward was in exile because when **King Cnut** of Demark seized the kingdom of England in 1016, he murdered the existing Anglo-Saxon King and every member of **King Aethelred’s** royal family he could get his hands on. Only Edward (eventually, **King Edward**) and his brothers, the younger sons of **Aethelred**, survived. They fled to Normandy, where they took refuge with their grandfather, **Duke Richard**, the father of their mother, Emma.

King Cnut died in 1035 but it was not until 1042 that the English invited **King Edward** to return from Exile. When he did return, he found that England was really being controlled by the **Godwine** family. This family had prospered greatly while Edward was in exile and had amassed so much land that they were second only to the power and wealth of the King. Edward had spent his entire adult life waiting for the chance to be King of England, and having achieved it had

found his power circumscribed by the over-powerful subjects of his predecessors, so much so that he was forced to marry Edith, daughter of Godwine, in a marriage of dynastic expediency. The chroniclers say that he despised his wife so much that he never consummated the marriage.

To counter the power of the Godwines, Edward promoted a notorious group called the “Normans” or the “Frenchmen” who were made up of the Norman and French nobles with whom Edward had shared his young adulthood in Normandy. One of these “Frenchmen” was **Otho Geraldini**, my ancestor. Another was **Eustace of Boulogne**, who was possibly an ancestor of Frances – the Eastes branch. Eustace is another spelling of the name, Estes.

In 1051, Edward’s friend, **Eustace**, was by the King’s order, given the town of Dover, which order was resisted by the Godwines. When King Edward called the Godwines to account they chose to flee which permitted Edward to dump his hated wife, Edith.

Soon after the **Eustace-Godwine** flap, **William of Normandy** came to visit England where it is claimed (but much disputed) that King Edward offered William the crown of England upon his death and in the event he (Edward) did not have an heir.

King Edward was kind to his Norman friend and buddy, **Otho Geraldini** as noted by an old English lyric which says, “the Earldom which to Otho brave, the Saxon sainted Edward gave”. **Otho (Geraldini)** was so powerful that his favor with **King Edward** was greatly resented by the native Norman nobles. He possessed:

3 lordships in Surrey,
3 in Buckinghamshire,
2 in Berkshire,
4 in Middlesex,
9 in Wiltshire,
2 in Hampshire,
3 in Dorset, and
1 in Somerset.

In 1052 the Godwines returned even stronger than before requiring that the “Frenchmen” (such as **Otho Geraldini**) flee or lie low. This mostly likely gave reason for **Otho Geraldini** and others to welcome William when he arrived in England in 1066. We don’t know if Otho returned at this time to Normandy or just kept a low profile until **William the Conqueror** returned. **Otho Geraldini’s** son, **Walter FitzOtho**, who at this time was a young man, probably went to (or stayed in) Normandy to train under **William of Normandy**.

In 1053, **Harold Godwine** became head of the Godwine family. In 1064, it was obvious to all that Edward was going to die without an heir and Harold saw himself as being in the catbird seat.

William the Conqueror and the Geraldinis

On January 5, 1066 **King Edward** died without an heir. **Harold Godwine** crowned himself King and was busy leading his army far to the north against his brother and the Viking King Hadrada who were invading from the north. **William of Normandy** began planning to invade England to claim the throne that he was promised. He even obtained the blessing of the Pope. So, eight months after Edward’s death, **William of Normandy**, his followers and his army landed on the

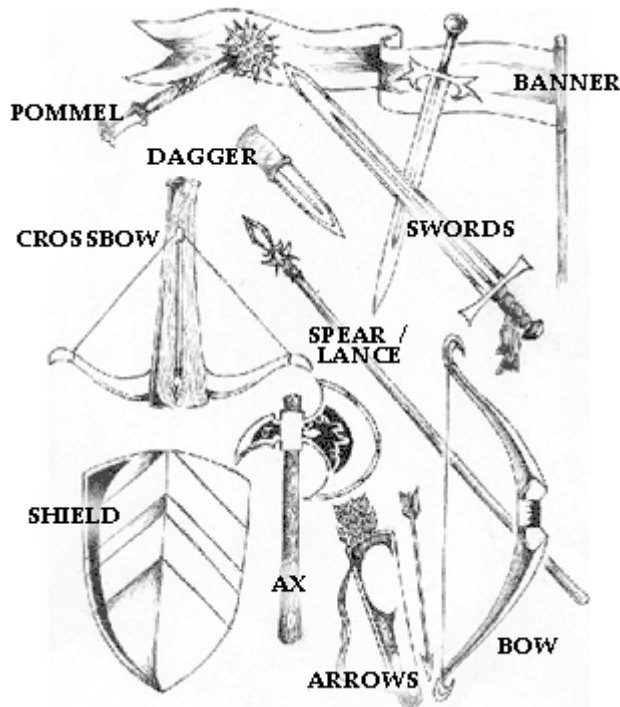
southeast coast of England. Otho's son, **Walter FitzOtho (Geraldini)**, was 29 years old and was with William during the invasion in the Battle of Hastings where he must have done very well as we will see later.

