

## SUMMARY

After the Romans withdrew their legions from England, the land was invaded by Germanic tribes, including the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that emerged were later overwhelmed by the Viking invasions. In 1066, William of Normandy conquered England. William and his successors asserted their authority over rival feudal lords and created a system of royal justice.

The increase of royal power did not go unchallenged. When Henry II pressed his claim of jurisdiction over the clergy, his friend, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, refused to submit. King John's failure on the battlefield and violation of feudal rights of his nobles led to the signing of the Magna Carta. In the 13th century, Parliament began to take shape as an assembly with representatives from the clergy, nobility, and middle class. In time, Parliament would gain greater power, especially when it won the "power of the purse."

During the Hundred Years' War, England lost its holdings in France, and Parliament increased its power. The power of the feudal nobles was greatly reduced during the Wars of the Roses when many nobles were killed. In 1485, with the accession of the Tudor king, Henry VII, England regained stability and entered on a period of development as a strong nation-state.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Anglo-Saxon traditions influence later developments in England?
- 2 What advantages did William's conquest of England give him over feudal monarchs elsewhere in Europe? How did William ensure royal supremacy?
- 3 Compare the quarrel between Henry II and Thomas à Becket in England to the struggle between the Holy Roman emperor, Henry IV, and Pope Gregory VII.
- 4 Study the origins and content of the Magna Carta in England and the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the United States. How were they similar and how different?
- 5 What were the causes of the Hundred Years' War? Why were the English victorious in the first phase of the war? What changes took place in England during the war?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Which books might describe the Norman conquest of 1066?*

- DAHMS, JOSEPH. *Seven Medieval Queens*. New York: Doubleday, 1972. A useful book that discusses the lives of seven medieval women who played decisive roles in history.
- DOBSON, R. B., ed. *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970. A valuable exploration of the various, and often contradictory, accounts of the peasant uprising in England. Uses such documents as trial records, contemporary poems, chronicles, and archives.
- GILES, ST. AUBYN. *The Year of the Three Kings, 1483*. New York: Atheneum, 1983. A balanced narrative of the power struggles among the noble families who were determined to control the English throne. Author presents the crimes with which Richard III is usually charged—conspiracy, child-murder and tyranny—and stimulates readers to form their own conclusions.
- KNOWLES, DAVID. *Thomas Becket*. Stanford University Press, 1971. An excellent biography that traces Becket's complicated career from his friendship with Henry II to his murder in the cathedral in 1170.
- TETLOW, EDWIN. *The Enigma of Hastings*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974. A careful examination of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings and the battle itself.