

Clan AUCHINLECK



ARMS	Argent, three bars Sable
CREST	An ear of rye Proper
MOTTO	Pretosunt quod utile (What is useful is valuable)

Nisbet states that the chiefs of this surname had lands in the county of Angus, and took their name from those lands. However, there is also a barony of Auchinleck in Ayrshire, and in 1300 the Laird of Auchinleck is reputed to have followed Sir William Wallace to Glasgow where he fought and slew the Northumbrian Earl Percy. Black states that John of Abhelek, otherwise Archinfleck, is the first recorded of the Angus family of the name and did homage in 1306. The origin of the name may be purely descriptive of the topography of the land it describes: 'auchen' seems to be applied to raised or higher land separating areas of water, while 'lech' may indicate dead, in the sense of barren or sterile. The Angus Auchinlecks held the office of hereditary armor bearers to the Earls of Crawford and lived in the substantial tower known as Affleck near the village of Monikie. The tower passed out of the hands of the family but still stands to this day (it is described in Nigel Tranter's *Fortified House in Scotland*, volume four). The family married into the distinguished family of Boswell, through one of the daughters of Sir John Auchinleck of that Ilk, and adopted the style 'of Auchinleck'. James Boswell, the famous biographer of Samuel Johnson, was a member of this family. General Sir Claude Auchinleck was commander-in-chief in India in 1941 when Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, assigned him to lead the Allied offensive in the western desert of Egypt and India. He led the British Eighth Army at the first battle of El Alamein in July 1942. The battle was indecisive, and Auchinleck was replaced by Bernard, later Field Marshal, Montgomery, who went on to lead the Eighth Army in a second attack on El Alamein in October, breaking Rommel's Afrika Korps and securing an important victory for the Allies at a crucial time in the war.

Taken from *Scottish Clan and Family Encyclopedia*, by Collins. HarperCollins Publishers 1994.

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