I have included as Appendix 5 a description of the Battle of Hastings that resulted in William, the Bastard becoming William, the Conqueror.

William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066 in Westminster Abbey and became known as **William the Conqueror** or **King William I**. Thus began a three century Norman occupation of England, Wales and Scotland, and later Ireland. It would also result in my ancestors being rewarded with land, castles and titles. Whereas, **Otho Geraldini** was favored by **King Edward**, his son, **Walter FitzOtho (Geraldini)** was favored by **King William I**.

William consolidated his conquest by starting a castle-building campaign in strategic areas. Originally these castles were wooden towers on earthen 'motes' (mounds) with a bailey (defensive area) surrounded by earth ramparts, but many were later rebuilt in stone. By the end of William's reign over 80 castles had been built throughout his kingdom, as a permanent reminder of the new Norman feudal order.

Having defeated the English at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and placed their leader, **William the Conqueror**, on the throne of England, the Normans were not content with just subjugating and



portioning out England among the captains of the invaders. They proceeded to invade Wales and conquered it within a year. Here they were purely conquerors, since William had some claim to the English throne, he had none to Wales. His barons went there simply to seize and possess the land. The methods they adopted were not wholly military; they were also matrimonial

In retrospect, the Normans succeeded in the conquest of Wales (and later Ireland) due to superior weapons and training. The Welsh and the Irish fought with clubs, stones, axes and occasional spears whereas the Normans used swords, bows and

arrows, shields, body armor, horses, etc. as shown on the left. They mastered the organized use of archers, mounted knights and men of armor.

Beginning of the Middle Ages

The period in which the Normans lived is often called the Middle Ages, because in history it lies between ancient times and modern times. Historians use it as referring to the period between the 12th and 15th century.

Most kingdoms in Medieval Europe had a system of government called feudalism. The king granted land to nobles, including higher churchmen such as bishops and abbots. These people then became the king's vassals, rather like tenants renting land from the owner. The actual 'granting' of the land was called feodum, from which we get the word feudalism, while the piece of land held by the vassal was called the fief (hence fiefdom).

In return for the land, the vassal swore an oath of homage. This basically meant that he became the king's man. He promised money to his overlord, the king, and he promised to provide knights to fight for the king; the number of knights depended upon the value of the land-grant received. This duty was known as "knight service". A vassal also had to give food and lodgings to the king and his major followers whenever they visited a vassal's castle. A feudal king also acted as a judge in disputes between his vassals should a vassal be killed, the king took in his children as wards until they were old enough to takeover their family fief, or, in the case of girls, be married. Most importantly, with the help of all the money and knight-service due to him, it was the duty of the king to protect the country (and so his vassals) in times of war.

The most important noblemen were earls; their fiefs were usually so large that they kept only some of the land for themselves (the demesne). The rest was rented out to lesser nobles such as barons or knights under similar terms to those between the earl and his king. The earl was then the overlord to his own vassals, and it was usually with some of their knights and payments that he paid his own dues to the king.

The Geraldinis are Rewarded

Walter FitzOtho (Geraldini) was a knight in **King William's** private retinue, and, when in 1070 William began the building of Windsor Castle, Walter was put in charge of its defense, and later became the first Constable of Windsor. Under the Norman kings, as with the kings of France, the Constable was the principal officer of a royal establishment, and was responsible for the defense of the establishment, by the knights stationed there. It was this position that conferred the name 'Windsor' upon Walter's sons.

The following is an excerpt from an article on the Geraldini family that shows how the current English Royalty rationalized doing away with the name of Hanover. It is premised on the vacating of the Windsor baronage by the Geraldinis. In fact, the male Geraldini heirs continued but they technically did not live in the Windsor baronage – instead they went to Pembroke.

