

Clan ERSKINE



ARMS CREST

Argent, a pale Sable (Erskin)

Dexter, on a chapeau Gules furred Ermine, a hand holding up a skene in pale Argent, hilted and pommelled Or (Erskine); sinister, on a chapeau Gules furred Ermine, a demi-lion rampant guardant Gules, langued Azure, armed Argent (Kellie)

MOTTOES

Dexter, Je pense plus (I think more); sinister, Decoridecus addit avito (He adds honor to that of his ancestors)

On Compartment

Unione foritor (Stronger through unity)

SUPPORTERS

Two griffins Gules, armed beaked and winged Or

STANDARD

Azure, a St Andrew's Cross Argent in the hoist and of two tracts Argent and Sable, upon which is depicted the Crest for Kellie (sinister above) in the first and third compartments and the Crest for Erskine (dexter above) the blade of the skene environed of the circlet of an Earl's coronet Proper in the second compartment, along with the Motto 'Je pense plus' in letters Or upon two transverse bands Azure

PINSEL

Sable, upon a chapeau Gules furred Ermine, a dexter hand holding a skene in pale Argent, hilted and pommelled Or, within a belt Gules, buckled and furnished Or with this Motto 'Je pense plus' in letters Argent within a circlet Or ensigned of an Earl's coronet, bearing the title 'Earl of Mar and Kellie' in letters Sable and in the fly, a spray of roses Gules, barbed and leaved Vert, seeded Sable, surmounted of an Escrol Argent bearing this Motto 'Unione fortior' in letters Sable

This name was originally derived from the lands of Erskine on the south of the Clyde in Renfrew, and the name itself may be from the ancient British for 'green rising ground'. Henry de Erskine was proprietor of the barony as early as the reign of Alexander II. He was witness to a charter by the Earl of Lennox of the patronage and titles of Roseneath to the Abbey of Paisley around 1226. John de Irskyn appears on the Ragman Roll of Scottish nobles submitting to Edward I of England in 1296. His son, Sir John de Irskyn, had a son and three daughters, the eldest of whom married Thomas Bruce, brother of King Robert. A second daughter, Alice, married Walter, the High Steward of Scotland.

The Erskines were staunch in their support of the Bruce family and Sir Robert de Erskine became an illustrious and renowned figure in his time. He was appointed by David II constable and keeper of the strategic royal Castle of Stirling. (The present chief still holds this royal office, greeting the monarch at the gates of the castle on state occasions.) In 1350 he was appointed Lord Great Chamberlain of Scotland and Justiciar north of the Forth. In 1371 he was one of the nobles who established the succession to the throne of Robert II, grandson of the great Bruce and first of the Stewart Dynasty. In the mid fifteenth century the family claimed one of the great Celtic titles when Alexander, Earl of Mar, died in 1435. Alexander was a Stewart who claimed the title through his wife, Countess of Mar in her own right. Sir Robert Erskine, who had been created Lord Erskine, who claimed the ancient earldom by right of his descent from Isabella, Countess of Mar. The king, however, refused, insisting that the earldom now belonged to the Crown because the last male holder had been a Stewart. Despite this dispute with the king, the Erskines became guardians to young James IV and were thereafter to be guardians to five successive generations of royalty.

Alexander, third Lord Erskine, constructed a massive tower in 1497 at Alloa, which was to be the seat of the chiefs for the next three hundred years. His son was killed at Flodden in 1513 and it was John, fifth Lord Erskine, who became guardian and tutor to James V. The ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots, came to the Erskines when she was still a baby, and spent the first five years of her life around Alloa and Stirling Castle. He bestowed upon Lord Erskine a new title of 'Earl of Mar', although without the former precedence. (This was later to cause considerable legal difficulties, and although the Erskine Chiefs are Earls of Mar and Earls of Kellie, there is also a Countess of Mar in

her own right who is also a member of Council of Chiefs.) In 1582, Lord Erskine took part in the raid of Ruthven, which place the young James VI in the hands of an extreme faction of the Protestant nobility for nearly a year. Erskine was exiled as a result, but was ultimately restored to royal favor and became Lord High Treasurer of Scotland in 1616.

The ability to change political allegiance according to the pragmatic needs of survival or the desire for gain was a skill not unknown to the Scottish nobility, and the sixth Earl of Mar, born in 1675, had the aptitude to such an extent that he has passed into history as 'bobbing John'. He was a supporter of the union and seemed reconciled to the Hanoverian succession, but when he attended court in London in 1714 he was not offered the post of Secretary of State for Scotland, and considered this to be a direct insult. He promptly returned to his ancestral lands and, raising the standard of the 'Old Pretender', James VIII, he called out his own clansmen and all loyal supporters of the house of Stuart. He had soon gathered an army of over ten thousand clansmen. The earl led his Jacobites to Dunblane where he met an indifferent royal force under the Duke of Argyll. The Battle of Sheriffmuir, which was fought on 12 November 1715, was inconclusive and, although Mar's forces were probably victorious, they left the field without inflicting any severe damage upon Argyll, who then claimed a victory for himself. The rising was a failure and Mar fled to France, whereupon his title and lands were forfeited. The estates were purchased by another branch of the family in 1724. The earl received the Jacobite title of Mar, but this was abandoned in 1824 when the Erskines were restored to the earldom of Mar and the attainder on the family was lifted. The earldom of Kellie, which had been bestowed in 1619 on a younger son of the chiefly line, became united with the earldom of Mar in 1835.

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Clan ERSKINE Septs

ERSKINE
MAC CORISKEN(E)

Clan genealogists: Home Page: <http://www.scotlands.com/tp/clan/erskine>

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The Scottish Society of Louisville, Inc.
PO Box 32248
Louisville, KY 40232-2248