

BRAOSE BREOS, BRAUSE, BRIOUSE, BREWES, etc.) family.

This powerful Marcher family took its name from Braose, near Falaise, in Normandy.

WILLIAM DE BRAOSE, the first of the line in England, was granted the barony of Bramber (Sussex) at the time of the Conquest. He was succeeded by his son PHILIP (c. 1096), who conquered the lordships of Radnor and Builth, acquiring also through his wife the lordship of Totnes (Devon). He supported Henry I against Robert of Normandy, but in 1110 revolted against Henry, his estates being confiscated. He regained possession in 1112 and, shortly after 1130, the territories passed to his eldest son, WILLIAM, the third baron, who, c. 1155, also inherited one-half of the Honour of Barnstaple, agreeing to pay a fee of 1,000 marks. William married Bertha, daughter of Milo of Gloucester, whose vast territories, after the death of his four sons, were divided among his daughters (1176). In her right William obtained the lordships of Brecon and Abergavenny, his lands thus forming a solid block in the Middle March. His younger brother, PHILIP, accompanied Henry II to Ireland, receiving in 1172 the Honour of Limerick. ROBERT DE BRAOSE, probably a cadet of the family, held a small estate in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.

The most famous member of the family was WILLIAM, the fourth baron (1175 - 1211), who probably took over the Welsh territories during his father's lifetime. He married Maud de S. Valerie, 'a prudent and chaste woman', by whom he had three sons. At the outset he incurred the enmity of the Welsh when, in revenge for the death in 1175 of his uncle, Henry of Hereford, he invited to the castle of Abergavenny Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and others of the Welsh of his lordship and treacherously put them to death. *Giraldus*, however, exonerates him from blame and refers to the religious zeal shown by William and his wife. Certainly, he was a benefactor of the priories of Brecon and Abergavenny.

William was Sheriff of Herefordshire, 1192-99, and, in 1196, Justice Itinerant for Staffordshire. He accompanied Richard I to Normandy in 1195. He supported John's claim to the throne, witnessing various royal grants, and he was in attendance on John in Normandy at the time of Arthur's death (1203). He also served in the French war of 1204. He was high in John's favour and acquired vast possessions, being granted the right to conquer territories from the Welsh (1200). He seized Elfael (1191) and in 1196 acquired full rights in Barnstaple by agreement with the co-heir. In 1200 he received the Honour of Limerick on payment of 5,000 marks at 500 marks a year, and, later, the town of Limerick. He became lord of Gower (1203) and of the Three Castles (1205). In 1207 he suddenly fell from grace, largely because of his failure to meet the charges on his estates. His English estates were distrained and the royal army occupied his Welsh territories, William and his family fleeing to Ireland. Here they were pursued, his wife and eldest son being captured, eventually to be starved to death at Windsor. William himself escaped to France, where he died 9 August 1211. He was buried at the Abbey of S. Victor, Paris.

The claim to the Braose lands was taken up by his son, GILES, bishop of Hereford, who, in 1213, returned from exile in France, supporting the cause of the barons and gaining the adherence of *Llywelyn the Great*. He recovered possession of the family estates in Wales and on 21 October 1215 made his peace with the Crown, but he died a month later. His brother, REGINALD, seized possession, and not until after the death of John did he come to terms with the Crown, 23 June 1217. Reginald's defection roused the anger of *Llywelyn*, who attacked his lands of Brecon and Gower and supported the claim to the family lands of JOHN DE BRAOSE, the eldest of the four sons of Reginald's brother William, who had starved to death in 1210. The four sons - JOHN, GILES, PHILIP, and WALTER - were released from captivity in 1218. John is said to have been brought up secretly by a Welshman in Gower, and he was later given into the custody of bishop Giles, his uncle. John's claim, however, was not sustained in the courts, but Reginald, by a convention, ceded to him the baronies of Gower and Bramber and thus was established the junior branch of the family in its own right. Reginald died June 1228 and was succeeded by his son, WILLIAM, the 7th baron, husband of Eva Marshall. He was captured by *Llywelyn the Great* in 1228 during the campaign in Kerry, but was released on payment of a ransom. He further agreed to the marriage of his daughter, Isabel, with *David*, son of *Llywelyn*. Later, on a visit to *Llywelyn*'s court, he was involved in an intrigue with *Llywelyn*'s wife and was hanged (3 May 1230). With his death the male line of this, the main, branch of the family ceased, and the inheritance was divided between his four daughters, the family name surviving in the line of JOHN DE BRAOSE, baron of Gower and Bramber.

John was killed at Bramber in 1232 by a fall from his horse. He left a widow, Margaret, daughter of *Llywelyn the Great*, and two sons, the elder of whom, WILLIAM, succeeded him as 2nd baron, while the younger, JOHN, became lord of the manor of Corfham and later of Glasbury. William married (1) Olive de Moulton, (2) Agnes, daughter of Nicholas de Molis, (3) Mary de Rus, founding a vigorous stock, the several families retaining their identity and succeeding to the family claims on the maternal side. By his third wife, William had two sons, RICHARD (died 1292) and PETER (died 1312). Richard married Alice de Longespee, their numerous descendants holding the manors of Whittingham and Akenham, Suffolk; Stinton, Norfolk; Ludborough, Lincolnshire; Knolton, Dorset; etc. Peter de Braose held the manors of Tetbury, Gloucestershire; Maningford, Wiltshire; Chersworth and Sedgwick, Sussex; but with the death in infancy of his great-grandson in 1395, his family came to an end.

William died 1290 and was succeeded by his eldest son, WILLIAM (1291 - 1326). The latter supported the barons' letter to the pope in 1301 and, in 1304, for his services to the Scottish war, he was conceded full Marcher rights in his lordship of Gower. The exercise of these brought him into conflict with his tenants of Gower, and in 1306 he granted to them a charter of liberties. Disputes and lawsuits had crippled him financially, and, to raise money, he agreed to sell Gower to various lords despite the fact that he had already settled it on his daughter Aline and her husband, John de Mowbray (married at Swansea, 1298). Hugh le Despenser, lord of Glamorgan and king's chamberlain, aiming to acquire Gower for himself, endeavoured to secure the confiscation of the lordship to the Crown, asserting that William had alienated his lordship without the consent of the Crown. This called forth an attack on Despenser by the Marcher lords, who claimed full rights of alienation in their territories. Mowbray forcibly occupied Gower, but the lordship was seized by the king. This enabled Despenser to come to terms with William, whereby the latter retained a life interest in the lordship, Mowbray and Aline being induced to agree to the arrangement. William died c. May 1326, and in the same year the fate of the lordship was involved in the revolt of the barons against Edward II, when Despenser met his death and Mowbray and his wife were restored to possession. The death of William saw the extinction of the title and the end of the family in the male line.

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Published date: 1959

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Rees, W., (1959). BRAOSE BREOS, BRAUSE, BRIOUSE, BREWES, etc.) family.. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 11 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s-BRAO-SEO-1066>

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