Windsor Castle continued as a baronage for the Geraldini descendants for centuries, until it passed out of existence due to lack of male heirs in the direct line. An interesting footnote is the story of how the current English royal family, the House of Windsor, took their name from this vacated baronage. During the first world War, there was enormous anti-German sentiment in England, and the

king wanted to distance himself from the German House of Hanover, their name at the time. Since the Geraldini family can be traced as the founders of the House of Hanover, it was very convenient that (my ancestor) Gerald de Windsor, baron of England, was related both to the English royal family and the Florentine Gheradinis, and hence the House of Hanovers. This provided justification (after much research) for the German House of Hanover to become the more politically-correct English House of Windsor, which they remain today.

Soon after 1070, **Walter FitzOtho (Geraldini)** also had the important post of Warden of the King's forests in Berkshire. (In those days, the southern and western areas of England were covered by vast forests) Although generally associated with hunting, the main recreation of the Royal household, the position was a military one, since the forests were subject to regular patrolling, as a precaution against enemies of the King. They were also regarded as the main source of provender for armies on the move, or those stationed at strategic castles. The initial castles were built with timber.

Walter FitzOtho was granted twenty-two manors in England, by **King William**, and was still holding these at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086. These manors, and land, were located in the counties of Berkshire, Buckingham, Middlesex, Surrey, and Hampshire. Among other titles, he was **Lord of Eton**.

During the time that **Walter FitzOtho** was protecting the Windsor Castle, he found time to have two wives and four children of record. His first wife was **Beatrice De Offaly** who was from Kildare, Ireland. The other wife was **Gwladus verch Rhiwallon** who was the mother of **Nesta ferch Rhys**. By these wives, he had three sons, **Gerald, William and Robert FitzWalter of Windsor**. Since Nesta was near the same age as **Walter FitzOtho's** son, **Gerald**, in all probability the sons were from Walter's first wife, Beatrice

King William I and his sons

In 1053, (thirteen years before conquering England) **William, the bastard**, married his cousin, **Matilda of Flanders**, daughter of **Count Baldwin V, Count of Flanders**. Children of William and Matilda were: Robert "Curthose", William "Rufus", who became King William II (1087-1100), Henry "Beauclerc", who became King Henry I (1100-1135), as well as eight others. William's son, Henry and **Walther FitzOtho's** son, Gerald, were close to the same age (Gerald was 3 years older) and apparently "grew up together". Gerald was known as **Gerald of Windsor**. When Henry became King, he made Gerald, in effect, his military "General".

So, between 1070 and 1100, **Prince Henry** (youngest son of King William) and **Gerald of Windsor** (son of Walter FitzOtho) were living, fighting and playing in and around Windsor castle. **Walter FitzOtho** was Constable of Windsor Castle and Keeper of the Forest and was also living at Windsor. The 3 of them (and others, of course) for sport and conquest ventured into Wales where they maintained a running battle with **Rhys ap Tewdwr Mawr**, Prince of South Wales. In one of these skirmishes they took Rhys wife (**Gwladus Verch Rhiwallon**) and daughter (**Nesta Rhys**) hostage and carried them back to Windsor. **Walter FitzOtho** married **Gwladus Verch Rhiwallon** and **Nesta** first became **Prince Henry's** mistress and later wife of **Gerald of Windsor**.

William the Conqueror divided his kingdoms between Henry's older brothers, leaving England to William Rufus and Normandy to Robert. Henry inherited no land but received £5000 in silver. Henry played each brother off of the other during their quarrels; both distrusted Henry and subsequently signed a mutual accession treaty barring Henry from the crown. Henry's hope arose when Robert departed for the Holy Land on the First Crusade; should William die, Henry was the obvious heir. **Prince Henry, King William Rufus, Gerald of Windsor**, probably **Walter FitzOtho** and others were in the woods hunting (at Henry's invitation) on the morning of August 2, 1100 when King William Rufus was killed by an arrow. Prince Henry's quick movement in securing the crown on August 5 led many to believe he was responsible for his brother's death. Robert returned to Normandy a few weeks later, was captured and lived the remaining twenty-eight years of his life as Henry's prisoner.

The first years of Henry's reign were concerned with subduing Wales with **Gerald of Windsor** as his "General".

Ancestor, Gerald, marries King Henry's Mistress

As noted above, while Henry (the future King Henry I) was young and only a Prince, he was engaged in a running battle with **Rhys ap Tewdwr Mawr**, Prince of South Wales. (Note – the name Tewdwr was eventually changed to Tudor from which much of the English royalty descended.). In one of the raids, Prince Henry took Prince Tewdwr's daughter, **Nesta Rhys**, hostage and made her his mistress in which capacity she bore him two sons. One was **Meyler FitzHenry** and the other, the celebrated **Robert of Gloucester** who later plays a large role in the civil war that occurred on the death of King Henry I. My ancestor, **Walter FitzOtho**, as Castellan of Windsor Castle, married Nesta's mother, **Gwladus Verch Rhiwallon**. This was after the death of Walter's first wife and mother of his children, **Beatrice De Offaly**.

Henry eventually fathered at least 20 illegitimate children but at the time of his death his only legitimate heir was **Matilda (Maud)** who he would make "Empress Maud". Henry had a legitimate son named **William** who would have become king had he not drowned when his ship sank between Normandy and England. The ship was known as the White Ship and it is thought by many that it was intentionally "holed" in order to kill William and prevent him from becoming king.

So here we have at the same time in Windsor Castle, **Prince Henry I** sleeping with **Nesta, Princess of Wales**, while my ancestor, **Gerald of Windsor** was hanging around in the same room hoping to marry Nesta; while in another part of the room, Gerald's father, **Walter FitzOtho** is "living" with Nesta's mother, **Gwladus**. At the time, castles were basically a large room (called the hall) over the barn surrounded by a curtain wall. The horses, oxen, etc. were kept on the ground floor and their bodies provided heat for the people on the second floor. The lord of the castle and his lady lived at one end of the hall while everyone else lived wherever they could find space in the same room. At meal time, boards were placed on trestles to form a large table around which everyone ate with the Lord and Lady at one end, with knights close-by and the servants further away. See page 11 for more on castle living. So, literally, Henry, Nesta, Gerald, Water and Gwladus and many others lived in the same room. If the Lord and Lady needed privacy they would erect a curtain between them and the rest of the room. However, all others had to place their cloaks over themselves for "privacy".

As mentioned earlier, then **Prince Henry I** had placed **Gerald of Windsor** in charge of the Norman forces fighting the Welsh. In 1094, Gerald won distinction by his gallant defense of the castle when the Welsh laid siege. As a steward of **Henry I**, he was living at Windsor where he had the frequent occasion to see Nesta. Perhaps by arrangement between Nesta's father and Henry or perhaps through love, Gerald and Nesta were married. It would seem that Gerald, busily engaged in military business, could have no peace about his wife, since she was clever as well as beautiful, and every warrior seems to have fallen in love with her.



King Henry gave Gerald and Nesta the Manor of Moultsford located on the Thames within 20 miles of Windsor Castle where they stayed when attending Royal Court in Oxford, Woodstock, if not London. Moultsford Manor stayed in Gerald and Nesta's family for 400 years and was not given up until 1497. The small map above shows the location of Moultsford with relation to Windsor and Oxford.

Nesta's father gave them a lot of land near Pembroke Castle which was on the west side of Wales and almost 200 miles from Windsor.





Probably to put some distance between Nesta and **King Henry I**, Gerald took a job with **Arnulf Montgomery** (owner of Pembroke Castle) as Constable of Pembroke Castle where in 1095 he distinguished himself in a battle against the Welsh who had Pembroke Castle under siege. In 1100, Gerald went to Ireland to secure for his lord, **Arnulf Montgomery**, the hand of the daughter of **King Murrough** in marriage. Thus he was the first of

the Geraldini family to set foot in Ireland, where Gerald's descendants were later to rule like kings. Later, when **Arnulf Montgomery** joined in a rebellion against the King, he was deprived of his estates and exiled in 1102. Then the King granted custody of Pembroke Castle to **Gerald de Windsor**. Thereafter, he was known as **Gerald of Pembroke Castle**, Later, he was appointed president of the County of Pembrokeshire. The map on page 9 shows a portion of southern Wales with both Pembroke Castle and Carew Castle are located. Pembroke Castle as it looks today is above.



While Keeper of Pembroke Castle, **Gerald of Pembroke** (formerly of Windsor) built Carew (Curru, Carriou, Carreu) Castle on lands given to him by Nesta's father when they married. It was on the site of an old Roman castle. Carew Castle was built in about 1095 of wood which was later changed to stone by Gerald's Great Great Grandson, **Nicholas de Carew**. A picture of the

Castle as it appears today is above. Another picture of Carew is below. The castle stayed in the family for 15 generations while the family became increasingly less affluent until financial circumstances forced the family to mortgage the castle in 1480.

